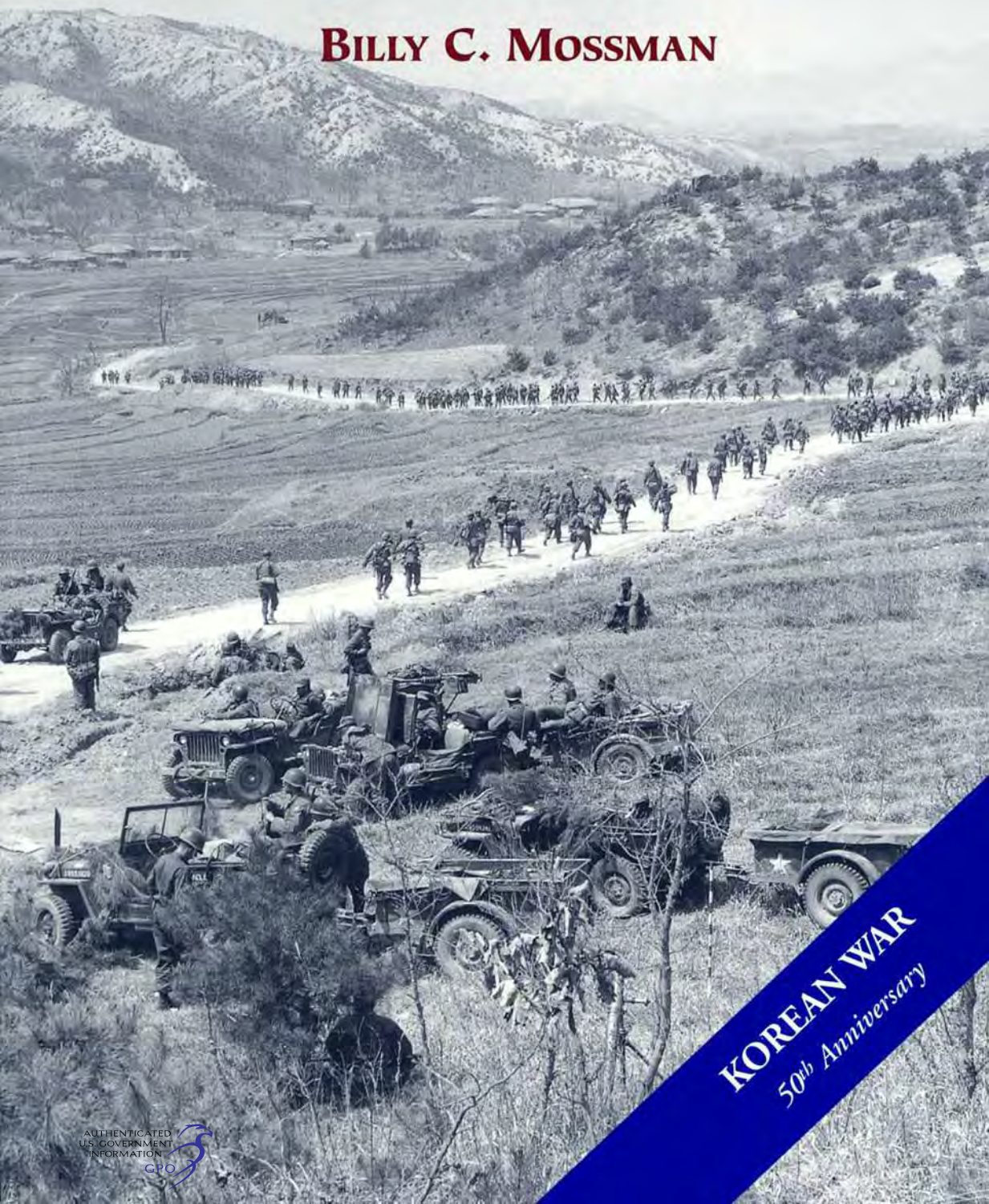
EBB AND FLOW

NOVEMBER 1950–JULY 1951

BILLY C. MOSSMAN



KOREAN WAR
50th Anniversary

AUTHENTICATED
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INFORMATION
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UNITED STATES ARMY IN THE KOREAN WAR

EBB AND FLOW
NOVEMBER 1950–JULY 1951

by
Billy C. Mossman



CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY
UNITED STATES ARMY
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. . . to Those Who Served

Foreword

This volume completes the general survey of combat operations in Korea that began with the publication in 1960 of Roy Appleman's *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu.* It will be followed by a study of theater logistics and an order of battle which, along with the recently published *Medics' War,* will comprise the series of official Army histories of America's so-called forgotten war.

Ebb and Flow records an important chapter in the Korean War. It begins with the last weeks of the pell-mell rush of United Nations forces to the Chinese border and goes on to describe in great detail the test of American military leadership and resources posed by the taxing retreat of the Eighth Army and X Corps across the frozen wastes of North Korea. It also examines the special problems posed to a fighting army during the deadly months of stalemate in the summer of 1951.

The part of the war described in this volume raises many questions for the military strategist and provides a treasure trove of lessons for the student of the art of war. The book emphasizes the limitations imposed by terrain and weather on the fighting capabilities of an American army facing surprise attack from a large, disciplined enemy. The operations it describes in such careful detail will help vivify the principles of war for those who would study the profession of arms.

It seems particularly appropriate that this volume is going to the printer during a year when the Army is emphasizing the theme of training. It is important to study carefully such a recent and important example of an American army performing superbly against great odds. I encourage the military student and veteran alike to take advantage of the insights into our profession imparted in the pages that follow.

Washington, D.C.
8 September 1988

WILLIAM A. STOFFT
Brigadier General, USA
Chief of Military History

The Author

A graduate of Wayne State (Nebraska) College, Billy C. Mossman is the author of studies and monographs on U.S. Army operations in the Korean War and of two chapters, "Peace Becomes Cold War, 1945–50," and "The Korean War, 1950–53," in *American Military History*, a volume in the Army Historical Series. He contributed to *Origins, History, and Accomplishments of the U.S. Army Reserve*, published by the Historical Evaluation and Research Organization, and to *Challenge and Response in Internal Conflict*, published by the Center for Research in Social Systems, American University. He is also coauthor of *The Last Salute: Civil and Military Funerals, 1921–1969*.

During World War II, Mr. Mossman served as a platoon leader with the 381st Infantry, 96th Infantry Division, and participated in the Leyte and Okinawa campaigns in the Pacific theater. In the Korean War, he was a military historian with the Eighth Army; Army Forces, Far East; and United Nations Command Military Armistice Commission.

Mr. Mossman joined the Office of the Chief of Military History as an Army officer in 1954 and became a civilian staff member in 1957. As a civilian staff member, he served successively as historian, deputy branch chief, branch chief, and acting division chief. He retired in 1983 but remains active in the field of military history.

Preface

This book describes military operations during the Korean War from late November 1950 to early July 1951, a period in which battle lines did indeed ebb and flow in pronounced surges. The volume is one of several in the United States Army in the Korean War series. In its coverage of combat operations, the book falls in the series between *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu* by Roy E. Appleman and *Truce Tent and Fighting Front* by Walter G. Hermes.

In describing the large-scale engagements that occurred between sizable opposing forces over seven months' time, I had to focus treatment of the battles at a somewhat high level, often corps or army. I also had to be selective in the use of detail. While this approach does not fully record the gallantry, suffering, and achievements of individual men in combat, I hope that the battle descriptions clearly indicate the substantial measure of their individual accomplishments and valor.

I wrote this book over many years, interrupting my work on numerous occasions and for long periods to carry out other responsibilities and assignments. In fact, I gave the account its final touches after I retired from the Center of Military History. It was also in retirement that I designed the maps and selected the photographs that illustrate the book.

During the years spent writing the book, I received valuable support and assistance from many people. Supervisory officials at all levels provided unfailing support. The successive Chiefs of Military History included Brig. Gen. James A. Norell, Brig. Gen. William H. Harris, Brig. Gen. Hal C. Pattison, Brig. Gen. James L. Collins, Jr., and Brig. Gen. William A. Stofft. Holding the post of Chief Historian during the period of preparation were Dr. Stetson Conn, Dr. Maurice Matloff, and Dr. David Trask. I received valuable assistance and guidance from a considerable number of officers who served as Chief, Histories Division: Lt. Col. James C. Griffin; Col. Louis G. Mendez, Jr.; Col. Paul P. Hinkley; Col. Leonard G. Robinson; Col. Albert W. Jones; Col. John E. Jessup, Jr.; Col. James W. Dunn; and Lt. Col. Richard O. Perry. Wise counsel also came from my branch chiefs: Charles B. MacDonald, Robert Ross Smith, Robert W. Coakley, and Walter G. Hermes.

Over the course of my research, Hannah M. Zeidlik, currently the Chief, Historical Resources Branch, was a mainstay in obtaining and

providing essential records, studies, and reports. On the production level, Joyce W. Hardyman performed the main editing of the volume assisted by James W. Grandy. Also importantly involved in the production process were John W. Elsberg, the current Editor in Chief, Barbara H. Gilbert, and Rae T. Panella. Arthur S. Hardyman and Linda M. Cajka processed the maps from layout to final form. Howell C. Brewer handled the acquisition and preparation of the photographs that illustrate the volume.

Notwithstanding the significant contributions of the persons named above, I alone am responsible for the interpretations made and conclusions drawn in this book and for any deficiencies that it may have.

8 September 1988
Washington, D.C.

BILLY C. MOSSMAN

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Illustrations are from Department of Defense files.

Ebb and Flow
November 1950–July 1951

CHAPTER I

The Mission

By the Thanksgiving holiday in 1950, an autumn offensive had carried the United Nations Command (UNC) deep into North Korea. Opening the advance in South Korea, UNC forces had moved some three hundred miles to a front slanting northeastward across the Korean peninsula from the mouth of the Ch'ongch'on River on the Yellow Sea to the southern outskirts of the city of Ch'ongjin on the Sea of Japan.[1] A full resumption of the offensive was set for Friday, 24 November, to clear the remaining hundred miles or less that lay between the front and Korea's northern border. Despite recent encounters with fresh forces from Communist China, there was considerable optimism for the success of renewed advance and even some speculation that UNC forces would reach the border and end the Korean War by Christmas, the date on which the war would be exactly six months old.

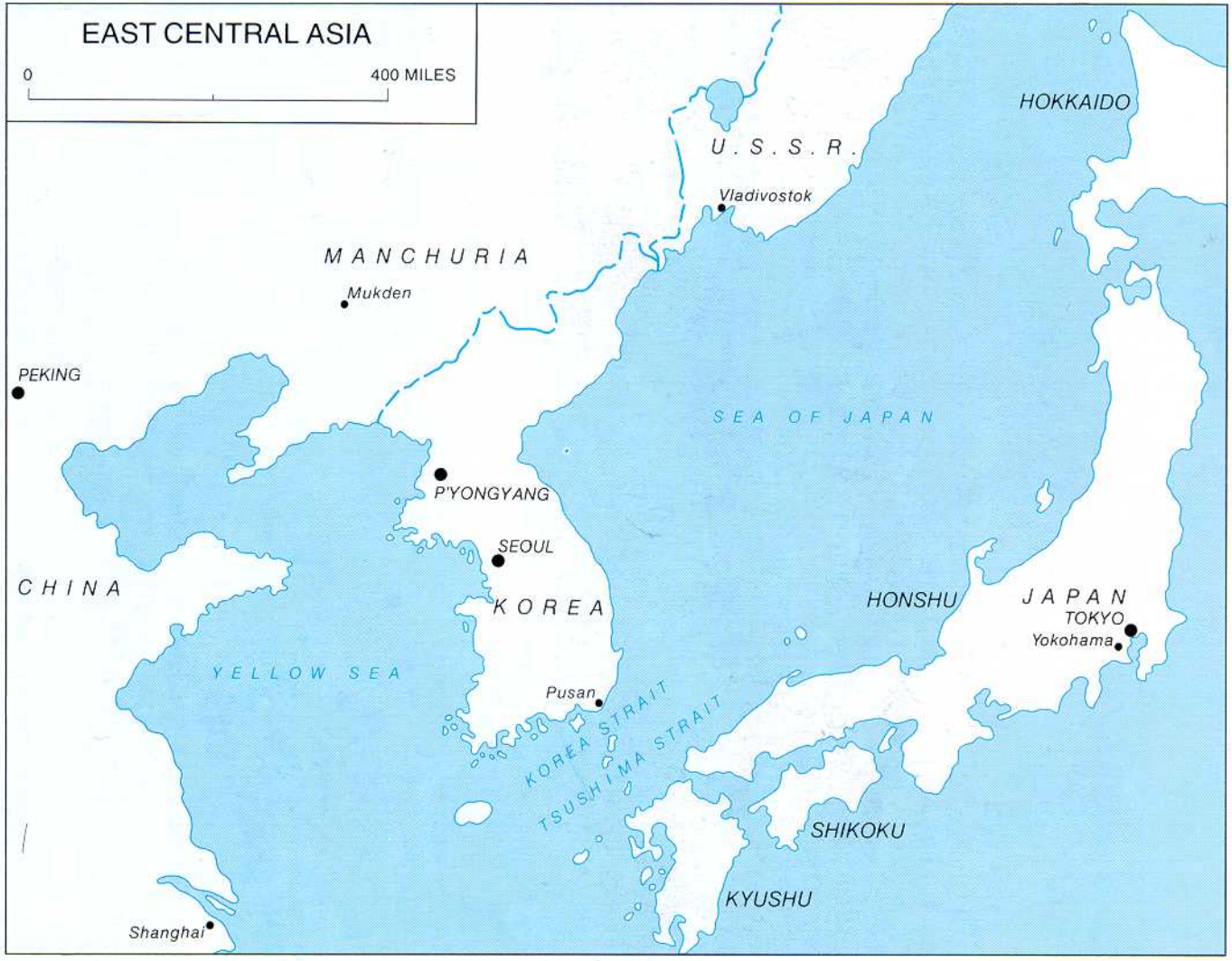
The Battleground

Until the war had begun during the past summer, Korea had received world attention only briefly, when the Allied victory over Japan in World War II released Korea from forty years of Japanese rule. After American and Soviet military forces entered the land to take the surrender of Japanese troops stationed there, most of the world outside Asia gave scant notice to the further course of events in Korea. When the outbreak of war in June 1950 again drew attention, few could recall with any certainty just where this country was located or what it looked like.

Shaped much like the state of Florida, the Korean peninsula, measuring about two hundred miles at its widest, reaches some six hundred miles southeastward from the central Asian mainland. *(Map 1)* In the north it borders on Manchuria, the northeasternmost region of China, and for a few miles in the far northeast on the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). To the west, the Yellow Sea separates Korea from north-central China. To the east, the Sea of Japan stands between the peninsula and the islands of Japan. Less than a hundred fifty miles off the southeastern tip of the peninsula, across the Korea and Tsushima Straits, lies Kyushu, Japan's southernmost main island.[2]

[1] For a detailed account of ground operations in Korea during 25 June–24 November 1950, see Roy E. Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu*, U.S. ARMY IN THE KOREAN WAR (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1961).

[2] So shaped and located, Korea is a strategic crossroads in the Far East, a fact long and well appreciated by the geopoliticians of the country's stronger neighbors, China, Russia, and Japan. Past rivalries among these nations for control of Korea are described in George M. McCune, *Korea Today* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950); Andrew J. Grajdanzev, *Modern Korea* (New York: The John Day Co.,


EAST CENTRAL ASIA
0
400 MILES
U . S . S . R .
HOKKAIDO
Vladivostok
MANCHURIA
Mukden
PEKING
SEA OF JAPAN
P'YONGYANG
SEOUL
CHINA
KOREA
HONSHU
JAPAN
TOKYO
Yokohama
YELLOW SEA
Pusan
KOREA STRAIT
TSUSHIMA STRAIT
SHIKOKU
KYUSHU
Shanghai

MAP 1



THE AXIAL TAEBAEK MOUNTAINS ALONG THE EAST COAST

As the UNC troops now deep in North Korea could attest from experience, Korea's steep, ubiquitous mountains, inferior communications system, and severe climate sharply inhibited the conduct of military operations—most sharply the operations of a modern, highly mechanized force such as the United Nations Command. Extending south from a high, jumbled mountain mass in the country's far north and northeast (the Northern Korea Highlands), the main Taebaek Mountains run the length of the east coast without interruption except for a narrow northeast-southwest corridor (the Wonsan-Seoul corridor) in central Korea that divides the Taebaeks into northern and southern ranges. *(Map 2)* From this axial spine, spur ranges spread southwestward across most of the peninsula. The few existing lowlands, themselves dotted by imposing mountain masses, lie principally along the west coast. This mountain framework made movement in any direction difficult, particularly cross-country and east-west.

Poor lines of communication complicated the movement of UNC troops

1944); M. Frederick Nelson, *Korea and the Old Orders in Eastern Asia* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1946); and Edwin O. Reischauer, *Japan: The Story of a Nation*, rev. ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974).


MANCHURIA
Manp'ojin
Kanggye
Changjin R.
Hyesanjin
Hapsu
Kapsan
Kilchu
P'ungsan
Changjin
Ch'osan
Yalu R.
Pyoktong
Mup'yong-ni
PUJON RES.
Songjin
Namsan-ni
CHANGJIN (CHOSIN) RES.
Hagaru-ni
Ch'ongsonjin
An-tung
Uiju
Sinuiju
Taeryong R.
Kuryong R.
Huich'on
Ch'ongch'on R.
Pukch'ong
Iwon
Inch'o-ri
Taedong R.
Hamhung
Chongju
Tokch'on
Hungnam
Sinanju
SEA OF JAPAN
Yangdok
Wonsan
P'YONGYANG
Chinnamp'o
Imjin R.
Kosong
Taebaek Mts.
Yesong R.
Sariwon
P'yonggang
Kansong
Namch'onjom
Ch'orwon
Kumhwa
Yangyang
Haeju
38°
Yonan
Kaesong
Chumunjin
Paengnyong do
Ongjin
Munsan-ni
Ch'unch'on
Kangnung
Uijongbu
Hongch'on
SEOUL
Samch'ok
Wonju
Han R.
Suwon
YELLOW SEA
Chech'on
Ulchin
Tokchok-to
Osan
Ch'ungju
Yongju
Andong
Sangju
Yongdok
Kum R.
Taejon
Naktong R.
P'ohang-dong
Kumch'on
Yongch'on
Taegu
Kunsan
Chonju
Kyongju
Ulsan
Miryang R.
Chinju
Masan
Kwangju
Chinhae
Pusan
Mokp'o
Yosu
KOREA STRAIT
KOREA
High Ground Above 200 Meters
0
50 MILES

MAP 2

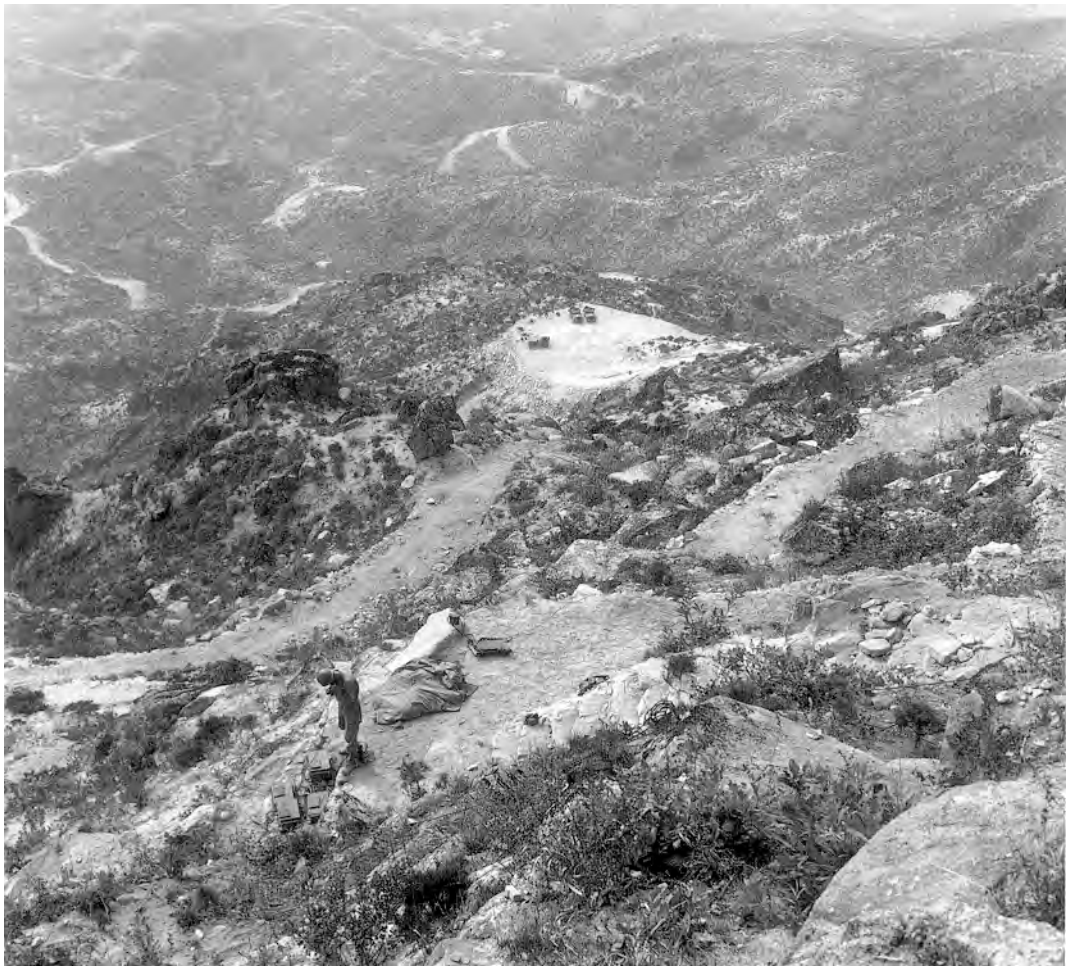
and supplies into and inside Korea. All harbors were year-round, warm-water ports, but few were good, and extreme tidal ranges limited the use of those on the west coast. Airfields were dated. Although they were numerous and well located for troop transport and cargo planes, putting and keeping them in condition to handle the heavy aircraft (tactical aircraft, as well) often required more than available UNC engineer crews could provide. The railroad, Korea's chief means of overland commercial transportation, had suffered from hard use and inadequate maintenance in recent years, and by late 1950 heavy war damage to bridges, tracks, and rolling stock had further reduced its capacity. The road net, which had been designed primarily to serve and supplement the railways, was a primitive system of narrow, one-lane, mostly gravel-surfaced roads with steep grades, sharp curves, and equally narrow bridges with low load capacities. Because of poor construction, few lateral routes, and vulnerability to weather damage, the road system was scarcely suitable for UNC military traffic.

Hardly a lesser obstacle was Korea's monsoonal climate with its characteristic reversal of prevailing wind direction in summer and winter. Marked by variable winds and changeable precipitation and temperature, spring and autumn are transitional periods for the wind shift. In summer the prevailing winds generally move northward off the Pacific Ocean, and in winter the principal flow of air comes southward out of the Asian interior. Consequently, summers are typically rainy, humid, and hot, winters relatively dry and cold. But the summer of 1950 had been one of drought—only about one-fourth the usual amount of rainfall. This phenomenon had increased the number of days of high temperatures, many over 100 degrees Fahrenheit and several as high as 120 degrees. In some summer actions heat exhaustion caused more UNC casualties than did enemy gunfire. By late November 1950 UNC forces also had had a taste of Korea's winter weather. Snowfall began in mid-November, and in the higher mountains in the far northeast the heaviest falls made roads dangerous or impassable. Although snow was light elsewhere, bitter cold intensified by brisk northern winds created problems all along the UNC front, disabling vehicles and weapons and causing numerous cases of frostbite among the troops. As UNC forces restarted their advance toward the northern border, they could anticipate a winter of few deeper snows but still stronger winds and decidedly lower temperatures.[3]

The Initial Mission

The northern border of Korea was not the original objective of UNC operations. The initial decision on the purpose of these operations, made concomitantly with the fundamental decisions of the United States and the United Nations (U.N.) to enter the war, had limited the mission to repelling the North Korean invasion of South Korea. On the ground, this meant driving the North Koreans back beyond the 38th

[3] For additional information on Korea's relief, ports, airfields, rail system, roadnet, and climate, see *Korea Handbook* (Washington: Department of the Army, Office, Assistant Chief of Staff, G–2, September 1950). For the effect of weather conditions on past operations, see Appleman, *South to the Naktong*.



TYPICAL TERRAIN NEAR THE 38TH PARALLEL IN THE WEST

parallel of north latitude crossing the peninsula at its waist. This was the line that for three years after World War II had served as a boundary first between American and Soviet forces taking the surrender of Japanese troops, then between U.S. and USSR occupation zones, and finally between the Communist Democratic People's Republic of Korea founded by the Soviets north of the parallel and the Republic of Korea (ROK) established under U.S. and U.N. sponsorship in the south.[4]

The hardening of the division of Korea at the 38th parallel had begun with an impasse in U.S.–USSR negotiations convened in 1946 and 1947 as an early measure in honoring Allied wartime

[4] The two areas of the divided land acquired their commonly used names, North Korea and South Korea, during the occupation.



THE PORT OF PUSAN

declarations that Korea, once liberated from Japanese rule, would eventually be restored as a sovereign nation. The final evolution grew out of a Soviet refusal to permit the United Nations to include the northern people in a U.S.-instigated 1948 attempt to supervise the election of a national assembly as the first step in establishing a government. By autumn of that year the parallel represented a confirmed political division between two governments of opposing ideologies.[5]

The partition of Korea reflected a broad realignment of international power resulting from World War II. Emerging with this realignment was a cold war between power blocs, West versus East, anti-Communists against Communists, nations aligned under the leadership of the United States confronting those assembled under the Soviet Union. In Europe, the Soviets opened a campaign of intimidation and subversion to consolidate control of territories occupied during the war. Whatever the impulse behind that campaign, whether a search for national security or a desire to promote Communist world revolution in keeping with Marxist-Leninist doctrine, the strategy ap-

[5] See Dept of State Pub 7004, Far Eastern Series 101, *The Record on Korean Unification, 1943–1960* (Washington, 1960).

peared to be one of expansion. In response, the United States adopted a policy of containment and led attempts, primarily through economic assistance pacts and military alliances, to prevent the Soviet Union from expanding its influence beyond the borders acquired in wartime military operations.

Although centered in Europe, the cold war was also visible in Korea. After Soviet and American occupation forces withdrew in 1948 and 1949, the regime north of the parallel and the government in the south competed in cold war terms for jurisdiction over the entire peninsula.[6] The Soviet Union assisted its satellite in the north, particularly in equipping and training an army. The U.S. policy toward Korea, established in 1948 as cold war tensions mounted in Europe and after demobilization and budgetary restrictions sharply reduced American military resources, was to avoid becoming "so irrevocably involved in the Korean situation that an action taken by any faction in Korea or by any other power in Korea could be considered a 'casus belli' for the United States."[7] Nevertheless, the United States provided economic and military assistance to the southern republic, and Korea's unification and full independence remained a matter of interest, if of little hope, to both the United States and the United Nations.

The North Korean invasion of the republic on 25 June 1950 and the inability of South Korean forces to check it prompted an abrupt reversal of the American position. Behind the change was a belief that the invasion was not simply an extension of a local jurisdictional dispute but a break in the wider cold war. Viewing the attack in this light, President Harry S. Truman and his principal advisers concluded that it had to be contested on grounds that inaction would invite further armed aggression, and possibly a third world war.

The immediate American response was to label the invasion as a threat to world peace before the United Nations. This step was not taken primarily to produce troop and materiel support, although such support was forthcoming. The ease and speed with which the North Korean invasion force was driving south made clear that there was not enough time to assemble a broadly based U.N. force. Only the United States could commit troops in any numbers immediately, these from occupation forces in Japan. Nor were North Korean authorities, who anticipated a quick victory, expected to submit to U.N. political pressure. Rather, the United States sought the moral support of the United Nations and the authority to identify resistance to the North Korean venture with U.N. purposes. Resolutions adopted by the U.N. Security Council on 25 and 27 June 1950, worded almost exactly as American representatives offered them, gave the sanction and support desired.

President Truman sought no congressional declaration of war but committed American forces as a response to the U.N. resolution under his authority as commander in chief of the

[6] See D. M. Condit, et al., *Challenge and Response in Internal Conflict*, vol. I, *The Experience in Asia*, ch. 17, "South Korea, 1946–1954," by B. C. Mossman (Washington: Center for Research in Social Systems, The American University, 1968).

[7] State–Army–Navy–Air Force Coordinating Committee (SANACC) 176/39, 22 Mar 48, title: U.S. Policy in Korea. President Truman approved this policy on 4 April 1948.



ALL AIRFIELDS REQUIRED HEAVY MAINTENANCE. *Above, loaded C–46 is pushed to solid ground after runway collapsed. Below, main rail lines were standard gage and reasonably well built. Roads were narrow and poorly constructed.*

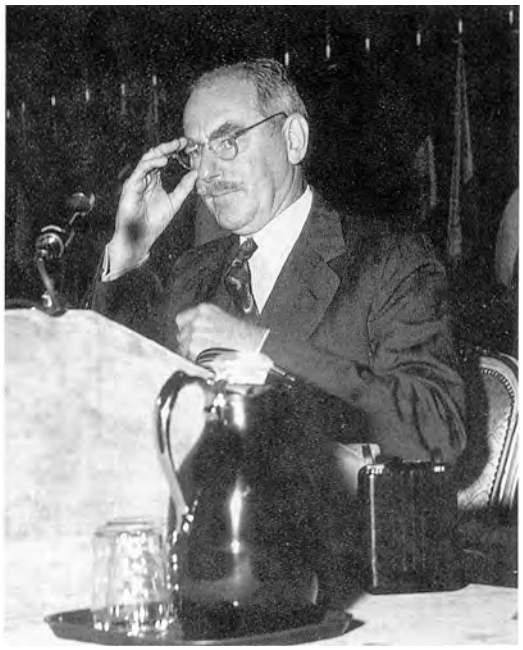




WINTER WEATHER WAS ANOTHER PROBLEM



PRESIDENT TRUMAN



SECRETARY OF STATE ACHESON

armed forces and under his general powers to conduct the foreign relations of the United States.[8] Partly out of these conditions of entry, the president avoided the word *war* in references to operations in Korea in favor of *police action*. He also used the euphemism to dramatize the limited scope of UNC operations. As formally resolved by the U.N. Security Council, the purpose was "to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security in the area.[9] As explained on 29 June by U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson, American actions taken in response to the U.N. resolutions of 25 and 27 June were "solely for the purpose of restoring the Republic of Korea to its status prior to the invasion from the North."[10] In line with this limitation, President Truman intended to avoid heavy commitments of American resources in Korea and to take no steps that would prompt the Soviet Union or the People's Republic of China, the newly risen Communist state on the mainland, to enter the conflict.

Acknowledging the United States as the major contributor to the effort in Korea, the U.N. Security Council on 7 July 1950 recommended that other nations supplying forces and materiel contribute them to a single command

[8] See J. Lawton Collins, *War in Peacetime* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1969), pp. 31–35.

[9] U.N. doc. S/1511, reprinted in Dept of State Pub 3922, Far Eastern Series 34, *United States Policy in the Korean Crisis* (Washington, 1950), p. 24.

[10] Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1969), p. 450.



THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF. *Left to right, Admiral Forrest P. Sherman, General of the Army Omar N. Bradley (chairman), General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, and General J. Lawton Collins.*

under the United States.[11] President Truman formally accepted the responsibilities of leadership on 8 July.

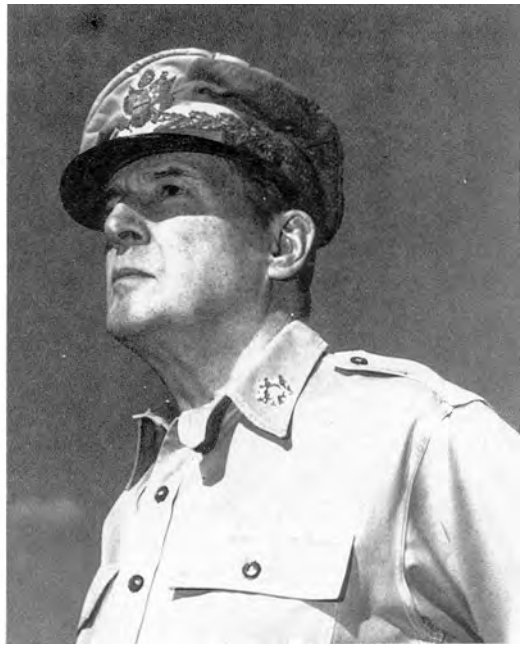
The evolving command structure placed Truman in the role of executive agent for the U.N. Security Council, although he had no obligation to clear his decisions with that agency. Assisting him in this role were the U.S. National Security Council and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), who helped develop the strategic concept of operations in Korea. In the strictly military channel, the Joint Chiefs issued instructions to the unified command in the field through its Army member.[12] This

[11] The council also authorized the new command to fly the U.N. flag in the course of operations against North Korean forces.

[12] The Joint Chiefs of Staff included General of the Army Omar N. Bradley, Chairman; General J. Lawton Collins, Army Chief of Staff; Admiral Forrest P. Sherman, Chief of Naval Operations; and General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, Air Force Chief of Staff. Although the Joint Chiefs instructed the U.N. Command, not all directives originated with them, nor did the directives in every case represent their recommendations. For an account of operations at the Joint Chiefs of Staff and U.N. Command headquarters levels during the first year of the war, see James F. Schnabel, *Policy and Direction: The First Year,* U.S. ARMY IN THE KOREAN WAR (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1972).



GENERAL COLLINS



GENERAL MACARTHUR

method followed an existing Department of Defense agreement whereby the chief whose service was playing the primary role in a command area, in this case Army Chief of Staff General J. Lawton Collins, would serve as executive agent for the Joint Chiefs. The command in the field, the United Nations Command, was formally established on 24 July 1950 under General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, who superimposed its headquarters over that of his existing Far East Command in Tokyo.

While the top echelons of command were being shaped, General MacArthur assigned control of air operations in Korea to the air arm of the Far East Command, the Far East Air Forces, commanded by Lt. Gen. George E. Stratemeyer, and allotted control of naval operations to Naval Forces, Far East, under Vice Adm. C. Turner Joy.[13] He assigned all UNC ground forces entering Korea to Lt. Gen. Walton H. Walker's Eighth U.S. Army, then on occupation duty in Japan with headquarters in Yokohama. After moving to Korea in mid-July, General Walker also assumed control of the operations of the ROK Army at the offer of South Korea's president, Syngman Rhee.[14]

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[13] It was not until 27 August 1950, however, that General MacArthur officially designated these air and naval organizations as parts of the U.N. Command. He issued this order primarily to clarify the relationship of the air and naval commands to him as UNC commander in chief.

[14] On 15 July 1950 President Rhee wrote to General MacArthur: "I am happy to assign to you command authority over all land, sea, and air forces of the Republic of Korea during the period of the continuation of the present state of hostilities; such command to be exercised either by you personally or by such military commander or commanders to whom you may dele-



GENERAL STRATEMEYER. (*Photograph taken in 1944.*)



ADMIRAL JOY

In the van of forces from other U.N. members, American ground troops began entering Korea in July to join the ROK Army in blunting the invasion, only to be shoved back into the southeastern corner of the country by the surprisingly strong North Korean People's Army. But there, in defenses based on the Naktong River and arching around the port of Pusan, General Walker through August and the first half of September successfully countered further North Korean attacks. General Stratemeyer's air command meanwhile all but eliminated North Korea's small air forces and severely interdicted traffic on the enemy's long overland supply lines. Admiral Joy's force wiped out what little naval opposition the North Koreans could offer and clamped a tight blockade on the Korean coast to prevent the movement of enemy troops and supplies by water.

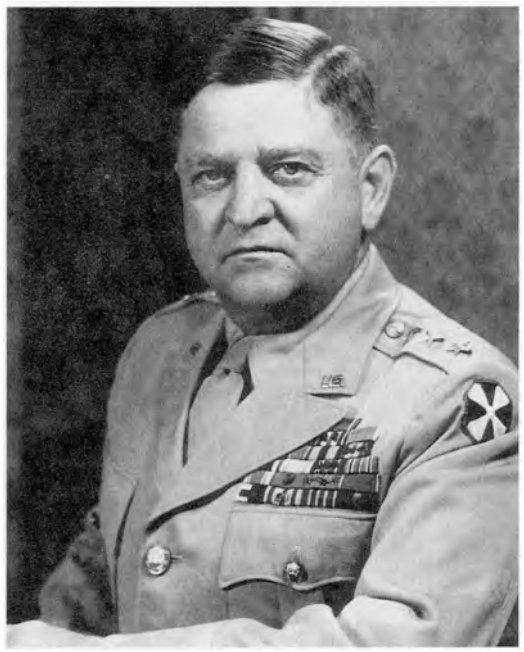
As the costs of repeated attempts to penetrate the Pusan Perimeter gradually reduced the North Koreans' ground strength, the favor of the war shifted to the United Nations Command. On the west coast, far behind North Korean lines, the U.S. X Corps, commanded by Maj. Gen. Edward M. Almond and operating separately from the Eighth Army, made an amphibious landing at Inch'on on 15 September and drove inland through Seoul, the South Korean capital. In concert, the Eighth Army opened an overland

gate the exercise of this authority within Korea or in adjacent seas." See Dept of State Pub 4263, Far Eastern Series 44, *United States Policy in the Korean Conflict, July 1950– February 1951* (Washington, 1951), p. 10.

offensive on the 16th. The X Corps' operation and the Eighth Army's frontal effort forced a North Korean retreat that quickly degenerated into a rout. By the end of September, although some bypassed North Korean troops remained in the southern mountains, the enemy ceased to exist as an organized force anywhere in the Republic of Korea.

The Mission Expanded

From mid-July into September, President Truman and his aides weighed the advisability of crossing the 38th parallel. The principal question before them was whether such a move might spark the active intervention of the Soviet Union or Communist China. Both of these governments issued warnings against a UNC entry into North Korea in August and September as the balance of power in the conflict shifted. But U.S. intelligence agencies believed that intervention by either was "improbable, barring Soviet decision to precipitate global war," and there was some direct, if ambiguous, evidence that the Soviet Union would not intervene.[15] At the end of June the United States had appealed to the Soviets to stop the North Korean attack. They replied that their "Government adheres to the principle of the impermissibility of interference by foreign powers in the internal affairs of Korea."[16] American officials interpreted the reply as an indication that the Soviet Union would not actively enter the conflict. In sum, while the possibility of Soviet or Chinese intervention remained the chief contra-argument in deliberations on crossing the parallel, the warnings heard in August and September were regarded as attempts to discourage the U.N. Command, not as genuine threats to enter the war.[17]



GENERAL WALKER

In any case, incentives for carrying the war into North Korea were strong. One was a considered need to destroy the North Korean Army completely so that there could be no recurrence of the June invasion. The military occupation of North Korea also could set the stage for achieving the long-standing U.S. and U.N. goal of unifying Korea.[18]

[15] Secretary of State Acheson, quoted in U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services and Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearings on the *Military Situation in the Far East* . . . (hereafter cited as *MacArthur Hearings*), 82d Cong., 1st sess., 1951, p. 1832.

[16] Soviet statement, 29 Jun 50, quoted in Dept of State *Bulletin*, vol. XXIII, no. 575, 10 Jul 50, p. 48.

[17] For a full discussion of the decision on crossing the 38th parallel, see Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, pp. 177–84. For documents pertaining to the matter, see Dept of State Pub 8859, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950*, vol. VII, *Korea* (Washington, 1976).

[18] For a discussion of occupation planning, see Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, pp. 219–21.



GENERAL ALMOND

Indeed, the possibility of enabling the United Nations to bring about the unification of Korea under a single, acceptable government provided a powerful inducement to cross the parallel and became the theme of deliberations opened in the U.N. General Assembly on 19 September to consider a U.S. bid for specific endorsement of an entry into North Korea. (General authority was considered to exist in the phrase "restore international peace and security in the area" in the resolution of 27 June.) Speaking before the assembly, Secretary Acheson made clear that he had dropped his June view by urging that the future of Korea "be returned where it belongs—to the custody of its own people under the guidance of the United Nations.[19] The assembly responded on 7 October with a resolution recommending that steps be taken to "ensure conditions of stability throughout Korea" and to establish "a unified, independent and democratic government in the sovereign State of Korea."[20] Thus, tacitly, the General Assembly recommended crossing the parallel.

Instructions expanding the UNC military objective were issued while the U.N. resolution was being debated. On 27 September the Joint Chiefs of Staff notified General MacArthur that he was to destroy the North Korean armed forces, and on 29 September Secretary of Defense George C. Marshall supplied the final word authorizing him to send troops into North Korea.[21] MacArthur could conduct operations north of the parallel, however, only if there was "no entry into North Korea by major Soviet or Chinese Communist Forces, no announcement of intended entry, nor a threat to counter our operations militarily in North Korea," and he was enjoined neither to cross the Manchurian and USSR borders of Korea nor to use other than South Korean forces in the Korean territory adjacent to the northern boundary.[22] The prospect of victory, however bright, had not diminished the determination of President Truman, who had personally approved the instructions to MacArthur, to avoid a battlefield confrontation with the Soviet Union or China.

MacArthur directed the Eighth Army, upon moving into North Korea,

[19] See Dept of State *Bulletin*, vol. XXIII, no. 587, 2 Oct 50, p. 526.

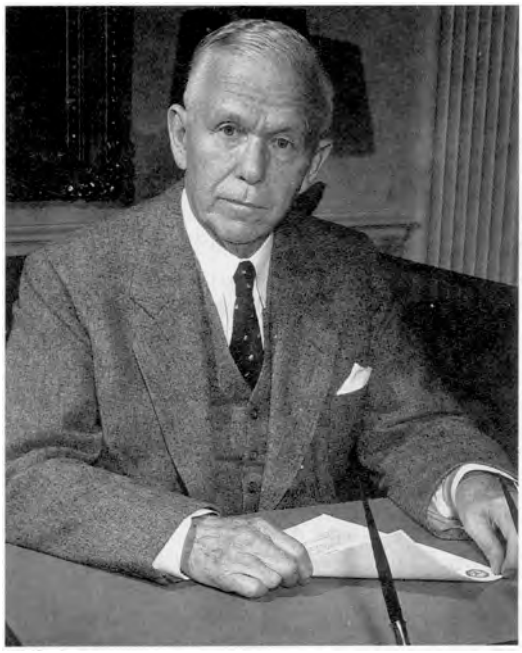
[20] U.N. doc A/1435, quoted in Dept of State Pub 4263, Far Eastern Series 44, *U.S. Policy in the Korean Conflict*, pp. 17–18.

[21] Marshall became secretary of defense on 21 September 1950, replacing Louis A. Johnson.

[22] Rad, JCS 92801, JCS to CINCUNC, 27 Sep 50.

to capture P'yongyang, the North Korean capital 120 miles north of Seoul, and ordered the X Corps, still a separate force, to make an amphibious landing eighty miles north of the 38th parallel at Wonsan, North Korea's major east coast seaport. After seizing these objectives the two ground arms were to march toward each other over a lateral road connecting P'yongyang and Wonsan, a move designed to trap any North Korean forces still straggling northward through the Taebaek Mountains. But because of the manner and speed of the Eighth Army's plunge over the parallel, the latter plan was not executed.

On the Eighth Army right, a South Korean corps crossed the parallel on 1 October and started a fast march along the eastern shore. The corps entered Wonsan nine days later and by the last week of October pushed northward another hundred miles to a line reaching inland from the coastal town of Iwon to positions within twenty miles of the huge Changjin Reservoir atop the Taebaek Mountains.[23] West of the Taebaek divide, Eighth Army forces moved into North Korea between 6 and 9 October, entered P'yongyang on the 19th, and by the last week of the month reached and crossed the Ch'ongch'on River within sixty-five miles of the Yalu River, the boundary between Korea and Manchuria. The X Corps meanwhile outloaded for the landing at Wonsan but did not reach its objective until after the port had fallen to the Eighth Army. With an assault landing obviated, the need to clear the heavily mined Wonsan harbor prevented the X Corps from going ashore until the last week of October.



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE MARSHALL

The Eighth Army's strides into North Korea stimulated new warnings from China. At midnight on 2 October, after South Korean but as yet no American forces had crossed the parallel, Foreign Minister Chou En-lai formally summoned Indian Ambassador Kavalam M. Panikkar to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Peking. Dismissing the South Korean advance as inconsequential, Chou declared that if American or other U.N. forces crossed the parallel, China would enter the war.[24]

After Panikkar relayed Chou's warning through diplomatic channels to Washington, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, with President Truman's approval, au-

[23] UNC forces best knew the Changjin Reservoir as the Chosin Reservoir, its Japanese name.

[24] K. M. Panikkar, *In Two Chinas* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1955), pp. 109–10.

thorized General MacArthur to engage any Chinese forces encountered in Korea "as long as, in your judgment, action by forces now under your control offers a reasonable chance of success." Behind this departure from the president's stand against involvement with China was a strong inclination to dismiss the threat. Truman distrusted Panikkar because of the latter's leaning toward Communist China, and since the U.N. resolution of 7 October was then under consideration in the General Assembly, the president believed that Chou was simply attempting "to blackmail the United Nations by threats of intervention in Korea."[25]

Similar warnings in the Chinese press and on Radio Peking also were discounted. There was no denying China's ability to intervene quickly. Twenty-four Chinese divisions had been identified near Yalu River crossing points, and another fourteen had been located elsewhere in Manchuria. But the consensus of officials privy to the highest level of intelligence appeared to be much as General MacArthur reported during a conference with President Truman at Wake Island on 15 October: there was "very little" chance of intervention. It appeared that both the Chinese and Soviets, "in spite of their continued interest and some blatant public statements, [had] decided against further expensive investment in support of a lost cause."[26]

Lending support to this evaluation, the Eighth Army by 24 October had entered Korean provinces adjacent to Manchuria without discovering any battlefield evidence that Chinese forces intended to engage. The North Koreans meanwhile put up little resistance, let alone any cohesive front. The remnants of the North Korean Army seemed eager only to escape into the interior mountains along the Yalu River in central North Korea or into the sanctuary of Manchuria. These circumstances gave rise to a belief that the war was all but ended, indeed that it could be ended before the onset of winter weather with an accelerated drive to the northern border.

Maintaining the Eighth Army and X Corps as separate commands, MacArthur on 24 October drew a boundary between them generally along the Taebaek divide and, after reassigning the South Korean corps operating along the east coast to General Almond, directed Walker and Almond each to proceed to the northern border with all forces available. His last instruction violated the restriction against using any but ROK forces along the northern boundary of Korea, but, although the Joint Chiefs questioned the order, they did not countermand after MacArthur told them that the South Koreans were incapable of handling the advance by themselves.[27]

In the west, the Eighth Army moved toward the Yalu River in several columns, each free to advance without regard for the progress of the others. On the opposite side of the peninsula, General Almond sent columns up the east coast and through the mountains toward the Changjin Reservoir and the

[25] Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, p. 200; Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs*, vol. II, *Years of Trial and Hope* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1956), p. 362.

[26] Allen S. Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu* (New York: Macmillan, 1960), p. 115; Appleman, *South to the Naktong*, pp. 760–61.

[27] For a discussion of this exchange, see Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, p. 218.

Yalu. UNC columns moved steadily along both coasts, and South Korean reconnaissance troops with an interior Eighth Army column reached the Yalu at the town of Ch'osan. But almost everywhere else, UNC forces encountered stout resistance and on 25 October discovered they were being opposed by Chinese. In the X Corps zone, Chinese defenses slowed Almond's column on the road climbing the Taebaeks to the Changjin Reservoir until 6 November, when the Chinese withdrew from contact. In the Eighth Army zone, Chinese attacks forced back the columns in the center and on the east. Although the columns near the coast were not attacked, the loss of ground elsewhere compelled General Walker to recall his western forces lest they be cut off. Walker's pursuit thus came to a complete halt. As the Eighth Army fell back to regroup in positions astride the Ch'ongch'on River, Chinese forces continued to attack until 6 November and then—as in the X Corps sector—abruptly broke contact.

The Mission Reconsidered

In Washington, the twelve-day engagement drew attention to the want of a precise course of action to be followed if the U.N. Command met Chinese forces. Earlier instructions from the Joint Chiefs of Staff had authorized General MacArthur to continue operations against any Chinese encountered if he thought he could succeed, but they had not prescribed or required him to develop the exact lines of action that continued operations against the Chinese might follow. The Joint Chiefs, in any case, now considered the actual introduction of Chinese forces as reason to reexamine and possibly change the UNC mission.

The reexamination was complicated by difficulty in judging the extent and purpose of the Chinese intervention. Intelligence from the field placed the Chinese strength involved in the recent engagement at no more than five divisions, or about 50,000 troops. This relatively small force and its voluntary withdrawal from contact on 6 November scarcely supported any conclusion that China had decided on an all-out effort in Korea, nor could other intelligence and diplomatic agencies offer conclusive evidence of such a decision.[28] The Joint Chiefs of Staff considered more limited interests, such as a Chinese wish to protect Yalu River electric power plants on which Manchuria heavily depended, but this reasoning rested more on speculation than on evidence.

The Joint Chiefs also heard strong objections to any change of mission from General MacArthur. In his view, not only did the reasoning behind the

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[28] One prophetic warning that seems not to have received serious consideration came from Karl Lott Rankin, ambassador to Nationalist China. In a telegram dispatched to the Department of State on 6 November, Mr. Rankin advised: "Chinese military intelligence forwarded to Washington by the Embassy's service attachés during the past few days lends strong support to the assumption that the Chinese communists plan to throw the book at the United Nations forces in Korea and in addition to step up their pressure in Indochina. Allowance evidently should be made for wishful thinking among the Chinese military, most of whom regard a general conflict as the only means of liberating China from the communists. In the present instance, however, such a caveat still leaves an imposing array of apparently established facts, as well as evidence of sincerity among the best informed Chinese, such as to render quite possible the correctness of their consensus of opinion that all-out action in Korea by the Chinese communists should be expected." Quoted in Rankin's book, *China Assignment* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964), p. 65.

current mission remain valid, but "it would be fatal to weaken the . . . policy of the United Nations to destroy all resisting armed forces in Korea and bring that country into a united and free nation."[29] He considered the existing situation to be satisfactorily covered by the earlier instructions allowing him to judge whether his forces had a reasonable chance of success. He did not claim to have determined the strength of the Chinese in Korea with any precision. On the contrary, he declared that only by advancing could he obtain "an accurate measure of enemy strength."[30] He nevertheless believed that his command could defeat the Chinese forces currently in Korea, and he was certain that his air power could prevent Chinese reinforcements from crossing the Yalu into Korea in any substantial numbers.

Unconvinced themselves that China had decided on full intervention, uncertain about any other purpose of the Chinese entry, and feeling both justified and obligated to accept their field commander's appraisal, the Joint Chiefs of Staff were willing to await clarification of Chinese objectives in Korea before deciding whether to recommend a change in the UNC mission. President Truman approved this position, presented in a meeting of the National Security Council on 9 November. MacArthur could continue toward the border, and the forces and plans for a full resumption of the UNC offensive were ready by Thanksgiving Day.

[29] Rad, C 68572, CINCFE to DA for JCS, 9 Nov 50.
[30] Rad, C 68465, CINCFE to DA for JCS, 7 Nov 50.

CHAPTER II

The Forces and the Plans

Notwithstanding the tendency of U.S. officials to discount a massive Chinese intervention, the entry of Chinese forces into the war ended a retrenchment of UNC forces begun when the complete defeat of the North Korean Army had seemed at hand. The Army halted the infant redeployment of major units from Korea, and Department of Defense and State officials stopped a move to reduce or cancel further contributions of forces from other nations. The Air Force did not return two groups of medium bombers sent back to the United States, but the Navy sharply cut back a redeployment of ships of the line, particularly fast carriers.[1]

Earlier steps that reduced or diverted materiel originally scheduled for shipment from the United States to the Far East also were canceled, as was planning for a roll-up of supplies in the theater. The Army also halted the release of South Korean troops who earlier, under a Korean Augmentation to the United States Army Program (KATUSA), had been incorporated in understrength American ground units as expedient fillers and replacements. Because of a continuing and growing understrength among American ground units, the Army resumed the once-curtailed flow of individual replacements and filler units from the United States at a rate greater than its earlier norm. The individual replacements were a particular boon to divisions, some of which were as much as 30 percent understrength. Army officials planned to ship 40,000 replacements in November and December and estimated that all units in the Far East would reach full strength by March 1951.[2]

The United Nations Command

With the full effect of these restorations yet to be felt, the United Nations Command on 23 November 1950 was a force of some 553,000 men from the Republic of Korea and thirteen members of the United Nations. Ground forces in Korea totaled 423,313 men; air forces based in both Japan and Korea around 55,000; and naval forces, ashore and afloat, about 75,000. The ground forces were predominately South Korean (223,950) and American (178,464). The American contingent included 153,536 Army and 24,928 Ma-

[1] Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, pp. 222–30, 237–39; Robert Frank Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950–1953* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1961), p. 195; James A. Field, Jr., *United States Naval Operations, Korea* (Washington, 1962), pp. 251–56.

[2] Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, pp. 237–39, 295.



KATUSA MEMBER WITH AMERICAN SOLDIER

rine Corps troops.[3] The remainder represented the United Kingdom (11,186), Turkey (5,051), the Philippines (1,349), Thailand (1,181), Australia (1,002), the Netherlands (636), India (326), and Sweden (168). The preponderance of both air and naval forces was American. Supplementing the air strength were forces from the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, the Union of South Africa, and South Korea; reinforcing the naval strength were contingents from South Korea, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, France, New Zealand, the Netherlands, and Thailand.[4]

The theater command lines reaching down to these diverse forces differed in two major respects from the way they had been established during the first month of the war, both changes involving arrangements for controlling and administering ground operations. In July General MacArthur had assigned the Eighth Army to conduct ground operations and to perform communications zone functions while continuing to meet responsibilities in the occupation of Japan. General Walker consequently had been obliged to divide his headquarters, leaving a rear echelon in Yokohama to carry out logistical and occupation duties while he and the remainder of his staff entered Korea to direct the ground campaign.[5] To permit Walker to concentrate on operations in Korea, MacArthur on 24 August had phased out the Eighth Army's rear headquarters and established the Japan Logistical Command, a separate command subordinate to the Far East Command with headquarters in Yokohama. Walker remained responsible for the receipt, storage, and forward movement of supplies in Korea itself, while the logistical command, under Maj. Gen. Walter L. Weible, absorbed the

[3] The Army's total strength was 1,032,613, with 372,519 posted overseas. Thus, less than half of the forces overseas and approximately 15 percent of the total strength had been committed in Korea.

[4] The ground strength is from Summary, ROK and U.N. Ground Forces Strength in Korea, 31 July 1950–31 July 1953, prepared by Program Review and Analysis Division, OCA, 7 Oct 54, and Mono, Hq, FEC, Maj William J. Fox, "Inter-Allied Co-operation During Combat Operations," copy of both in CMH. The air and naval strengths are estimates based on Hq, FEAF, Korean Air War Summary, 25 June 1950–30 June 1951, and Field, *United States Naval Operations, Korea*, p. 253.

[5] During the time that the Eighth Army had forces in both Korea and Japan, its contingent in Korea was designated the Eighth United States Army in Korea (EUSAK). This designation, though appropriate for only a brief period, was not abolished until 19 February 1953.



UNC-FEC HEADQUARTERS, TOKYO

missions the Eighth Army had been performing in Japan.[6]

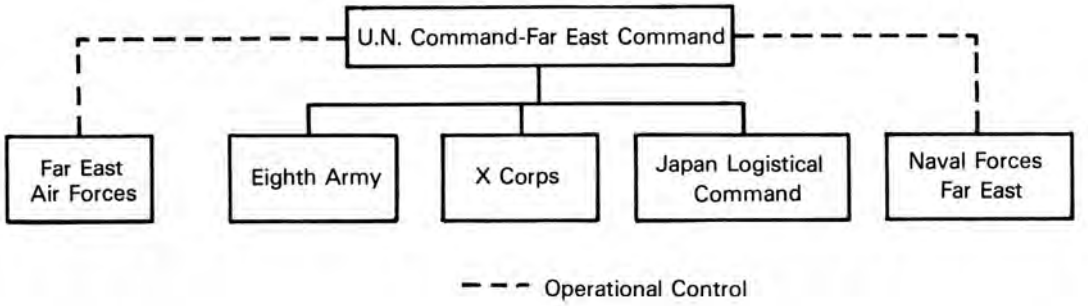
The other change had occurred in September when the separate X Corps under General Almond landed at Inch'on. Until that time, General Walker had commanded or exercised operational control over all ground forces. As of 23 November Walker was responsible for the logistical support of Almond's forces, but otherwise the Eighth Army and the X Corps remained separate commands. The centralized control of ground forces within Korea and their operations thus rested in General MacArthur at theater, or UNC, level in Tokyo. *(Chart 1)*

Ground Forces

The heart of the UNC ground combat strength comprised Eighth Army headquarters, ROK Army headquarters, six corps headquarters, seventeen infantry divisions (including one of U.S. marines), three infantry brigades, two separate infantry regiments (one of U.S. airborne troops and one of ROK marines), and three separate infantry battalions. Among lesser formations were a number of ROK Army security battalions and ROK National Police

[6] Mono, Hq, Eighth Army, "Logistical Problems and Their Solutions," and Mono, Hq, JLC, "Logistical Problems and Their Solutions," copy of both in CMH.

CHART 1—THEATER LINES OF COMMAND FOR OPERATIONS IN KOREA
23 NOVEMBER 1950



battalions, all low-strength units organized primarily for antiguerrilla operations. Also included were a few separate ROK marine battalions, which came under ROK Army control when operating on the mainland but under ROK Navy control when located, as they were most of the time, on offshore islands. Still smaller units included a provisional company of U.S. Rangers, a company of British marine commandos, and a U.S. special operations company—a provisional unit of Army troops originally organized for commando-type operations during the Inch'on landing.[7]

By far the larger portion of the ground strength was vested in the Eighth Army and was located west of the main Taebaek spine, where, in the wake of the drive out of the Pusan Perimeter and the pursuit above the 38th parallel, General Walker's forces had become spread from the port of Pusan northwestward to the Ch'ongch'on River. Walker also had split his headquarters during the autumn offensive, establishing main headquarters in Seoul while he and a small staff operated from a forward command post in P'yongyang.

U.S. combat formations of the Eighth Army included two corps (I and IX), four infantry divisions (1st Cavalry, 2d, 24th, and 25th), the airborne regiment (187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team), and the Ranger company (8213th).[8] Other U.N. forces in Walker's command accounted for the three infantry brigades (1st Turkish Armed Forces Command, 27th British Commonwealth Infantry Brigade, and 29th British Independent Brigade Group) and the three separate infantry battalions (10th Battalion Combat Team, Philippine Expeditionary Force to Korea; 21st Regimental Combat Team, Thailand Expeditionary Force; and Netherlands Detachment, United Nations).[9]

Most of the ROK Army also was under General Walker's control. The ma-

[7] For an account of the unusual activities of this special operations company during the Inch'on-Seoul campaign, see Robert D. Heinl, Jr., *Victory at High Tide: The Inch'on-Seoul Campaign* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1968), pp. 60–61, 79, 145, 186.

[8] The 1st Cavalry was an infantry division retaining its former designation.

[9] The 27th British Infantry, which had arrived in Korea from Hong Kong with only two battalions, had



GENERAL FARRELL

jor combat units included two corps (II and III) and eight divisions (1st, 2d, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, and 11th). To date, the ROK Army headquarters had seldom directed the operations of its combat formations within an assigned sector or zone at the front. The headquarters functioned more as a clearinghouse for instructions issued to ROK corps on line by Eighth Army headquarters and did not enter the command picture at all when an ROK unit was attached to a U.S. headquarters below Eighth Army level. On the other hand, the headquarters did play a normal role under the ROK Army chief of staff, Maj. Gen. Chung Il Kwon, in planning and directing operations in rear-area security missions.

Walker maintained close liaison with South Korean forces through six hundred officers and men constituting the U.S. Military Advisory Group to the Republic of Korea (KMAG). Commanded by Brig. Gen. Francis W. Farrell, this group guided the ROK Army in both training and combat and kept Walker and other American commanders under whom ROK units served informed of South Korean capabilities and activities. General Farrell's headquarters currently was located with that of the ROK Army in Seoul, while the remainder of his command was spread, rather thinly, through the various ROK Army staffs and technical services and among the combat units as far down the chain of command as battalions.[10]

Eighth Army supplies were handled by the 2d Logistical Command, under Brig. Gen. Crump Garvin, and its subordinate 3d Logistical Command, under Brig. Gen. George C. Stewart. As of 23 November the port, depot, and transportation units of the 2d Logistical Command operated in and from the major port and storage facilities at Pusan, while those of the 3d Logistical Command worked in and out of smaller installations in the Inch'on-Seoul and Chinnamp'o-P'yongyang areas. Pusan, the main supply center, was the starting point of three not easily distinguishable but separate supply lines. Through the principal line, that of the United States, flowed the supplies for all American units and, except for a few items, for all attached U.N. units other than those of the British Commonwealth. Commonwealth units main-

been augmented by the attachment of the 3d Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, and 60th Indian Field Ambulance and Surgical Unit, resulting in its redesignation as a commonwealth brigade. Advance parties of infantry battalions due from Canada and France also had joined the Eighth Army by 23 November.

[10] See Major Robert K. Sawyer, *Military Advisors in Korea: KMAG in Peace and War* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1962).

tained their own supply line and, except for perishable foods and petroleum products obtained from American stocks, used only commonwealth supplies and equipment. A supply line for ROK forces constituted the third system, through which passed, for the most part, issues of war materials from the United States. Other supplies for ROK forces came from local sources, but, except for food, only in small amounts because of South Korea's flimsy economy and limited industrial development.[11]

Besides supply functions, the two logistical commands handled the confinement of prisoners of war, currently at camps in Pusan, Inch'on, and P'yongyang holding 130,921 captives. The 2d Logistical Command also operated the U.N. Reception Center at Taegu, sixty miles northwest of Pusan, where arriving UNC contingents received any required clothing, equipment, and training with U.S. Army gear before joining combat operations.

Also operating as part of the 2d Logistical Command was Sweden's contribution to the U.N. Command, a 400-bed Red Cross field hospital. The 160 civilians on the hospital staff had received assimilated military ranks so as to be "respected and protected" as provided in the Geneva Conventions of 1949.[12] Although organized as a mobile evacuation hospital, it had been augmented by a U.S. Army medical administrative detachment and had become a fixed installation in Pusan handling not only military but also civilian patients when the work load permitted.

Dealing with civilians on a larger scale was a command of some three hundred officers and enlisted men, the U.N. Public Health and Welfare Detachment.[13] Civil assistance teams of the command, using foreign aid supplies, worked throughout the Eighth Army area to prevent disease, starvation, and unrest among the civil population. Theirs was essentially a relief mission, but some team activity, such as assisting the movement of refugees, also was designed to prevent civilians from interfering with military operations.

Units with the separate X Corps in northeastern Korea included the ROK I Corps taken over from the Eighth Army in late October after General Almond's forces landed at Wonsan, three American divisions (3d, 7th, and 1st Marine), two ROK divisions (3d and Capital), the ROK marine regiment (1st Korean Marine Corps), the British commando company (41st Independent Commando, Royal Marines), and the American Special Operations Company. General Almond also controlled the U.S. Army's 2d Special Engineer Brigade, which handled port operations at Hungnam, fifty miles north of Wonsan, where most of the X Corps' seaborne supplies, either transshipped from Pusan or shipped directly from Japan, arrived. Ten miles inland from Hungnam, Almond had established X Corps headquarters in the city of Hamhung. *(Chart 2)*

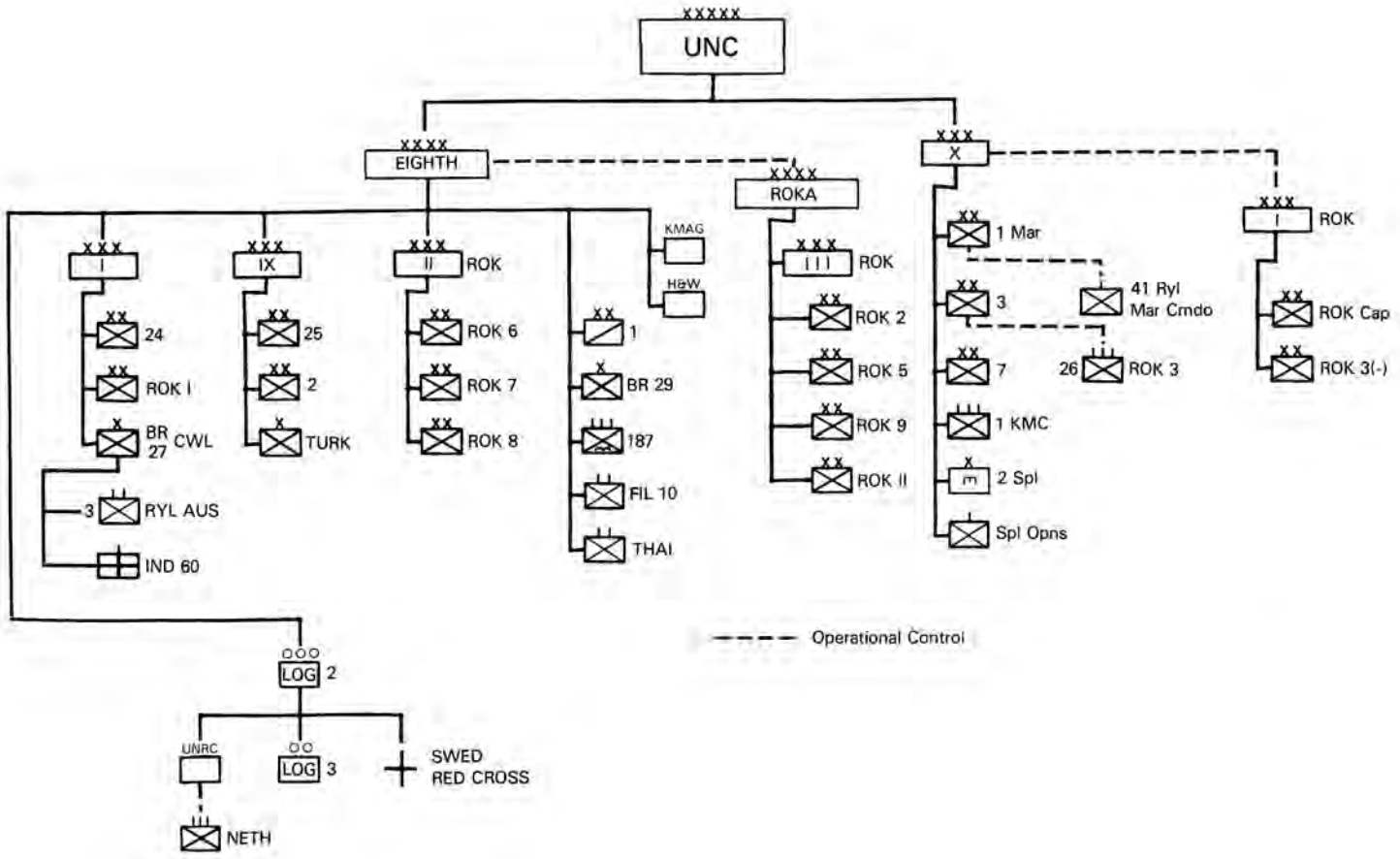
The American predominance in operations was nowhere more evident than in the organization and equipment

[11] See Eighth Army, "Logistical Problems and Their Solutions."

[12] The conventions provide certain protections for military medical personnel in combat areas and offer the same to Red Cross members if they are "subject to military laws and regulations."

[13] In January 1951 this detachment would become the U.N. Civil Assistance Command, Korea.

CHART 2—ORGANIZATION OF UNC GROUND FORCES IN KOREA
23 NOVEMBER 1950



of the assorted ground forces assembled under U.S. command. ROK formations and, except for the British Commonwealth forces, all U.N. units were structured under modified U.S. Army tables of organization, and all of their weapons and almost all of their other equipment and supplies were of American manufacture.[14]

As a result of revised tables of organization and equipment, the structure of U.S. divisions was distinctly different in many respects from that of their World War II counterparts. The modifications affected every unit level from squad upward; the latest change, to become effective on 29 November 1950, set the authorized war strength of an infantry division at 18,855, more than 4,000 greater than that of a World War II division. A comparable increase in organic firepower came largely from an increase in the number of field artillery pieces and the addition of tanks, antiaircraft artillery, and heavy mortars that previously had not been included in a division's own arsenal.[15]

The weapons being used in Korea, as well as the vehicles and other equipment, were in the main the same models and types used during World War II. Large numbers were the very same weapons. The .30-caliber M1 rifle, .30-caliber Browning automatic rifle, and light and heavy .30-caliber Browning machine guns remained basic infantry weapons. Continuing in use were Colt .45-caliber pistols, .30-caliber carbines, .45-caliber Thompson and M3 submachine guns, .50-caliber Browning machine guns, and 60-mm., 81-mm., and 4.2-inch mortars (but a new model of the 4.2 with considerably greater range). Although 2.36-inch rocket launchers remained standard weapons, they were being supplanted by a new and more powerful 3.5-inch version. Virtually new were 57-mm. and 75-mm. recoilless rifles tested but used very little during the last few months of World War II.

The tank units assigned to infantry divisions were equipped with light M24 Chaffee, medium M4A3 Sherman, and heavy M26 Pershing tanks, all World War II models, and the M46 Patton, a modified version of the Pershing introduced in 1948. New tank models were being developed, but none would reach Korea in time to play a combat role. British tanks in use included the World War II vintage Churchill and a new 52-ton Centurion.

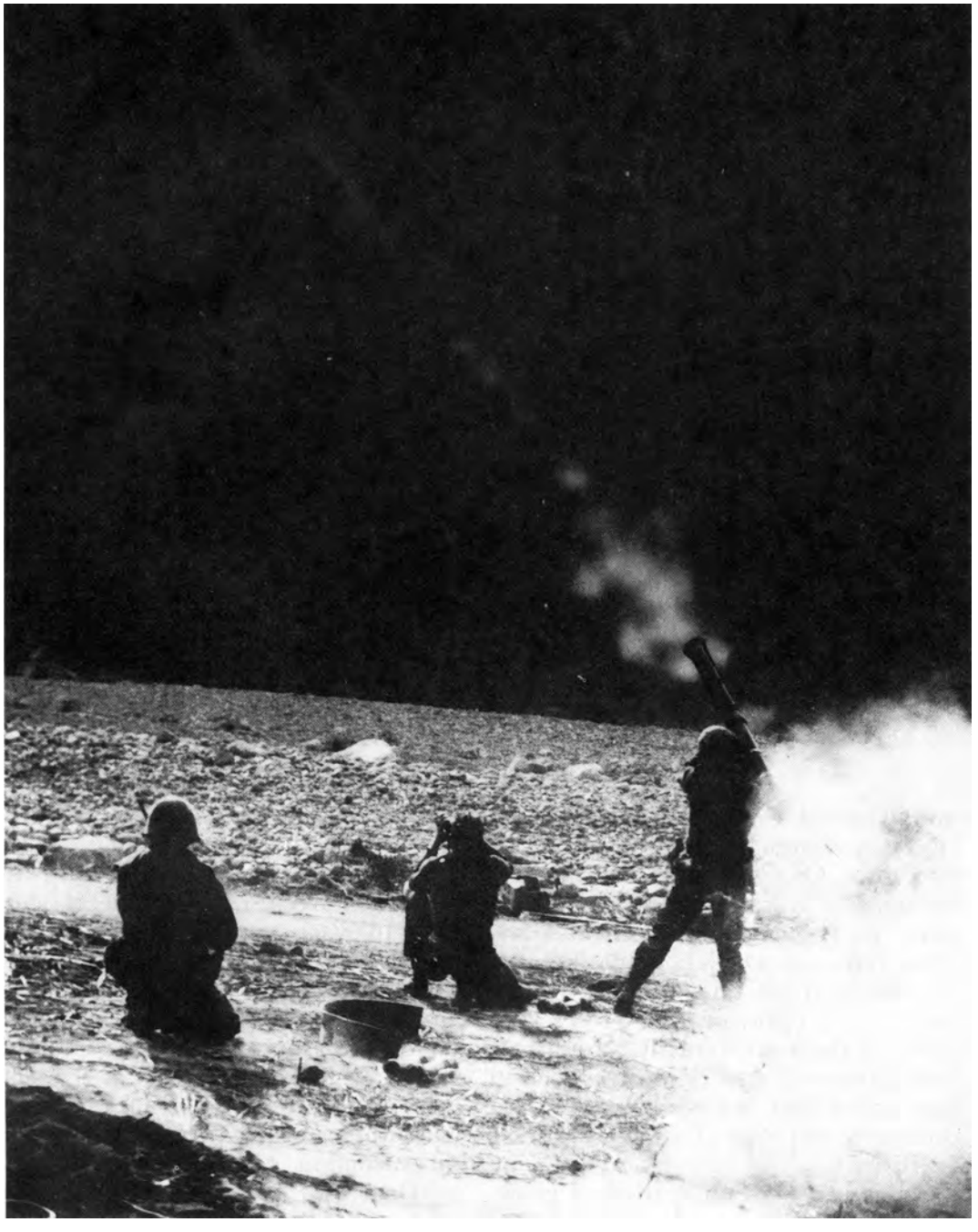
The basic divisional field artillery weapons continued to be the 105-mm. and 155-mm. howitzers, but now with six tubes in each battery instead of four as in World War II, an increase that raised a division's total to fifty-four 105-mm. and eighteen 155-mm. pieces. Nondivisional battalions in Korea also were equipped with these weapons and with 155-mm. guns and 8-inch howitzers. Except for the single 8-inch unit in Korea, their batteries, too, had six tubes each.

The antiaircraft battalion now organic to division artillery was equipped with twin 40-mm. guns and quad .50-caliber machine guns, all self-propelled. In addition to the same weapons, a few

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[14] See Fox, "Inter-Allied Co-operation During Combat Operations."

[15] For accounts of the development of postwar tables and the resulting changes in units, see John K. Mahon and Romana Danysh, *Infantry, Part I: Regular Army* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1972), a volume in the ARMY LINEAGE SERIES, pp. 70–87; and MS, John B. Wilson, Divisions and Separate Brigades, also to be in the same series, CMH files.



THE 3.5-INCH ROCKET LAUNCHER, *a new ground weapon.*



THE 57-MM. RECOILLESS RIFLE

nondivisional antiaircraft artillery battalions in Korea were armed with 90-mm. guns. Of significant benefit to the divisions in Korea was the virtual absence of enemy air attacks on UNC ground troops, which permitted extensive use of divisional antiaircraft weapons in a ground support role. The value of these weapons in support of both offensive and defensive ground operations had been well established during World War II and was quickly reaffirmed.

An operational innovation of growing importance was the use of helicopters as ambulances to evacuate seriously wounded men from the front. This practice had started in July 1950 with occasional requests from ground units to the 3d Air Rescue Squadron of the Fifth Air Force for the help of Sikorsky H–5s in evacuating critically wounded men from forward aid stations. An increasing demand for such assistance and the success of the squadron in safely bringing back wounded who might not have survived a slow, rough overland move led to the Army's formal adoption of helicopters for medical evacuation. The Army's 2d Helicopter Detachment, the first of four such units scheduled for deployment to Korea, arrived on 22 November. Following a two-month training period to



THE 75-MM. RECOILLESS RIFLE

became familiar with its Bell H–13 craft and the Korean terrain, the unit was to become operational as an attachment to the 8055th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital.

The mobile army surgical hospital, or MASH, as it was instantly and permanently dubbed, also was a new kind of organization conceived soon after World War II, mainly as a way of bringing emergency lifesaving surgery closer to critically wounded men. The concept called for placing and keeping a sixty-bed, truck-borne MASH in a forward location just out of enemy artillery range in support of each division. Only four of the mobile units were in Korea, not enough to place one in support of each division; and, because of a shortage of evacuation hospitals, each MASH had been enlarged to 150 beds and was handling more than just surgery patients. But the early treatment of wounded at a MASH located only minutes from the battlefield, combined with the swift, comfortable delivery of seriously hurt men by helicopter, had helped to lower the fatality rate for the Army's wounded. The rate had been 4.5 percent during World War II. In Korea, it would eventually reach a new low of 2.5 percent.[16]

[16] The rates cited are from Frank A. Reister, *Battle Casualties and Medical Statistics: U.S. Army Experience in the Korean War* (Washington: Department of the Army, Office of the Surgeon General), pp. 15–16.



THE M46 PATTON TANK

Air Forces

For air operations in Korea, it had been necessary at the beginning of hostilities to make expedient and expeditious changes in Far East Air Forces dispositions, equipment, and organization. General Stratemeyer's principal prewar mission of maintaining an air defense of his theater had compelled the deployment of subordinate air commands over a wide area. Only the Fifth Air Force and the Far East Air Materiel Command, which handled air logistics throughout the theater, had been based in Japan. To create a force capable of operations in Korea, General Stratemeyer had found it necessary to pull in units from distant theater locations and adjust the locations of some units within Japan to bring them within range of the battle area. Additional forces and equipment also had had to be requisitioned from the United States.

The change in equipment had stemmed from a recent conversion of Far East Air Forces fighter units from F–51 Mustangs to F–80C Shooting Stars, short-range jet interceptors not meant to be flown at low altitudes in support of ground operations. The U.S. Air Force inventory included the F–84E Thunderjet that was adaptable to air-ground operations, but its use required better airfields than those existing in



THE SIKORSKY H–5 HELICOPTER

Japan and Korea. The immediate alternative had been to return to the F–51 with its longer range and its capacity for low-level missions and operations from short and rough fields. In striking a balance to meet all air requirements, Stratemeyer had reconverted half of his F–80C squadrons to F–51s. As of 23 November the F–80Cs and F–51s remained the basic fighter aircraft, but the Far East Air Forces were in the process of importing both F–84Es and the high performance F–86A Sabres from the United States and were improving airfields in Japan and Korea to handle them.

In organizational changes, two provisional commands subordinated to the Far East Air Forces had been established, Bomber Command under Maj. Gen. Emmett O'Donnell, Jr., to handle deep interdiction and strategic bombing operations and Combat Cargo Command under Maj. Gen. William H. Tunner to lift troops and supplies.[17] Bomber Command currently possessed ninety-five B–29s, now classed as medium bombers, and included the 19th and 307th Bombardment Groups based at Kadena Air Base on Okinawa and the 98th Bombardment Group and 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron at

[17] General O'Donnell was on temporary duty from his assignment as commander of the Fifteenth Air Force, Strategic Air Command.



THE F7F TIGERCAT

Yokota, Japan. Combat Cargo Command comprised four carrier groups, all based in Japan, equipped with C–46, C–47, C–54, and C–119 aircraft. General Tunner also controlled the operations of a U.S. Marine squadron flying R5Ds.[18]

Tactical air operations were the province of the Fifth Air Force under Maj. Gen. Earle E. Partridge. By 23 November General Partridge had set up headquarters in Seoul adjacent to the main headquarters of the Eighth Army, including the Joint Operations Center and Tactical Air Control Center, which arranged and dispatched air sorties. Fifth Air Force units included two light bomber wings, each with three squadrons of B–26s based in Japan, and five fighter wings located on Korean fields. The fighter wings included six squadrons of F–80Cs and eight squadrons and a separate flight of F–51s.[19] The F–80C jets operated from Kimpo Airfield west of Seoul and a field at Taegu; the F–51s flew from North Korean fields, five squadrons and the separate flight based on P'yongyang and P'yŏngyang East Airfields behind the Eighth Army, three squadrons stationed at Yonp'o Airfield near Hungnam behind the X Corps. Other Fifth Air Force units included a squadron of F–82 all-weather fighters based in Japan but used sparingly over Korea because the Air Force possessed so few and supply support for them was limited. For reconnaissance missions, General Partridge had two photo squadrons (RF–80 and RB–26) at the Taegu field and a visual squadron (RF–51) in Japan. His remaining unit was a squadron of T–6 Mosquitoes based at P'yongyang East Airfield for the control of close support sorties.[20]

Additional UNC air strength included the U.S. 1st Marine Aircraft

[18] Canada also had allocated a transport squadron to support the U.N. Command. Its Royal Canadian Air Force Transport Squadron No. 426 equipped with North Star planes flew regularly scheduled flights between McCord Air Force Base, Washington, and Haneda Airport in Tokyo. Additional transports for flights within the theater would become available on 26 November upon the arrival from Greece of the Royal Hellenic Air Force Flight No. 13 with six Dakota aircraft.

[19] Australia and South Africa had contributed two of the F–51 units, the 77 Royal Australian Air Force Squadron and 2d South African Air Force Squadron. The separate flight belonged to the fledgling ROK Air Force. Also serving with the Fifth Air Force were twenty fighter pilots and a number of technicians from Canada.

[20] The above information on UNC air forces is based on Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*; Hq, FEAF, Korean Air War Summary, 25 Jun 50–30 Jun 51; and Lt. Col. Herbert Fairlie Wood, *Strange Battleground* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1966), pp. 14, 179.



A MASH NURSE



(Top to bottom) THE F–80C SHOOTING STAR, F–84E THUNDERJET, AND F–86A SABREJET

Wing with four squadrons of F4U Corsairs and two squadrons of F7F Tigercat night fighters based on Wonsan and Yonp'o Airfields behind the X Corps and on an escort carrier off the east coast, and two U.S. Navy air groups aboard carriers, each with five squadrons, equipped with F4Us, F9F Pantherjets, and AD Skyraiders. Naval air units also included Fleet Air Wing Six, which, with three U.S. squadrons of Neptunes and Mariners and two Royal Air Force squadrons of Sunderlands, carried out Naval Forces, Far East, air patrol operations over Japanese and Korean waters.[21]

Given the varied sources of UNC air strength, effective air operations in Korea had required some form of centralized control. General Stratemeyer during the first days of the war had sought operational control of all aviation operating from Japan or over Korea except that employed in purely naval tasks, such as the patrolling by Fleet Air Wing Six. Admiral Joy had resisted giving over that much control of his aircraft and carriers, judging that doing so could damage his command's ability to meet other naval responsibilities. In compromise, General MacArthur had given Stratemeyer "coordination control," a lesser degree of authority that centralized the conduct of air operations in Stratemeyer without giving him direct control of Navy and Marine air units. Stratemeyer, in turn, had delegated the coordination of close support operations to the Fifth Air Force commander, General Partridge. Although differences arose between the air and naval commands over the exact meaning of coordination control, the system was still in use in late November.[22] *(Chart 3)*



THE F9F PANTHERJET

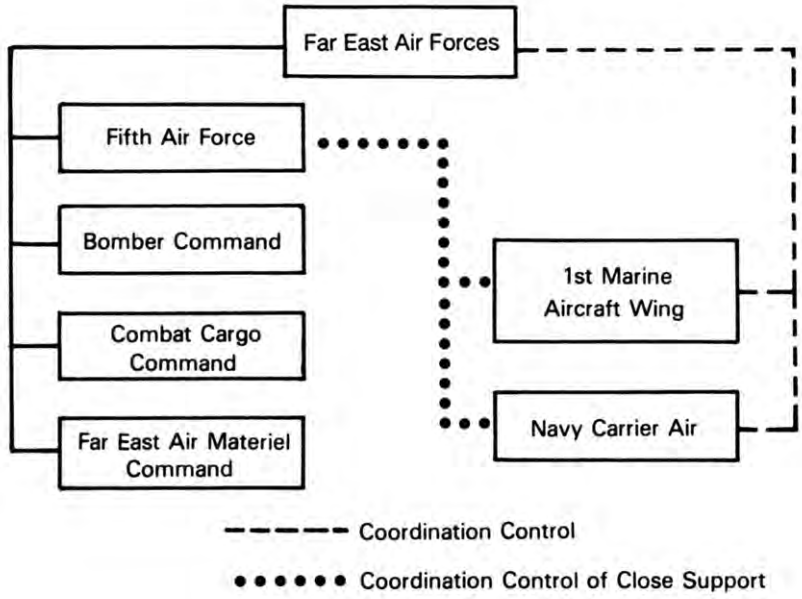
Naval Forces

UNC naval units currently included the U.S. Seventh Fleet and three separate task forces. Task Force 96, the single, small combat force available to Admiral Joy at the opening of hostilities, now included Fleet Air Wing Six, an escort carrier group, a submarine group, and a service group located in Japan to handle Naval Forces, Far East, logistical functions in port. The task

[21] Field, *United States Naval Operations, Korea*, p. 276; Commander Malcolm W. Cagle and Commander Frank A. Manson, *The Sea War in Korea* (Annapolis: United States Naval Institute, 1957), pp. 374–77, 499, 520–22. The British units were RAF Squadrons 88 and 209.

[22] Field, *United States Naval Operations, Korea*, p. 388; Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*.

CHART 3—ORGANIZATION FOR UNC AIR OPERATIONS IN KOREA
23 NOVEMBER 1950



force also had a number of Japanese-manned and -supported freighters and landing ships of the Shipping Control Administration, Japan, that were employed in the intra-area lift of troops and supplies.[23] Joy himself was the task force commander. From a nucleus of five ships, Task Force 90 commanded by Rear Adm. James H. Doyle had become a full-fledged amphibious force.[24] So far in the war, Admiral Doyle's force had participated in three major landings—at P'ohang-dong, Inch'on, and Wonsan—and was currently posted in both Japanese and Korean waters. Task Force 95, under Rear Adm. Allen E. Smith, constituted the U.N. Blockading and Escort Force. Incorporated with the U.S. contingent of the force were all line ships furnished by other U.N. countries and South Korea. To enforce the blockade of the Korean coast and to perform bombardment and minesweeping assignments, Admiral Smith's force was deployed in both the Yellow Sea washing Korea on the west and the Sea of Japan on the east.[25]

Before the outbreak of hostilities, the Seventh Fleet, commanded by Vice Adm. Arthur D. Struble, had been based in the Philippines. Its operations at that time were under the control of Adm. Arthur E. Radford, Commander

[23] On 25 June 1950, Joy's line ships had consisted of 1 antiaircraft light cruiser, 4 destroyers, 1 frigate (Australian), and 1 submarine.

[24] The five original vessels were a command ship, attack transport, attack cargo ship, LST, and fleet tug.

[25] Another assignment, the escort of convoys between Japan and Korea, was canceled early in the war after it became obvious that the North Koreans would make no effort against shipping.



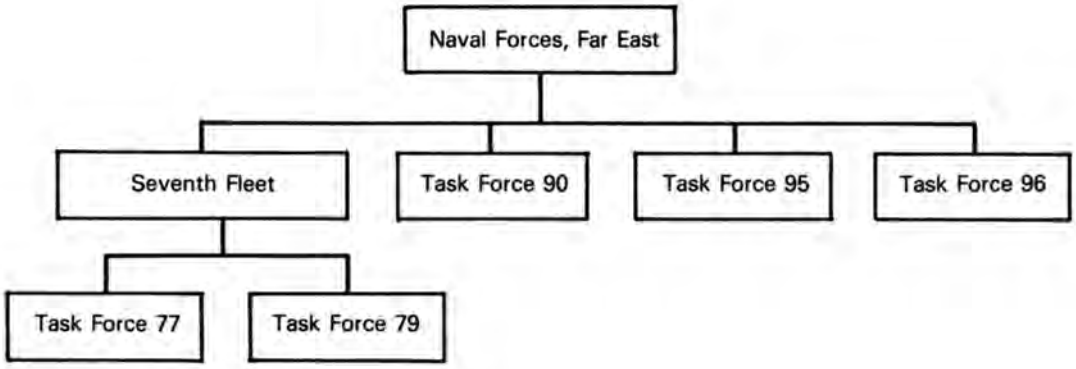
THE USS LEYTE BEING REFUELED AT SEA

in Chief, Pacific Fleet, but standing orders passed control to Admiral Joy whenever the Seventh Fleet operated in Japanese waters or in the event of an emergency. When these orders went into effect after the war started, the Seventh Fleet, at the direction of President Truman, was assigned both to conduct combat operations in Korean waters and to operate in the Formosa area where its presence and patrolling could discourage the Chinese on the mainland and the Nationalists on the island from attacking each other and thus prevent a widening of hostilities.

As of 23 November Fleet Air Wing One, headquartered on Okinawa, and surface ships constituting Task Force 72 were handling the Formosa patrol. Admiral Struble himself and two task forces were in the immediate battle area. Task Force 77, a fast carrier force commanded by Rear Adm. Edward C. Ewen, was deployed off the eastern Korean coast in the Sea of Japan. Its two carriers, the *Leyte* and *Philippine Sea*, each carried an air group of five squadrons and, together, were operating with approximately a hundred fifty planes. Underway replenishment for Ewen's ships was provided by a logistical support force, Task Force 79.[26] (*Chart 4*)

[26] The information on UNC naval forces is based on Field, *United States Naval Operations, Korea*; Cagle and Manson, *The Sea War in Korea*.

CHART 4—ORGANIZATION FOR UNC NAVAL OPERATIONS IN KOREA
23 NOVEMBER 1950



The UNC Plan of Advance

With these forces at his disposal, General MacArthur planned to continue operations by combining his overland advance with air attacks on the principal Yalu River bridges to shut off Chinese reinforcement from Manchuria. He also planned to intensify air attacks opened during the first week of November on North Korean towns judged to be important centers for enemy supply and communications.

Against the earlier attacks on towns deep in northwestern Korea, enemy fighter pilots, some flying Russian-built MIG–15 jets, had adopted a special countermeasure, rising from nearby Manchurian fields and climbing to superior altitudes before crossing the border, then making diving attacks on UNC planes and darting back to sanctuary above the Yalu.[27] On 7 November, as MacArthur began to increase air operations in the northwest, he asked the Joint Chiefs of Staff for instructions on how to deal with the enemy hit-and-run tactics. There was historical and legal precedent under which UNC pilots, once engaged by enemy fliers over North Korea, could continue the air battle even though maneuvers carried them into the air space above Manchuria. The Joint Chiefs, Secretary of Defense Marshall, Secretary of State Acheson, and President Truman all favored adopting this course, commonly referred to as "hot pursuit," since it could not be construed, at least according to precedent, as a violation of Manchurian territory. They dropped the idea, however, after encountering strong objections from officials of other nations with forces in Korea.[28]

The Washington reaction to MacArthur's plan to bomb the Yalu bridges followed an opposite sequence. Because bridge attacks at the border might result in inadvertent bombing of Man-

[27] The first MIG–15 appeared over northwestern Korea on 1 November. The first all-jet air battle in history occurred on 8 November when Lt. Russell J. Brown, U.S. Air Force, flying an F–80, shot down a MIG–15 over Sinuiju. In another first, the initial use of incendiary bombs in the war occurred on 4 November when B–29s of the 98th Group attacked the city of Ch'ongjin in northeastern Korea.

[28] Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, pp. 247–50; Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, pp. 210–11.

churian territory, thus undermining forthcoming endeavors to assure China that the northern border of Korea was the extent of UNC interest and perhaps triggering a crisis expanding the war, President Truman ordered the air plan canceled. But MacArthur won a reversal from the president by protesting that unopposed Chinese troop and materiel movements across the Yalu bridges threatened to destroy his command. On 8 and 9 November he opened air attacks on the Yalu crossings at Sinuiju, Ch'ongsongjin, Namsan-ni, Manp'ojin, and Hyesanjin. So as not to violate Manchurian territory, bombing runs were made against only the first overwater spans on the Korean side of the river.[29]

For the ground advance, General MacArthur initially let stand his order of 24 October allowing General Walker and General Almond each to proceed toward the border independently. In the northeast, where Chinese had resisted only the X Corps' west flank forces before breaking contact on 6 November, Almond resumed his advance with almost no perceptible pause, pushing four divisions over three widely separated axes. Inland on the corps left, the U.S. 1st Marine Division climbed toward the Changjin Reservoir atop the Taebaek Mountains. The U.S. 7th Infantry Division moved northward over the next arterial road to the east leading from Pukch'ong near the coast to Hyesanjin on the Yalu. On the corps right, the South Korean Capital and 3d Divisions of the ROK I Corps followed the coastal road toward the Tumen River, which for eleven miles upstream from its mouth marks the border between Korea and the Soviet Union.[30]

General Walker laid out a new plan of advance on 6 November but delayed executing it while he strengthened his attack force and supplies. In pursuit of North Korean Army remnants, the Eighth Army had moved through western North Korea with two corps and six divisions. Fully expecting to meet Chinese forces when he again moved north, Walker intended to increase his force to three corps, eight divisions, and three brigades. By 6 November he had started the additional units forward and planned to reopen his advance around the 15th provided he could arrange adequate logistical support by that date.[31]

Supply requirements had plagued Walker from the time he crossed the 38th parallel. For the initial advance into North Korea, the Eighth Army was to have received supplies through Inch'on, but the port had been tied up during the first half of October by the X Corps' outloading for Wonsan. Walker, as a result, had sent forces across the parallel with only a marginal store of provisions.[32]

Replenishing these small stocks had been another problem. Battle-damaged rail lines had not been repaired beyond the Pusan Perimeter at the time of the

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[29] Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, pp. 241–46; Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, pp. 209–13.

[30] X Corps operations between 26 October and 26 November 1950 are covered in Appleman, *South to the Naktong*, chs. XXXVIII and XXXIX.

[31] Eighth Army Opn Plan 14, 6 Nov 50; Memo, Gen Walker for CinC, FEC, 6 Nov 50; Rad, GX 27681 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA et al., 13 Nov 50.

[32] Memo, Gen Walker for CinC, FEC, 6 Nov 50; Eighth Army G4 SS Rpt, 6 Nov 50.

crossing, and at the last week of October train service on the main line had been restored no farther than the Imjin River, thirty miles above Seoul and a hundred fifty miles below the Eighth Army front on the Ch'ongch'on River. Even then, Walker's engineers had pieced together only a single pair of rails out of a double track system, which, together with the poor condition of the bridges, sharply limited the line's capacity. This restriction had forced extremely heavy supply traffic onto the roads. Three-fourths of the Eighth Army's trucks had operated around the clock out of Pusan and Inch'on and from railheads and airheads to keep Walker's forces moving. This support had threatened to wear out before the Eighth Army reached the Ch'ongch'on because of too many deadlined vehicles and too few repair parts. In fact, only through the addition of a daily airlift of 1,000 tons from Kimpo Airfield to P'yongyang had the Eighth Army been able to support its advance from the North Korean capital to the Ch'ongch'on.[33]

Far too few supplies were stockpiled at the front on 6 November to support the advance; petroleum products and ammunition were especially short, the latter amounting only to a single day of fire. With winter approaching, Walker also needed to equip his troops with heavier clothing. In addition to building up stocks in forward areas, he faced the necessity of accelerating the northward flow of resupply. His logistics officer, Col. Albert K. Stebbins, estimated that a daily flow of at least 4,000 tons was needed to sustain a three-corps offensive. This rate could be established only by repairing the main rail line from the existing railhead at the south bank of the Imjin River into P'yongyang and by opening the west coast port of Chinnamp'o on the estuary of the Taedong River twenty-five miles southwest of P'yongyang.[34]

The time needed to meet these requirements, in particular to complete railroad bridge repairs and to sweep away mines strewn by the North Koreans at Chinnamp'o, forced Walker to drop his 15 November target date. By the 17th, however, five trains were running about a hundred cars with 2,000 tons of supplies into P'yongyang daily, and at Chinnamp'o the daily discharge was reaching upwards of 1,500 tons. With his transportation system moving into higher gear, Walker was able to set the 24th as the date for reopening his offensive.[35]

During the time used to arrange adequate logistical support, Walker maintained some contact with enemy forces through patrolling and short advances. He mounted the advances with the I Corps and ROK II Corps, keeping the IX Corps, which only recently had come forward, to his right rear to secure and refuse the Eighth Army's east flank. Enemy resistance initially ranged from little or none in the west to sharp local counterattacks in the rougher ground to the east, then subsided everywhere after 12 November. Later, in final preparation for the attack, Walker inserted

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.; Appleman, *South to the Naktong*, p. 771.

[35] Eighth Army G4 SS Rpts, 7–18 Nov 50; Eighth Army Trans SS Rpts, 7–18 Nov 50; Rad, GX 27880 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA et al., 17 Nov 50; Rad, GX 50025 KGLX, CG Eighth Army to CINCFE, 22 Nov 50.

the IX Corps in the center of his line so that the I, IX, and ROK II Corps were deployed west to east along a seventy-mile front. As the Eighth Army was disposed on the eve of the renewed advance, the Ch'ongch'on River flowing southwestward into the Yellow Sea split the army position into two nearly equal parts. *(Map 3)* The western half formed a bridgehead above the Ch'ongch'on, arching from the mouth of the river to a depth of ten miles and then returning to the Ch'ongch'on some thirty-five miles upstream. The remainder stretched another thirty-five miles almost due east into the western watershed of the Taebaek Mountains.[36]

The Eighth Army Plan

Walker meanwhile revised his attack plan to include more specific instructions for a coordinated advance. He originally had directed his forces to "coordinate their advance with elements on flanks," otherwise giving them only the general instruction to advance to the northern border in zone. In revision, he drew clearly defined phase lines and restricted to himself the authority to move beyond each.[37] This would keep his forces from dangling tenuously at the ends of their supply lines and from inviting ambush by moving independently into enemy territory as they had done during the October pursuit.

In view of the terrain north of the Eighth Army, close coordination would not be easy. Except for the flats and low hills of the lower Ch'ongch'on valley and a slim band of lowlands on the west coast, rough mountains filled the space between the army front and the northern border. Extremely dissected ridges trended northwestward above the western half of the army line, and the western watershed of the Taebaeks spread in dendritic patterns beyond the Eighth Army positions in the east. Six roads offered the main axes of movement through this ground. On the extreme west, Korea's main arterial road, Route 1, with the main rail line alongside, moved from Sinanju on the Ch'ongch'on through the coastal lowland to Sinuiju on the Yalu opposite An-tung, Manchuria. Another arterial road, with a single-track rail line paralleling it, ran northeastward from Sinanju along the upstream trace of the Ch'ongch'on through the towns of Anju, Kunu-ri, Huich'on, and Kanggye, then turned northwest to Manp'ojin on the border. The other roads passed northwestward through mountain corridors between these two routes.

Walker intended that his three corps advance abreast over all six axes. The I and IX Corps initially were to move to a phase line some twenty miles out, which would give them a road to assist lateral communication and would get them into the mountain corridors leading to the border. On the right, the ROK II Corps was to advance through the mountains east of the Ch'ongch'on valley road to a phase line arching from Huich'on east and southeast to the army boundary at the village of Inch'o-ri. The South Koreans were to contact

[36] Rad, GX 27333 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA et al., 7 Nov 50; Rad, GX 27470 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA et al., 9 Nov 50; Rad, GX 27914 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA et al., 18 Nov 50; Eighth Army WD, Sum, Nov 50; Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, 23–24 Nov 50.

[37] Eighth Army Opn Plan 14, 6 Nov 50, Opn Plan 15, 14 Nov 50, and Opn Plan 16, 23 Nov 50.


THE BATTLEFRONT
23 November 1950
High Ground Above 200 Meters
0
50 MILES
CHINA
KOREA
Tumen R
Lin-chiang
Ch'ongjin
NK VI CORPS
Hyesanjin
Hapsu
Kapsan
Kilchu
MANCHURIA
Yalu R
Manp'ojin
Changjin R
Kanggye
Changjin
P'ungsan
Songjin
Mup'yong-ni
ARMY GROUP
PUJON RES
CHANGJIN RES
IX
Yudam-ni
Hagaru-ri
Namsan-ni
Ch'ongsongjin
Tanch'on
Iwon
Pukch'ang
Huich'on
An-tung
Sinuiju
Kusong
Onjong
Unsan
Ch'ongch'on R
Inch'o-ri
Taedong R
Hamhung
Sonch'on
T'aech'on
XIII ARMY GROUP
Chongju
Kunu-ri
Hungnam
SEA OF JAPAN
Anju
Sinanju
EIGHTH XXXX XXX X
YELLOW SEA
Wonsan
Yangdok
P'YONGYANG

MAP 3

General Almond's rear units in the vicinity of Inch'o-ri and thus, nominally at least, close a worrisome forty-mile gap—holding the spine and highest watershed ridges of the northern Taebaeks—that currently existed, between the Eighth Army and X Corps. Meanwhile, as Walker issued his final instructions, Far East Air Forces pilots, under General MacArthur's orders, flew night and day reconnaissance missions over the gap area but sighted no enemy forces.[38]

A Change in X Corps Plans

By 23 November the X Corps' assault divisions had advanced against spotty resistance to separated positions spread over a space of 150 air miles. The 1st Marine Division held the town of Hagaru-ri at the lower end of the Changjin Reservoir. Seventy miles to the northeast, the 7th Division occupied Hyesanjin on the Yalu. Thirty miles east and slightly south of Hyesanjin, the ROK 3d Division had moved inland to the town of Hapsu; and some forty miles northeast of Hapsu, the ROK Capital Division was at the outskirts of Ch'ongjin on the coast.

General Almond had given his divisions their border objectives on 11 November. The 1st Marine Division was to occupy a forty-mile stretch of the lower Yalu River bank due north of the Changjin Reservoir; the 7th Division was to hold the region between Hyesanjin and Hapsu; the two divisions of the ROK I Corps were to clear the remaining ground to the east. General MacArthur, however, chose to revive the concept formulated but not used in October of sending X Corps forces westward toward the Eighth Army. Since the UNC front slanted across the peninsula with the Eighth Army holding the more southerly portion of the tilted line, a westward attack by Almond's forces would place them deep in the enemy's rear, giving them an excellent opportunity to ease the Eighth Army's progress.[39]

Almond initially proposed that he could best help the Eighth Army by continuing northward and then, if feasible, by attacking west from some point above the Changjin Reservoir. This proposal fairly coincided with what MacArthur had in mind. On 15 November he instructed Almond to open an attack to the west after his inland flank forces reached the town of Changjin, twenty-five miles north of the reservoir. Thirty miles west of Changjin lay Kanggye and a junction with the arterial road and rail line connecting Manp'ojin and Huich'on. The road and track obviously served as enemy supply routes, and it was MacArthur's intention that the X Corps' westward attack would cut them.[40]

[38] Ibid.; Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, p. 272.

[39] X Corps Opn 0 6, 11 Nov 50; Ltr, Gen Wright to Gen Almond, 10 Nov 50. In reviewing the above discussion of planning for the X Corps' attack to the west, General Matthew B. Ridgway commented: "I find it amazing that highly trained professionals with extensive combat experience could have approved and tried to execute the tactial plan of operations for the X Corps in northeast Korea in November 1950. It appears like a pure Map Exercise put on by amateurs, appealing in theory, but utterly ignoring the reality of a huge mountainous terrain, largely devoid of terrestrial communications, and ordered for execution in the face of a fast approaching sub-arctic winter." Ridgway, MS review comments, 27 Feb 85.

[40] Ltr, Gen Almond to Gen Wright, 15 Nov 50; Rad, CX 69009, CINCFE to CG X Corps, 15 Nov 50.

Apprehensive, after further consideration, that the supply line of the attack force would become precariously extended in any drive westward from a point as far north as Changjin town, Almond offered the alternative of an attack over the road leading into the Eighth Army zone from Yudam-ni at the western edge of the Changjin Reservoir. The enemy supply routes were to be cut at the village of Mup'yong-ni, fifty-five miles west of Yudam-ni and forty miles north of Huich'on. Almond intended that the 1st Marine Division make the westward effort into Mup'yong-ni and then press an attack northwestward to the Yalu, pinching out in the process the ROK II Corps on the Eighth Army right. MacArthur agreed to the change and instructed Almond to begin the attack as soon as possible.[41]

Almond set the 27th as the opening date. The 7th Division meanwhile was to expand its zone westward, placing forces on the east side of the Changjin Reservoir for an advance to the Yalu through the zone previously assigned to the marines. The ROK I Corps was to continue to the border from Hapsu and Ch'ongjin while Almond's remaining major units, the U.S. 3d Division and 1st Korean Marine Corps Regiment, secured the corps rear area between Wonsan and Hungnam.[42]

The Air Plan

Believing that the Eighth Army would encounter heaviest resistance in the ground bordering the Ch'ongch'on valley in the center of its zone, General Walker asked the Fifth Air Force to give that region priority for close support. He wanted second priority given to his inland flank, which was held insecurely by South Korean forces, and some attention given to the west coast area, although he expected opposition there to be light.[43]

In line with these priorities, the Joint Operations Center arranged 120 sorties for the Eighth Army's opening advance, these and others that might be requested during the day to be flown by the Fifth Air Force squadrons based in western Korea. General Partridge allotted the Fifth Air Force and Marine squadrons in northeastern Korea to the support of the X Corps. The Navy squadrons aboard the *Leyte* and *Philippine Sea* meanwhile were to fly interdiction missions in the Eighth Army zone. Although Admiral Ewen considered interdictory flights into western Korea from carriers in the Sea of Japan uneconomical, Partridge turned down as unneeded Ewen's counterproposal that the carrier-based planes fly supplemental close support missions for the X Corps. As planned, Task Force 77 and Far East Air Forces' Bomber Command were to strike bridges and lines of communications within a fifteen-mile strip along the Yalu River.[44] This interdiction would in effect extend the air cam-

[41] X Corps WD, Sum, Nov 50; X Corps Opn Plan 8, 16 Nov 50; Rad, CX 69661, CINCFE to CG X Corps, 23 Nov 50.

[42] X Corps WD, Sum, Nov 50; X Corps Opn 0 7, 25 Nov 50.

[43] Ltr, Maj Gen Leven C. Allen, CofS Eighth Army, to CG Fifth Air Force, 23 Nov 50.

[44] Eighth Army G3 Air Briefing Rpts, 24 and 25 Nov 50; Field, *United States Naval Operations, Korea*, p. 262.

paign launched earlier by General MacArthur against the Yalu bridges and North Korean supply and communications centers.

The Outlook for Victory

Brightening the outlook for success in reaching the border during the time taken to prepare the forces and plans was the light opposition to the X Corps' latest advances, in which 7th Division units near the center of the corps zone had gone all the way to the Yalu. In the Eighth Army zone, too, enemy forces for the most part had remained inactive and inconspicuous since mid-November. Eighth Army patrols ranging deep into enemy territory during that time had encountered outposts but no major force or position. In neither zone was any evidence of offensive preparations uncovered. It appeared, rather, that the enemy had adopted a defensive strategy and that the Chinese, after breaking off their engagement on 6 November, had withdrawn into position defenses some distance to the north.[45]

Also encouraging was the estimate of enemy strength, in particular the strength of Chinese forces. By 23 November the latest, and highest, estimate of total enemy strength was about 167,000, that of Chinese forces alone about 70,000.[46] The figures represented substantial increases over the estimates of early November but still left the Eighth Army and X Corps with a solid numerical superiority.

General MacArthur expressed his confidence when he reviewed operations after flying to Korea to watch the Eighth Army take its first steps forward on the morning of the 24th. He described the advance toward the border as "massive compression envelopment," and as a "pincer" operation in which his air units were the "isolating components" for the two arms of the ground advance, the Eighth Army and X Corps. In the air campaign, now more than two weeks old, the bombing attacks on the Yalu River crossings had knocked down spans of the highway bridge at Sinuiju and two bridges at Hyesanjin, and incendiary strikes against North Korean towns had destroyed between 20 and 95 percent of the built-up areas. It was MacArthur's appraisal that this effort had "successfully interdicted enemy lines of support from the north so that further reinforcement therefrom has been sharply curtailed and essential supplies markedly limited." In the ground advance, MacArthur believed the recent moves of the X Corps had placed it in a "commanding envelopment position" for the westward thrust into the Eighth Army zone. Enthusiastic, if less positive, about the Eighth Army's advance just getting under way, he believed that "if successful," it "should for all practical purposes end the war."[47]

By appearances and appraisals, a UNC victory did seem within reach. If the bright outlook had a drab side, it was the lack of definite knowledge

[45] Eighth Army PIRs 118–135, 7–24 Nov 50.

[46] Field, *United States Naval Operations, Korea*, p. 259; Appleman, *South to the Naktong*, p. 763.

[47] Cagle and Manson, *The Sea War in Korea*, pp. 222–29; USAF Historical Study No. 72, pp. 22–32; GHQ FEC Communique No. 12, 24 Nov 50. The quotations are from the last source.

about the extent and purpose of Communist China's participation in the war. Indeed, persisting questions involved the "accurate measure of enemy strength," which MacArthur intended to obtain by advancing, and the clarification of Chinese objectives, which the Joint Chiefs of Staff had decided they needed before considering a change in the UNC mission.

CHAPTER III

The Enemy

Kanggye, the town considered but not selected as the objective of the X Corps' planned attack to the west, was now the seat of North Korean government. Forced out of P'yongyang by the Eighth Army's advance in October, Kim Il Sung, the premier of North Korea and commander in chief of the *North Korean Armed Forces*, had established a new capital at Sinuiju, the Yalu River city opposite An-tung, Manchuria. When UNC forces moved toward Sinuiju a short time later, he took his government to Kanggye, deep in the mountains of north central Korea.[1]

The North Korean Armed Forces

Also in Kanggye under Kim Il Sung was a recently formed *Combined Headquarters* staffed by both North Korean and Chinese officers. Kim was publicized as commanding the operations of both North Korean and Chinese forces from this headquarters, but the combined agency was really no more than a mechanism for coordinating North Korean operations with those of the Chinese, and Kim's voice in the conduct of joint operations was no stronger than the forces he was able to field. As of 23 November, these forces were few. North Korean air and naval forces, defeated early in the war, remained virtually nonexistent, and the *North Korean People's Army*, while on paper an impressive organization of eight corps, thirty divisions, and several brigades, was in fact a depleted force.[2]

The only major North Korean unit actively engaged at the front on the 23d was the *IV Corps* employing one division and two brigades, its bulk opposing the ROK I Corps in northeastern Korea. The *II Corps* also was active, but as a guerrilla force operating from a command post hidden high in the central mountains near the 38th parallel under the direction of General Kim Chaek, previously the commander of *Front Headquarters*, the now defunct tactical echelon of the *North Korean People's Army General Headquarters*. Along with bands of South Korean dissidents and North Korean irregulars who had long populated the Taebaek and southwestern mountains, four reduced divisions of the *II Corps* conducted desultory guerrilla operations both above and below the 38th parallel while they gradually reorganized around their own remnants and stragglers from other units.[3]

[1] Appleman, *South to the Naktong*, pp. 663–64.

[2] Ibid., p. 769; GHQ, FEC, Order of Battle Information, North Korean Army, 20 Aug 51 and 16 Sep 51.

[3] GHQ, FEC, Order of Battle Information, North Korean Army, 20 Aug 51 and 16 Sep 51. See also Appleman, *South to the Naktong*, ch. XXXVII, "Guerrilla Warfare Behind the Front."

The rest of the North Korean Army was in north central Korea and Manchuria. Much of the *General Headquarters* itself had entered Manchuria to direct the reorganization and retraining of three corps and nine divisions that had crossed the border during the earlier UNC advance. Under Marshal Choe Yong Gun, the minister of national defense and deputy commander in chief of the *North Korean Armed Forces*, and Maj. Gen. Lee Sang Cho, the *North Korean People's Army* chief of staff, the remainder of *General Headquarters* was directing the restoration of three corps and sixteen divisions in the vicinity of Kanggye. Few of the twenty-five divisions being refurbished possessed more than a semblance of readiness. Least ready were those in Manchuria.[4]

TABLE I—MAJOR NORTH KOREAN PEOPLE'S ARMY UNITS, 23 NOVEMBER 1950

Location	*Corps*	*Divisions*
Korea	I, II, III, IV, V	1st, 2d, 3d, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 12th, 15th, 17th, 24th, 27th, 31st, 38th, 41st, 43d, 47th, 105th Tank
Manchuria . .	VI, VII, VIII	13th, 18th, 19th, 32d, 36th, 37th, 42d, 45th, 46th

The Chinese People's Volunteers

While few North Korean forces would oppose the renewed UNC advance, the Chinese opposition, except at sea, would be of major consequence. The *People's Navy*, small and scarcely a year and a half old, had primarily a coastal defense mission at home and would not sortie against the United Nations Command.[5] The *People's Air Force*, though also young and small, had entered the fighting to oppose UNC air operations along the Yalu.[6] Apparently



KIM IL SUNG

[4] GHQ, FEC, Order of Battle Information, North Korean Army, 20 Aug 51 and 16 Sep 51; Hq, FEC, History of the North Korean Army, 31 Jul 52, pp. 84, 91–92.

[5] The approximate composition of the *People's Navy* was a light cruiser, perhaps twenty frigates and destroyers, some landing craft, and a few hundred gunboats and speedboats. See John Gittings, *The Role of the Chinese Army* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 141–42.

[6] The *People's Air Force* was organized in 1949. In early 1950 its aircraft numbered about 100, but purchases from the Soviet Union, according to Far East Air Forces estimates, raised the inventory to 650 by December. Of this total, 250 were conventional and jet fighters, 175 ground-attack planes, 150 conventional

to reduce the risk of aircraft losses, the Chinese so far had confined their air operations to northwestern Korea and had made no real attempt to establish air superiority in that region. They were, however, putting up MIG–15s, which could outmaneuver the American F–80C Shooting Stars and F9F Panthers. The MIGs were a particular reason why the Far East Air Forces were importing higher performance F–84E Thunderjets and F–86A Sabres from the United States.[7]

Only a fraction of the Chinese *People's Liberation Army* had entered Korea.[8] Field armies, or "tactical field forces," which were the elite of the organization's combat strength, numbered somewhere between two and three million men. Local garrison armies, which were second-line troops, numbered between one and two million more. In addition, a militia, from which the *People's Liberation Army* drew recruits, had a strength of five million. The fraction of the Chinese Army in Korea, however, was not the 70,000 given in the latest UNC intelligence estimate. Over four times that number were massed in the mountains opposite the Eighth Army and X Corps.[9]

Some 200,000 Chinese constituting the *XIII Army Group* of the *Fourth Field Army* faced the Eighth Army in western North Korea.[10] With six armies, each with three infantry divisions and a total of about 30,000 men, two artillery divisions and the bulk of a third, a cavalry regiment, and two truck regiments, the *XIII Army Group* had entered Korea during the last half of October, crossing the Yalu at Sinuiju and Manp'ojin. Forces from four of its armies had fought the Eighth Army and X Corps in what the Chinese called their First Phase Offensive between 25 October and 6 November.[11] The air attacks on Yalu bridges opened by General MacArthur on 8 November obviously had no chance to interdict the group's movement across the river.

The *IX Army Group*, part of the *Third Field Army*, had entered Korea with three armies during the first half of November. The leading army had crossed the Yalu at Manp'ojin, the other two at Lin-chiang on a big bend in the river about sixty miles northeast of Manp'ojin. Far East Air Forces planners had not selected the highway bridge at Lin-chiang as a target for the Yalu bombings, judging it less important than the crossings at Hyesanjin and over the lower reaches of the river. With the Manp'ojin crossings (a highway bridge and a railway bridge) standing despite the bombing and with the Lin-chiang bridge untouched, the *IX*

twin-engine bombers, and 75 transports. See Gittings, *The Role of the Chinese Army*, p. 136, and Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, p. 231.

[7] Gittings, *The Role of the Chinese Army*, pp. 136–37; Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, pp. 205–07, 210–12, 230–33; Field, *United States Naval Operations, Korea*, p. 259.

[8] In this volume *People's Liberation Army* refers only to ground forces, although by Chinese definition it includes air and naval forces as well. The term *Chinese Communist Forces*, frequently used in official reports and the press to designate Chinese military formations, is of U.N. Command origin.

[9] Gittings, *The Role of the Chinese Army*, pp. 76–79; GHQ, FEC, Order of Battle Information, Chinese Communist Regular Ground Forces (China, Manchuria, and Korea), 9 Dec 51; Appleman, *South to the Naktong*, pp. 768–69.

[10] *People's Liberation Army* tactical field forces were organized as four numbered field armies, the *First* through the *Fourth*, and some separate units known collectively as the *North China Independent Unit*. In each field army, the major groupings in descending order were army groups, armies, and divisions.

[11] Hq, USAFFE, Intel Dig (Digest), vol. 1, no. 4, 1–15 Feb 53, pp. 26–38; Appleman, *South to the Naktong*, pp. 766–68.

Army Group had crossed the river with little difficulty, then moved southeast to the Changjin Reservoir in the X Corps zone. Although a Chinese army normally comprised three divisions, each in the *IX Army Group* had been reinforced by a fourth, giving it about 40,000 men, and the group a strength approaching 120,000. The total Chinese commitment in Korea by 23 No-

TABLE 2—THE MAJOR CHINESE UNITS IN KOREA
23 NOVEMBER 1950

XIII Army Group	*IX Army Group*
38th Army	20th Army
112th Div (334th, 335th, 336th Regts)	58th Div (172d, 173d, 174th Regts)
113th Div (337th, 338th, 339th Regts)	59th Div (175th, 176th, 177th Regts)
114th Div (340th, 341st, 342d Regts)	60th Div (178th, 179th, 180th Regts)
	89th Div (265th, 266th, 267th Regts) [a]
39th Army	26th Army
115th Div (343d, 344th, 345th Regts)	76th Div (226th, 227th, 228th Regts)
116th Div (346th, 347th, 348th Regts)	77th Div (229th, 230th, 231st Regts)
117th Div (349th, 350th, 351st Regts)	78th Div (232d, 233d, 234th, Regts)
	88th Div (262d, 263d, 264th Regts) [a]
40th Army	27th Army
118th Div (352d, 353d, 354th Regts)	79th Div (235th, 236th, 237th Regts)
119th Div (355th, 356th, 357th Regts)	80th Div (238th, 239th, 240th Regts)
120th Div (358th, 359th, 360th Regts)	81st Div (241st, 242d, 243d Regts)
	90th Div (268th, 269th, 270th Regts) [a]
42d Army	
124th Div (370th, 371st, 372d Regts)	
125th Div (373d, 374th, 375th Regts)	
126th Div (376th, 377th, 378th Regts)	
50th Army	Approximate Strengths
148th Div (442d, 443d, 444th Regts)	Army 21,000–30,000
149th Div (445th, 446th, 447th Regts)	Division 8,000–10,000
150th Div (448th, 449th, 450th Regts)	Regiment 3,000
66th Army	
196th Div (586th, 587th, 588th Regts)	
197th Div (589th, 590th, 591st Regts)	
198th Div (592d, 593d, 594th Regts)	

[a] Attached from *30th Army*.

vember thus had risen above 300,000 men.[12]

A major reason UNC intelligence failed to reveal more closely the extent to which the Chinese had entered Korea was their concerted effort to avoid aerial observation through a rigid march and bivouac discipline, movements under the cover of darkness, and substantial use of secondary roads. In fact, UNC aerial reconnaissance had made small opportunity to observe the Chinese. Other than Mosquito control aircraft operating at the front, the Far East Air Forces had no planes committed to visual reconnaissance, and as of 8 November available photo reconnaissance aircraft were committed mainly in support of the attacks on the Yalu bridges.[13] These aircraft appeared over Sinuiju and Manp'ojin too late to spot the crossing of the *XIII Army Group* and were in the wrong place to sight the crossing of the bulk of the *IX Army Group*. The area between the river and the front was not entirely neglected, but the limited number of reconnaissance planes largely restricted coverage to areas adjacent to main roads, and few sorties were flown at night. Consequently, very little evidence of the Chinese entry was from the air.[14]



LIN PIAO

Hiding the fact further were code designations the Chinese used to identify units. Perhaps most deceptive was a battalion designation for a division.[15] But even after captives from the initial engagement had explained the designations and correctly identified their units, skeptical intelligence officers accepted only parts of the units named as being in Korea. By 23 November the U.N. Command had acknowledged the presence of twelve Chinese infantry divisions when in fact there were nine armies with thirty infantry divisions.[16]

The units committed included the best in the *People's Liberation Army*. The *Fourth Field Army*, commanded by Lin

[12] Appleman, *South to the Naktong*, p. 768; Hq, FEC, History of the North Korean Army, 31 Jul 52; Hq, USAFFE, Intel Dig, vol. 1, no. 3, 16–31 Jan 53, pp. 32–37; Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, pp. 212–13.

[13] The Fifth Air Force's 45th Squadron, the single visual reconnaissance unit in the theater, apparently was not employed over Korea until early 1951, and after 9 November 1950 the B–29 photo planes of Bomber Command were not used along the Yalu because they proved to be easy marks for the MIG–15s.

[14] Appleman, *South to the Naktong*, p. 770; Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, pp. 216–17.

[15] The *55th Unit*, for example, was the *39th Army*, and the *1st Battalion, 55th Unit*, was the *115th Division, 39th Army*.

[16] Appleman, *South to the Naktong*, pp. 752–54, 763.

Piao, was the strongest, and its *XIII Army Group* included armies honored for past achievements with the title of "iron" troops.[17] The *Third Field Army*, commanded by Chen Yi, was not particularly strong as a whole, but its *IX Army Group* included at least one army considered to be a crack unit. But however highly rated by *People's Liberation Army* standards, the two groups essentially constituted a mass of infantry with little artillery support, no armor or air support, and primitive, haphazard logistical support. They were, characteristically, poorly equipped. Individual and crew-served weapons, from company to army, were a collection of diverse makes and calibers; other equipment was equally mixed; and both weapons and equipment were in short supply, small arms to such a degree that as many as two-thirds of some infantry units lacked them. Their strongest points were experience and morale. Most of the troops were veterans of the recent civil war, and virtually all senior officers had fought the Japanese during World War II. Their high morale presumably was the result of effective political indoctrination, notwithstanding that former Nationalist Army members constituted much of the strength of the intervention force. It was on a combination of morale and guerrilla warfare tactics that Chinese leaders had long depended to compensate for inferiority in weapons and equipment. Supporting the efficacy of this "man-over-weapons" doctrine were successes against the Japanese and Nationalist Chinese, and most recently against the United Nations Command.[18]

Upon leaving their parent field armies in China, the two army groups had come under *Headquarters, Chinese People's Volunteers*, specially organized for operations in Korea.[19] Under the command of Lin Piao, the special headquarters was located in Mukden, Manchuria. It was Lin in Mukden, not Kim Il Sung at *Combined Headquarters* in Kanggye, who made the basic tactical decisions, including those affecting the operations of North Korean forces. But publicizing the Kanggye headquarters under the North Korean premier as controlling all military operations lent support to claims made by both Chinese and North Korean officials that the Chinese presence in Korea was simply the result of individuals and units having volunteered to assist the North Koreans.[20] (*Chart 5*)

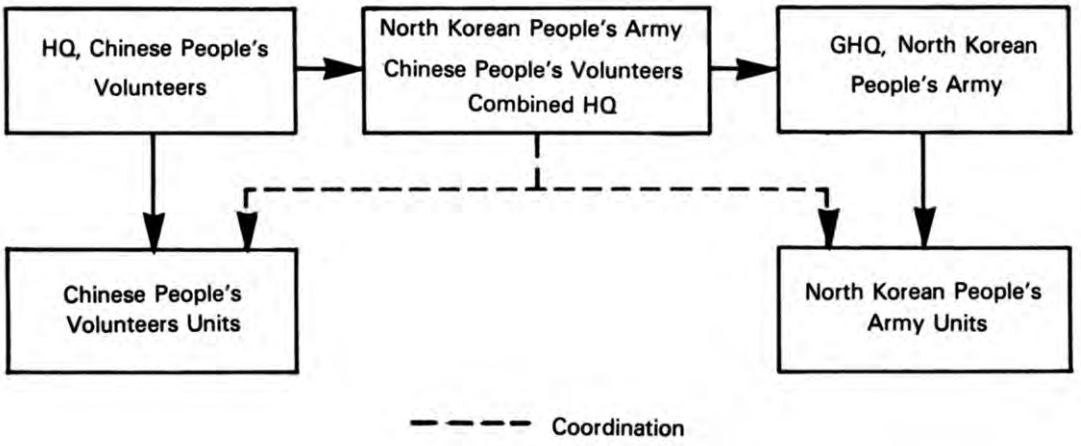
[17] Officers of the *People's Liberation Army* were not designated by nominal ranks as in the U.S. Army. Troop commanders held positional ranks and staff officers held equivalent ranks. The commander of a regiment, for example, held the positional rank of regimental commander, and a regimental staff officer held the equivalent rank of assistant regimental commander. See DA Pam 30–51, *Handbook on the Chinese Communist Army*, Sep 52, pp. 75–76.

[18] Alexander L. George, *The Chinese Communist Army in Action* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), pp. vii–viii, 5–7, 83–84, 173; Samuel B. Griffith II, *The Chinese People's Liberation Army* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967), p. 131; Gittings, *The Role of the Chinese Army*, p. 77; DA Pam 30–51, *Handbook on the Chinese Communist Army*, 7 Dec 60, pp. 8, 66; ibid., Sep 52, pp. 38–39; GHQ, FEC, Order of Battle Information, Chinese Communist Regular Ground Forces (China, Manchuria, and Korea), 9 Dec 51.

[19] The shape of the Chinese field command would elude UNC intelligence for some time. As late as March 1951, for example, the Eighth Army intelligence officer could state only that "it is possible that the XIII CCF Army Group may be the controlling headquarters of 4 CCF armies. . . . Unconfirmed." See Eighth Army PIR 234, 3 Mar 51.

[20] A communique released by the North Korean government on 7 November stated that "volunteer units formed by the Chinese people participated in operations along with the People's Armed Forces, under the unified command of the General Headquarters." On 11 November a spokesman for Chou En-lai,

CHART 5—ENEMY LINES OF COMMAND
23 NOVEMBER 1950



Giving China's entry into the war a veneer of voluntary participation evidently had two purposes. In China itself, the image of voluntary action was projected to gain total popular support, material and moral, for the commitment in Korea. Otherwise, that image attempted to reduce the risks of intervention, primarily to mitigate the U.S. response. According to a former high-ranking Communist Party member, concern that Chinese forces might be defeated in Korea, that American forces might invade the Chinese mainland, and that the United States might employ the atomic bomb had permeated deliberations leading to the decision to enter the war.[21] Intervention, according to the same source, had been stoutly opposed by a number of Peking authorities, including some *People's Liberation Army* officials. They had argued that the newly established regime needed peace so that it could concentrate on national reconstruction and that China, in any case, could not afford to accept the risks of waging war with a first-rate power like the United States.[22] Officials in favor of entering the war had insisted that the threat to China posed by a UNC victory in North Korea made it necessary to accept the

China's minister of foreign affairs, admitted that Chinese forces were fighting in Korea but denied official responsibility. As precedents the spokesman cited the French assistance to the American colonists during the Revolutionary War and the individual volunteers, including Americans and British, in the Spanish Civil War. Captives taken from the first forces to enter Korea revealed that, before entering, the members of some units were asked, or, if they refused, pressured, to sign statements volunteering their service in the war. See Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu,* pp. 137–38, and George, *The Chinese Communist Army in Action,* pp. 156–57.

[21] This was Chou Ching-wen, a prominent writer and scholar and former president of Northwestern University in Manchuria, who held high party positions for eight years. Chou broke with the Peking regime and fled to Hong Kong in 1957. See Chou Ching-wen, *Ten Years of Storm* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960).

[22] This account is borne out by contemporaneous evidence. A 6 November 1950 editorial in the *Jen-min Jih-pao* (*People's Daily*), an official Communist Party organ in China, stated and then refuted the views of those who had opposed China's intervention.



CHOU EN-LAI

risks. The principal and winning argument for intervention may have been that China needed a friendly buffer state along its Manchurian border. A minimal Chinese goal in entering the war, then, was to maintain a Democratic People's Republic of Korea, but not necessarily to restore its 38th parallel border.[23]

Whether the Chinese predetermined a larger military objective is less evident. Some of the first forces to enter Korea were told beforehand that the objective was to drive UNC troops out of Korea and that they could expect a quick and easy victory. Propaganda appearing on the wider home front soon after forces crossed the Yalu marked the United States as a "paper tiger." The United States could be defeated, the claim went, because its strategy rested on its atomic bomb and air force. This strategy could not be devastating to a rural China and left U.S. ground forces so weak in numbers that they were incapable of waging ground warfare on a large scale.[24]

On the other hand, that the Chinese believed they could make important political gains but were uncertain of achieving any grand-scale military success is perceptible in a retrospective explanation of China's decision for war attributed to Premier Mao Tse-tung. A victory, according to Mao, would immediately raise China's international status, a stalemate between backward China and a power like the United States would amount to a victory for China, and a defeat would simply require that China engage in a war of resistance as it had done against Japan. Evidencing concern that *People's Liberation Army* forces might be defeated in Korea and that the U.N. Command might carry the war into China, Foreign Minister Chou En-lai in reporting the international situation to a group of government officials soon after China's intervention announced, "We are prepared to withdraw, if necessary, from the coastal provinces to the hinterland, and build up the Northwest and the Southwest provinces as bases for a long-drawn-out war."[25] The Chinese

[23] Tang Tsou, *America's Failure in China, 1941–1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), pp. 575–77; Chou, *Ten Years of Storm*, pp. 116–17; Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu*, p. 155; Gittings, *The Role of the Chinese Army*, pp. 83–86.

[24] George, *The Chinese Communist Army in Action*, pp. 164, 187; Tang Tsou, *America's Failure in China*, pp. 576–78. On page 578, Tang Tsou relates that in a discussion with Indian Ambassador Panikkar, Nieh Jung-chen, *People's Liberation Army* chief of staff, remarked, "After all, China lives on farms. What can atom bombs do there?"

[25] Quoted in Chou, *Ten Years of Storm*, p. 117. Chou writes that he was one of the group to whom Chou En-lai spoke.

did in fact remove machinery and other material, including the huge furnaces of an important steelworks, from the coastal provinces. Thus is appears that the Chinese entered the war not confidently, but gingerly.[26]

The voluntary disengagement of the *XIII Army Group* on 6 November is further evidence of how warily the Chinese entered the war. The disengagement suggests that Lin Piao was reluctant to continue operations without a greater concentration of force and ordered a pause while the *IX Army Group* completed its move into Korea, or that the Chinese leadership suspended operations until the UNC response to China's intervention could be determined.[27] These considerations, of course, could have been restraints only briefly. The additional army group reached the Changjin Reservoir by mid-November, and by the last week of the month it was clear that the U.N. Command would limit its response to bombing Yalu bridges on the Korean side of the river. However cautiously and tentatively the Chinese may have intervened, their ultimate decision, evidently made soon after the *XIII Army Group* broke off its opening attack, was to resume offensive operations. Perhaps relieved when the U.N. Command did not carry the war to China, and perhaps encouraged by the confident tone of field appraisals of the initial battles—especially those with U.S. forces—the Chinese high command concluded that the two army groups would be able to operate successfully against the United Nations Command.[28]

Earlier, after the *XIII Army Group* had broken contact, group commander Li T'ien-yu set out light forces to screen his major units, which assembled far north of the line reached during their initial attack. As disposed on 23 November, the group's six armies were located ten to fifteen miles north of the Eighth Army front. The *50th* and *66th Armies* stood opposite the I Corps in the west; the *39th* and *40th Armies* were centrally located north of the IX Corps; the *38th* and *42d Armies* were above the ROK II Corps in the east.[29] The *42d Army* earlier had opposed X Corps forces below the Changjin Reservoir but had shifted west into the Eighth Army zone after being relieved by the *20th Army* of the *IX Army Group*. The latter group, also deployed with major units assembled behind screening forces, was now located above and west of the reservoir. Group commander Sung Shih-lun had set the *20th Army* to the west and south of Yudam-ni, in the path of the X Corps' coming westward drive, and had assembled the *26th* and *27th Armies* in the mountains to the north and northeast of the reservoir.[30]

This arrangement of forces followed a long-existing Chinese concept of mobile defense designed for operations against a superior force.[31] Aimed not

[26] Tang Tsou, *America's Failure in China*, pp. 578–79; Chou, *Ten Years of Storm*, p. 117.

[27] Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu*, pp. 132, 138–39.

[28] The field appraisals lauded American equipment, firepower, and air support but depreciated American infantry and summarized results as satisfactory. See Appleman, *South to the Naktong*, pp. 719–20.

[29] The *50th Army* was formerly Nationalist China's 60th Army, which had defected en masse during the civil war. It was kept intact except for being given a Communist cadre. See George, *The Chinese Communist Army in Action*, p. 6.

[30] Hq, USAFFE, Intel Dig, vol. 1, no. 4, 1–15 Feb 53, pp. 28–33, 36–38; ibid., no. 3, 16–31 Jan 53, pp. 34–37.

[31] Chinese defensive tactics would not include the development of a main line of resistance until later in the war when the front became stabilized during armistice negotiations. See Mono, Hq, Eighth Army, "Enemy Tactics," 26 Dec 51, copy in CMH.

to hold ground but to destroy opposing forces in brief actions, the underlying strategy was to invite attack; fight a delaying action while allowing the attack force to penetrate deep; then, at a point of Chinese choice, counterattack suddenly while the opposing force was ill-prepared to receive the assault.[32]

It was because the Chinese deployed major forces well behind screening units that Eighth Army patrols and X Corps assault forces had encountered only outposts after mid-November. Showing little awareness of their adversary's doctrine, however, UNC officials had assumed from the light contact that the Chinese had withdrawn into position defenses far to the north, and they had interpreted the deep, voluntary withdrawal as further indication that the Chinese were weak in numbers.[33] With unwarranted optimism, then, the Eighth Army and X Corps started forward on 24 November, believing that they comfortably outnumbered enemy forces and expecting to encounter these in defensive positions that their weakness, and perhaps their mission, had forced them to establish.

[32] Like all *People's Liberation Army* precepts, the strategy reflected the guerrilla warfare doctrine developed by Mao Tse-tung. As Mao expounded it in his classic study, *On the Protracted War:* "To achieve quick decision we should generally attack, not an enemy force holding a position, but one on the move. We should have concentrated, beforehand under cover, a big force along the route through which the enemy is sure to pass, suddenly descend on him while he is moving, encircle and attack him before he knows what is happening, and conclude the fighting with all speed. If the battle is well fought, we may annihilate the entire enemy force or the greater part or a part of it. Even if the battle is not well fought, we may still inflict heavy casualties." See Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu*, pp. 132–33, for a correlation of Mao's teaching with Chinese strategy so far employed in the Korean War.

[33] Eighth Army PIRs 118–135, 7–24 Nov 50; Hq, USAFFE, Intel Dig, vol. 1, no. 4, 1-15 Feb 53, p. 26.

CHAPTER IV

The Battle of the Ch'ongch'on

The Advance to Contact

While General Walker fully expected the Eighth Army to encounter Chinese when it moved north, the lack of revealing contact in his zone left him uncertain about the location of enemy positions. From a study of air sightings, aerial photographs, and prisoner of war statements, his G–2, Lt. Col. James C. Tarkenton, traced two possible enemy defense lines. The nearer line curved from Chongju northeast through T'aech'on and Unsan above the western half of the army front, then extended almost due east into the mountains roughly ten miles above the eastern segment of the front. The second line started at Sonch'on, twenty miles beyond Chongju, and ran northeast through Kusong, Onjong, and Huich'on and into the Taebaeks as far as the northern end of the Changjin Reservoir. Colonel Tarkenton estimated that the Eighth Army would meet some 48,000 Chinese and several North Korean units defending important road centers along these lines.[1]

Walker distributed assault forces evenly for the advance toward the suspected lines. In the west, the I Corps comprised the 24th Infantry Division, ROK 1st Division, and British 27th Commonwealth Brigade. At center, the IX Corps included the 25th Infantry Division, the 2d Infantry Division, and the brigade-size 1st Turkish Armed Forces Command, which had not yet seen combat in Korea. The ROK II Corps, on the east, would operate with the ROK 6th, 7th, and 8th Divisions. The 1st Cavalry Division and the British 29th Independent Infantry Brigade were Walker's immediate reserves. While in reserve the cavalrymen were to protect forward army supply points at Kunu-ri, located just below the Ch'ongch'on River in the IX Corps area, and at Sukch'on, fifteen miles south of the river on Route 1 behind the I Corps. The British brigade, a recent arrival in Korea, was currently far to the south assembling temporarily at Kaesong, thirty miles north of Seoul.[2]

Eighth Army units with no assignment in the attack included the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team and the Philippine 10th Battalion Combat Team, which were guarding supply installations in the P'yongyang-Chinnamp'o area, and the ROK III Corps with four recently activated or reactivated ROK divisions (the 2d, 5th, 9th,

[1] *Eighth Army PIRs 118–135, 7–24 Nov 50.*

[2] Eighth Army Opn Plan 15, 14 Nov 50; Eighth Army WD, Sum, Nov 50; Fox, "Inter-Allied Cooperation During Combat Operations"; Eighth Army G3 Situation Overlay, 23 Nov 50; I Corps POR 216, 23 Nov 50; IX Corps WD, vol. II, an. 3, Nov 50.



GENERAL MILBURN *(left) with Secretary of the Army Frank Pace, Jr.*



GENERAL COULTER

and 11th) which was operating against guerrillas in central and southern Korea. The infantry battalion from Thailand had just finished processing at the U.N. Reception Center and was en route to P'yongyang on the eve of the advance. Replacing the Thais at the reception center was the Netherlands Battalion, which had reached Korea on 23 November and was to receive two weeks' training before joining operations.[3]

On the morning of the 24th Maj. Gen. Frank W. Milburn, commander of the I Corps, sent his two divisions west and northwest toward Chongju and T'aech'on, holding his British brigade in reserve. Maj. Gen. John B. Coulter, in command of the interior IX Corps, kept the Turkish brigade in reserve at Kunu-ri, sent one division north astride the Kuryong River toward Unsan and Onjong, and moved his other division up the Ch'ongch'on valley in the direction of Huich'on. On the army right, Maj. Gen. Yu Hae Ueng, the ROK II Corps commander, started two of his three divisions north through the mountains toward terrain objectives aligned with those of Coulter's forces.[4]

[3] Eight Army Opn Plan 15, 14 Nov 50; Eighth Army WD, Sum, Nov 50; Fox, "Inter-Allied Co-operation During Combat Operations."

[4] Eighth Army WD, Nar, Nov 50; I Corps Opn O 4, 18 Nov 50; I Corps Opn Dir 23, 19 Nov 50; IX Corps Opn Plan 3, 18 Nov 50; IX Corps Opn Dir 8, 20 Nov 50; IX Corps Opn Dir 9, 23 Nov 50; ROK Opn Plan 5 (Overlay), and Rpt of Staff Visit to II ROK Corps on 23 Nov 50, both in IX Corps G3 Spot Rpts, Nov 50.

At the I Corps left, Maj. Gen. John H. Church's 24th Division led off with a regimental attack over Route 1, its 21st Infantry and a company of tanks moving westward toward Chongju, eighteen miles out. On the corps right, two regiments of Maj. Gen. Paik Sun Yup's ROK 1st Division supported by a company of American tanks advanced on T'aech'on, moving upstream on both sides of the Taeryong River over secondary roads that converged on the objective ten miles northwest. General Church's single regiment marched more than halfway to Chongju during the day, receiving only a little long range small arms fire from the hills north of Route 1 as it moved. Two platoons of Chinese infantry and a ditch that delayed the tanks were the only opposition to General Paik's forces, who established night defenses within four miles of T'aech'on.[5]

In the left half of the IX Corps zone, the 25th Division, commanded by Maj. Gen. William B. Kean, moved north astride the Kuryong River toward Unsan with two regiments and an armored force, Task Force Dolvin.[6] General Kean's 35th and 24th Infantry Regiments on left and right, respectively, advanced four miles unopposed, while Task Force Dolvin in the middle moved seven miles along the east bank of the Kuryong, receiving only small arms fire as it covered the last mile. Four miles southeast of Unsan the Dolvin force recovered thirty members of the 8th Cavalry who had been captured at Unsan in early November and then released by the Chinese. Most were wounded and frostbitten.[7]

Maj. Gen. Laurence B. Keiser's 2d Division, at the IX Corps right, sought no sweeping first-day gains since it was already three miles ahead of the 25th Division. Rather than risk an open west flank, General Keiser ordered short moves by his line regiments, the 9th and 38th, to mass along the lower bank of the Paengnyong River, a westward-flowing tributary of the Ch'ongch'on.[8]

In the ROK II Corps zone, gains by the ROK 7th and 8th Divisions ranged from a quarter to a full mile but none at all against two enemy battalions dug in near the boundary between them. In one of the deeper gains, the 3d Regiment of the ROK 7th Division at the corps left came up to the Paengnyong River and tied in with the 38th Infantry of the 2d Division.[9]

Chongju and T'aech'on remained the immediate I Corps objectives on 25 November. Chongju, previously tagged as a probable center of enemy resistance, was empty when the 21st Infan-

[5] Eighth Army PIR 135, 24 Nov 50; I Corps PORs 219 and 220, 24 Nov 50; 24th Div WD, Nov 50; 24th Div OI 70, 19 Nov 50; 21st Inf Unit Rpts 138 and 139, 23 and 24 Nov 50.

[6] The task force, led by Lt. Col. Welborn G. Dolvin, commander of the 89th Medium Tank Battalion, included Company B, the Assault Gun Platoon, and the Reconnaissance Platoon of the 89th; the 25th Reconnaissance Company; Company E, 27th Infantry; Company B, 35th Infantry; and the 8213th Ranger Company.

[7] 25th Div OI 18, 20 Nov 50; 25th Div Opn O 15, 21 Nov 50; 25th Div WD, 24 Nov 50; 25th Div Nar Rpt, Nov 50; 35th Inf Opn O 19, 22 Nov 50; 35th Inf Hist Rpt, Nov 50; 35th Inf Unit Rpt 43, 24 Nov 50; 24th Inf Opn O 20, 22 Nov 50; 24th Inf WD, 24 Nov 50; 24th Inf Unit Rpt 54, 24 Nov 50; IX Corps G3 Spot Rpts, Entries 1479 and 1491, Nov 50; IX Corps G2 Spot Rpts, Entry 241915 Nov 50, Interrogation of Released U.S. PW (Capt Ray J. Yantis).

[8] 2d Div Opn O 10, 20 Nov 50; 2d Div WD, Nar, Nov 50; 2d Div G3 Jnl, 23–24 Nov 50; 38th Inf Opn O 20, 22 Nov 50; 38th Inf Nar Sum, Nov 50; 9th Inf Hist, Nov 50, Incl H.

[9] Eighth Army POR 406, 24 Nov 50; IX Corps Sit Overlay, 242400 Nov 50; IX Corps G3 Spot Rpts, Entry 1535, 24 Nov 50; 2d Div G3 Jnl, Entry 113, 24 Nov 50.

try entered in midafternoon. In preparation for widening the 24th Division's advance, General Church meanwhile moved the 19th Infantry out on Route 1 to Napch'ongjong, eight miles behind Chongju.[10] The ROK 1st Division, on the other hand, had found during the night that T'aech'on would be harder to take when Chinese supported by artillery and mortar fire counterattacked along the east bank of the Taeryong and forced part of General Paik's right regiment two miles to the rear. Although the Chinese lifted their attack after daylight, they allowed the South Koreans only to restore and improve slightly their previous position. Paik's forces west of the Taeryong held themselves to a small advance while those on the east regained lost ground. The division was still three miles short of T'aech'on at dark on the 25th.[11]

Encountering no organized enemy positions but receiving considerable long range small arms, machine gun, and mortar fire, the two IX Corps divisions gained two to four miles on the 25th. At that rate the 25th Division astride the Kuryong on the corps left was easily within a day's advance of Unsan. On the corps right, the 9th Infantry of the 2d Division moved two miles up the Ch'ongch'on valley, closing into positions split by the Ch'ongch'on with the bulk of the regiment on the west side of the river. The 38th Infantry meanwhile stayed at the Paengnyong except for patrols that searched above the river to cover the 9th's east flank.[12]

The ROK II Corps advanced one to two miles against opposition that varied in much the same pattern as on the previous day. The corps center continued to be a trouble spot, and at the far right, ten miles to the rear of the South Korean front, an enemy force tested the 16th Regiment of the ROK 8th Division protecting the corps and army east flank from positions some eight miles east of the village of Yongdong-ni. The force, presumably Chinese and possibly a reconnaissance unit since it was reported to include a hundred horse cavalrymen, struck the easternmost battalion of the 16th and lifted its attack only after forcing the South Koreans to withdraw two miles.[13]

Although the second day of advance had produced heavier enemy fire and local counterattacks, General Walker's forces had little reason to lose enthusiasm for their renewed offensive. All divisions had gained ground. In the I Corps zone, the 24th Division, having occupied Chongju, was on the Eighth Army's first phase line, and the ROK 1st Division was close to it. In the IX Corps zone, the 25th Division was not far from Unsan, and the 2d Division had made progress in the Ch'ongch'on valley. Despite rougher going in the Taebaek ridges farther east, the ROK II Corps also had pushed forward.

[10] I Corps Opn Dir 24, 241800 Nov 50; I Corps POR 222, 25 Nov 50; 21st Inf Unit Rpt 140, 25 Nov 50.

[11] I Corps POR 222, 25 Nov 50.

[12] 25th Div WD, 25 Nov 50; 35th Inf WD, Nar, Nov 50; 35th Inf Unit Rpt 44, 25 Nov 50; 24th Inf Unit Rpt 55, 25 Nov 50; IX Corps PIR 60, 25 Nov 50; 2d Div WD, Nar, Nov 50; 2d Div G3 Activ Rpt, Nov 50; 2d Div G3 Jnl, Entry 32, 25 Nov 50; IX Corps WD, 25 Nov 50; IX Corps POR 183, 25 Nov 50; Eighth Army POR 408, 25 Nov 50; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entry 1525, 25 Nov 50.

[13] Eighth Army POR 409, 25 Nov 50; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entry 1955, 25 Nov 50; Eighth Army PIR 136, 25 Nov 50; Eighth Army G2 SS Rpt, Nov 50; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Briefing for CG, 25 Nov 50; IX Corps PIR 60, 25 Nov 50; IX Corps G3 Spot Rpts, Entry 1607, 25 Nov 50.

Casualties had not been heavy in any of the corps zones. The advance, moreover, was soon to be reinforced by the X Corps' attack from the east. Walker issued a single order on the 25th, one that shortened the final objective line of the ROK II Corps to conform with the 27 November attack by General Almond's forces. Otherwise, he intended that the Eighth Army would continue its advance on the 26th as originally conceived.[14]

The Eighth Army's optimism still hinged on the assumption that the Chinese had not tapped their large Manchurian reserve for offensive operations in Korea. Although the final army intelligence report on 25 November showed an increase in Chinese forces opposing the advance, the new figure stood at only 54,000, just 6,000 more than the pre-attack estimate. In reviewing possible enemy actions, army G–2 Tarkenton added only that he now expected enemy forces to employ local counterattacks in conjunction with their defense.[15]

The Chinese Attack

At dark on the 25th the 2d Division occupied a fifteen-mile front centered in the Ch'ongch'on valley twenty miles north of Kunu-ri. *(Map 4)* In the 9th Infantry sector at the division left, the companies of the 3d Battalion and all but one company of the 2d Battalion occupied separated positions atop the first ridges west of the Ch'ongch'on. The remainder of the regiment was east of the river on a line hooking southeastward from the Ch'ongch'on to the lower bank of the Paengnyong. Beyond a half-mile gap to the right of the 9th, the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 38th Infantry carried the division line along the south bank of the Paengnyong to the boundary with the ROK II Corps. After a daylight patrol, Company A of the reserve 1st Battalion was in perimeter two miles north of the Paengnyong.[16]

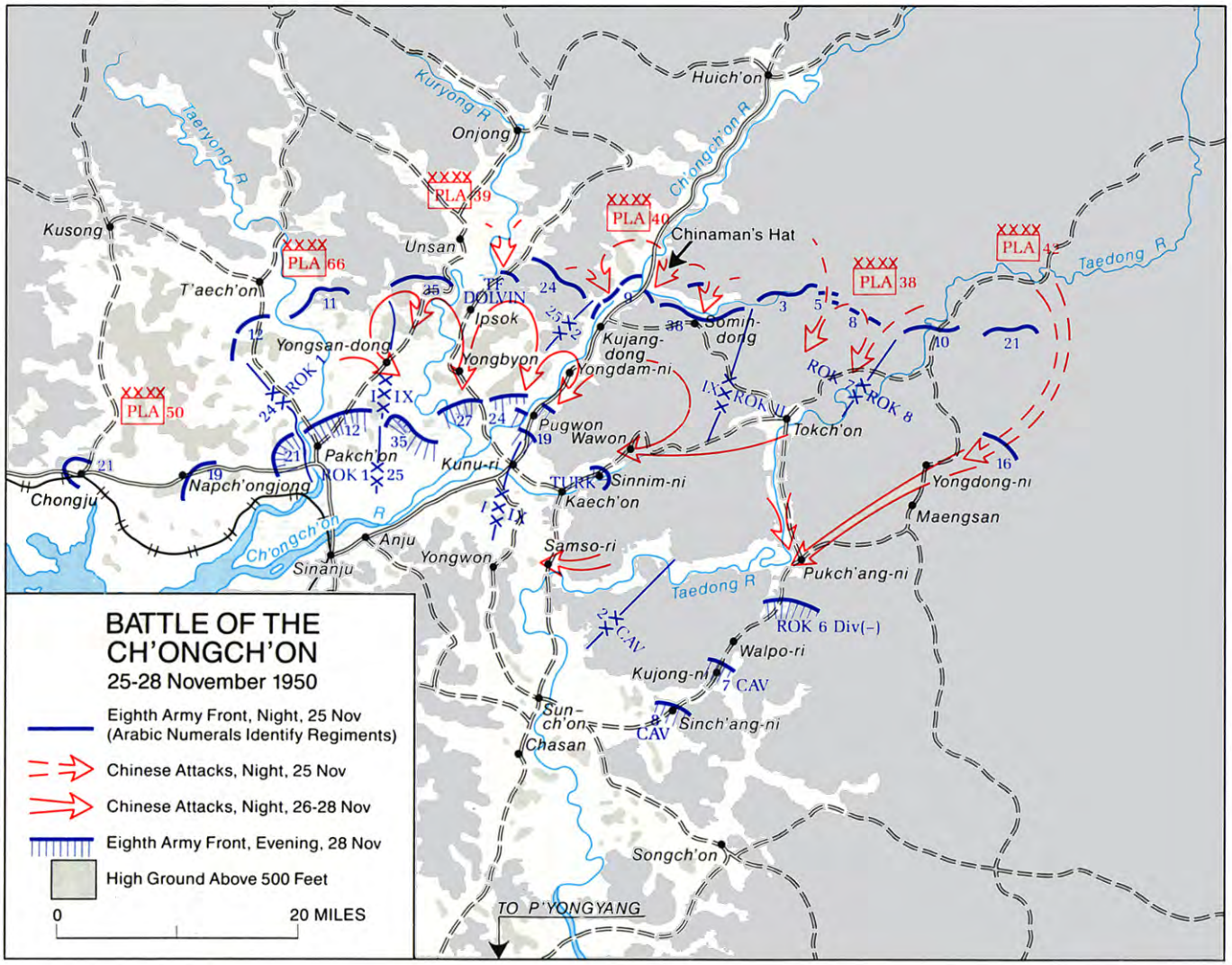
Two miles behind the 9th Infantry, the headquarters, tank company, and 1st Battalion of the 23d Infantry occupied a position arching from the lower bank of the Ch'ongch'on eastward across the valley road. Col. Paul L. Freeman, commander of the 23d, had taken these forces forward during the day under General Keiser's order to pass through the 9th Infantry on the 26th. When Keiser later postponed this change, Colonel Freeman held his remaining battalions near Kunu-ri and deployed his leading units behind the 9th, amid the firing positions of three artillery battalions supporting the division's advance.

Between dark and midnight two Chinese regiments struck the 9th Infantry in the Ch'ongch'on valley while a third hit the center of the 38th Infantry's Paengnyong position. Coming southeast from the area above the 25th Divi-

[14] Eighth Army G1 SS Rpt, 25 Nov 50; Rad, GX 30007 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA et al., 25 Nov 50.

[15] Eighth Army PIR 136, 25 Nov 50.

[16] The account of the opening enemy attacks against the 2d Division is based on the following sources: IX Corps G2 Spot Rpts 2990, 2997, and 3026, 26 Nov 50; 2d Div PIR 68, 26 Nov 50; 2d Div G3 Jnl, 26 Nov 50; 2d Div Arty WD, 26 Nov 50; 2d Div Arty POR 94, 26 Nov 50; 1st Cav Div G3 Jnl, Entry 15, 26 Nov 50; 9th Inf Hist, Nov 50; 9th Inf PIR 75, 26 Nov 50; 1st Bn, 9th Inf, WD, Nov 50; 2d Bn, 9th Inf, Unit Jnl, 26 Nov 50; 3d Bn, 9th Inf, Nar Diary, 25 Nov 50; 23d Inf, Nar Sum, Nov 50; 23d Inf WD, Nov 50; 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nov 50; General Charles D. Palmer, MS review comments, 1985. General Palmer was the division artillery commander of the 1st Cavalry Division at the time of the action.


BATTLE OF THE
CH'ONGCH'ON
25-28 November 1950
Eighth Army Front, Night, 25 Nov
(Arabic Numerals Identify Regiments)
Chinese Attacks, Night, 25 Nov
Chinese Attacks, Night, 26-28 Nov
Eighth Army Front, Evening, 28 Nov
High Ground Above 500 Feet
0
20 MILES
Kusong
T'aech'on
Yongsan-dong
Unsan
Onjong
Kuryong R
Taeryong R
Ch'ongch'on R
Huich'on
Ipsok
Yongbyon
DOLVIN
Kujang-dong
Yongdam-ni
Somin-dong
Chinaman's Hat
Tokch'on
Taedong R
Pugwon
Wawon
Kunu-ri
Pakch'on
Napch'ongjong
Chongju
Anju
Sinanju
Yongwon
Samso-ri
TURK
Sinnim-ni
Kaech'on
Pukch'ang-ni
Yongdong-ni
Maengsan
Walpo-ri
Kujong-ni
Sinch'ang-ni
Sun-ch'on
Chasan
Songch'on
TO P'YONGYANG
PLA 39
PLA 40
PLA 41
PLA 38
PLA 66
PLA 50
ROK 1
ROK 6
ROK 7
ROK 8
ROK 6 Div(-)
IX
2 CAV
7 CAV
8 CAV

MAP 4

sion, one enemy regiment advanced in several columns toward the two battalions of the 9th Infantry west of the Ch'ongch'on. Moving mostly over valley trails, the Chinese missed the 2d Battalion's hilltop positions, which were farthest north, but found either the front or flanks of the three separated companies of the 3d. At the sound of bugle signals, the Chinese in file changed formation for assaults that through the night gradually pressed the 3d Battalion toward the river.

Other columns of the same regiment infiltrated the gaps between companies and waded the cold Ch'ongch'on to hit the 1st Battalion, 23d Infantry, and the 61st Field Artillery Battalion just north of Colonel Freeman's position.[17] The strike startled the 61st into retreat, especially the members of Battery A, who, after their commander had been killed and all other battery officers wounded, abandoned both guns and vehicles. A few artillerymen withdrew eastward, but most of them, with Chinese following, moved south over the valley road through Colonel Freeman's position. Though the confused southward rush of American artillerymen and Chinese infantry complicated the defense, Freeman's forces eventually beat off the Chinese without losing ground. Seeking both cover from Freeman's fire and a position on which to reorganize, the Chinese pulled away and climbed a low but rugged mountain, called Chinaman's Hat, located northeast of Freeman and immediately below the rearmost position of the 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry.

In company with the attack from the northwest, a second Chinese regiment struck south along the east side of the Ch'ongch'on. While some of its searching columns hit and hurt the 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry, another moved behind that battalion through the half-mile gap between the 9th and 38th Regiments. Part of the forces reaching the rear area overran the 1st Battalion command post and aid station, then climbed Chinaman's Hat to join the forces who had broken away from the 1st Battalion, 23d Infantry. Following this juncture, the Chinese moved off the Hat and again attacked Colonel Freeman's battalion, focusing this time on the refused right flank east of the valley road. Freeman lost part of his flank position but then shifted forces to the east and blocked the assault. Near dawn, the Chinese again withdrew to Chinaman's Hat.

Farther east, some of the Chinese entering the gap between regiments discovered and assaulted Company G, 38th Infantry, holding a detached position at the west end of the 38th's line. About 2330 a third enemy regiment opened an attack against the 38th's center, part of it surrounding and engaging Company A north of the Paengnyong, the bulk crossing the river to attack at the boundary between the 2d and 3d Battalions. Pressing frontal assaults against the central companies, F and L, the Chinese invested portions of the company positions, then called off their attack near 0230 after suffering heavy casualties.

Within two hours the Chinese renewed their attacks against the regimental center, this time forcing Companies F and L to withdraw. Their withdrawal, although short, isolated

[17] The 61st Field Artillery Battalion was a 1st Cavalry Division unit that had been attached to the 2d Division to provide additional direct support to the 9th Infantry.

Companies I and K to the east. Col. George B. Peploe, the regimental commander, countered near dawn, attacking with his reserve 1st Battalion, less Company A but with Company C of the 2d Engineer Combat Battalion attached as the third rifle company. Starting from a point west of the enemy penetration and moving east into the Chinese flank, the 1st Battalion cleared the area sufficiently to permit Colonel Peploe to restore his central positions.

West of the 2d Division, Chinese also struck the 25th Division during the night, centering a small but sharp blow on Task Force Dolvin on the east side of the Kuryong. In a give-and-take battle that ran the course of the night and into the morning of the 26th, Colonel Dolvin's forces lost one of two hills at their forwardmost position.[18]

Although the 25th had not been hit in strength, General Kean canceled plans for continuing the advance on the morning of the 26th. Against a possible renewal of the attack at the division center, he merged the 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry, and all Dolvin elements except the ranger company (which withdrew from the front) into Task Force Wilson under Brig. Gen. Vennard Wilson, the assistant division commander.[19]

A half hour after noon the Chinese switched attention to the rightmost position of Col. John T. Corley's 24th Infantry, surrounding two companies of the regiment while they were receiving a supply airdrop in somewhat isolated positions at the east flank. Most members of the two units managed to slip out of the encirclement and withdraw eastward into the 2d Division sector. Against this new threat, Kean ordered the bulk of his reserve 27th Infantry to assemble behind the weakened position of the 24th. Leaving the 2d Battalion to back up Task Force Wilson, Col. John H. Michaelis, commander of the 27th, started the remainder of his regiment toward the right sector around midnight.[20]

In the 2d Division sector, General Keiser spent the 26th rebuilding his line in the Ch'ongch'on valley. Near dawn he authorized Col. Charles C. Sloane, commander of the 9th Infantry, to pull in the 2d Battalion, which, although it had survived the night without difficulty, was precariously separated from the remainder of the regiment. Colonel Sloane then established the entire regiment in a tight position facing generally northwest on high ground along the upper bank of the Ch'ongch'on. To compensate losses in the 3d Battalion the previous night, Keiser gave Sloane all but Company C of the 2d Engineer Combat Battalion for use as infantry.[21]

East of the Ch'ongch'on, Keiser assigned the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 23d Infantry to defend the ground just below Chinaman's Hat. While Colonel Freeman brought the 2d Battalion up from Kunu-ri into position at the right of the 1st, members of the 61st Field Artillery Battalion, at Keiser's order, returned to the position they had vacated during the night, just above Freeman, and recovered most of the equipment

[18] 25th Div WD, 25–26 Nov 50; 25th Div PORs 64 and 65, 26 Nov; 25th Div PIR 150, 26 Nov 50.

[19] 25th Div WD, 26 Nov 50; 25th Div O1 20, 26 Nov 50.

[20] 25th Div WD, 26 Nov 50; 25th Div O1 21, 26 Nov 50; 24th Inf WD, 26 Nov 50; 1st Bn, 24th Inf, WD, 26 Nov 50; 27th Inf Hist Nar, Nov 50; 27th Inf Unit Rpt 82, 26 Nov 50.

[21] 2d Div WD, Nov 50; 2d Div G3 Jnl, 26 Nov 50; 9th Inf Hist Nar, Nov 50.

they had left behind. As the other two artillery battalions that had been below Freeman already had done, the 61st then moved south to new and safer positions.[22]

Keiser gave his sole remaining reserve, the 3d Battalion, 23d Infantry, a blocking assignment behind Freeman's front, placing it a mile east of the valley road town of Kujang-dong on a lateral road leading to and serving as the main supply route for the 38th Infantry. Several times through the day Colonel Peploe had asked division to reinforce the 38th Infantry with part of the 23d. His central companies had been severely reduced by casualties; only a handful of Company A's men returned to the regimental line after fighting free of encirclement north of the Paengnyong, and Company G, after its engagement at the west end of the regimental line, counted no more than one officer and sixty men. But Keiser had judged the Ch'ongch'on valley to be the more critical area. Although Freeman's 3d Battalion could have been sent to Peploe, Keiser chose not to commit the last of his reserves to the line.[23]

Peploe thus was left to his own resources in defending his Paengnyong position. However he decided to hold his ground, he had to take into account that no north-south road served his sector. The only accessible road ran laterally close behind his forward units, westward to Kujang-dong and southeastward toward Tokch'on in the ROK II Corps sector. In setting a defense, he had to remain north of this road to insure the receipt of supplies and to hold open an exit route should a withdrawal be called.[24]

By noon Peploe knew that his problem was much greater than just holding a road-poor interior position with reduced forces. Fragmentary reports made it clear that the ROK II Corps had been under attack for some time, that the South Koreans were not holding their positions, and that the 38th Infantry was fast becoming the right flank unit not only of the 2d Division and the IX Corps but also of the Eighth Army.

The piecemeal information coming out of the ROK II Corps sector left obscure the exact chronology of the attacks against General Yu's forces. It appeared that during the previous night a Chinese regiment had skirted the 21st Regiment of the ROK 8th Division at the far right of the Eighth Army front and broken through the flank position of the division's 16th Regiment six miles east of Yongdong-ni. A stronger force of two regiments at the same time infiltrated the ROK front at the center of the 7th Division's position and at the boundary between the 7th and 8th Divisions. By 0800 on the 26th heavy enemy pressure had developed across the entire corps front except in the sector of the 3d Regiment on the west flank. By that hour the 8th Division's 21st Regiment on the corps east flank had given up its position and moved south to Yongdong-ni, and its 10th Regiment was withdrawing to the same area. Elsewhere, as reported at that hour by the IX Corps liaison officer

[22] 2d Div WD, Nov 50; 2d Div G3 Jnl, 26 Nov 50; 2d Div Arty S3 Jnl, 26 Nov 50; 23d Inf, Nar Sum, Nov 50; 23d Inf WD, Nov 50.

[23] 2d Div WD, Nov 50; 2d Div G3 Jnl, 26 Nov 50; 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nov 50.

[24] 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nov 50.

with General Yu, "things are slightly confused."[25]

In the late morning hours the Chinese who had infiltrated the South Korean front moved ten miles south to Tokch'on, blocked the road serving as the main ROK supply route north and south of town, and trapped the 2d Regiment of the reserve ROK 6th Division inside. Another Chinese regiment attacked south between the 5th and 8th Regiments of the ROK 7th Division, inducing both to withdraw. Since the 8th Division already had left its position, the withdrawal of the ROK 7th's 5th and 8th Regiments left only the 3d Regiment on the original front. The 3d, too, soon vacated its left flank position and sought safety by sliding westward into the IX Corps sector behind the positions of the 38th Infantry.[26]

Thus, near noon of the 26th, the ROK II Corps front folded. General Yu attempted through the afternoon and evening to establish a new line between Tokch'on and Yongdong-ni but was defeated by broken communications, the confusion of the withdrawals, and continued enemy pressure. By dark the Chinese who had come through the center of the corps front fully controlled the Tokch'on area. The smaller group that had come in from the northeast had seized Yongdong-ni and moved south another four miles to the village of Maengsan. Yu planned next to defend Pukch'ang-ni, twelve miles south of Tokch'on, at the junction of roads leading south from Tokch'on and southwest from Maengsan. He intended to hold the Pukch'ang-ni area with the remaining strength of the ROK 6th Division and while holding his position there to reorganize his 7th and 8th Divisions as the remnants drifted south. But until and unless such a reorganization could be accomplished, the ROK II Corps could not be considered an effective force.[27]

After learning of the collapse of the ROK II Corps, Colonel Peploe bent the 38th Infantry's line. Retaining his 2d Battalion in its western position above the road to Kujang-dong, he pivoted the remainder of the regiment on Somin-dong, a village near the center of his sector, so as to form a horseshoe-shaped arc running from his existing left flank eastward to Somin-dong, then southeast along the high ground rising west of the road to Tokch'on. Peploe's forces completed this shift by 1800, thus securing the regimental supply route and refusing the Eighth Army's new right flank.[28]

Peploe's adjustment, of course, protected the flank only at the immediate front. As reports of the ROK II Corps failure reached army headquarters, General Walker moved against the possibility of deeper incursions from the northeast.

From Tokch'on and Maengsan, two roads entering the army rear were open to the Chinese, one leading west from Tokch'on to Kunu-ri, the other running deeper through Pukch'ang-ni to Sunch'on. To block the deeper route, Walker relieved the 1st Cavalry Divi-

[25] Eighth Army WD, G3 SS Rpt, 26 Nov 50; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 26 Nov 50; Eighth Army POR 410, 26 Nov 50; IX Corps PIR 61, 26 Nov 50; IX Corps G2 Spot Rpt 2982, 252255 Nov 50; IX Corps G3 Spot Rpt 1692, 260800 Nov 50.

[26] Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, Briefing for CG, 26 Nov 50; IX Corps PIR 61, 26 Nov 50; IX Corps PIR 62, an. 2, 27 Nov 50; 2d Div G3 Jnl, 26 Nov 50.

[27] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 26 Nov 50; Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, 27 Nov 50; IX Corps G2 Spot Rpt 3050, 261505 Nov 50.

[28] 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nov 50.

sion from protecting supply installations in the Kunu-ri and Sukch'on areas (substituting the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team and Philippine 10th Battalion Combat Team for that mission) and ordered it into position at Sunch'on and along the road to the east. Division commander Maj. Gen. Hobart R. Gay scheduled the move to begin on the 27th.[29]

To deny the Tokch'on–Kunu-ri road, Walker instructed General Coulter to send the IX Corps reserve, the Turkish brigade, from Kunu-ri eastward over that road and to clear Tokch'on. Once Tokch'on was retaken, Coulter was to place the Turks in defense of the town and tie their positions to those of the 2d Division to the northwest. Coulter moved one battalion of Turks to Wawon, about ten miles east to Kunu-ri, before midnight and planned to assemble another battalion there by daylight. At that time the Turks were to start for Tokch'on. Since employing the Turkish brigade would leave Coulter with few uncommitted troops, Walker also ordered the British 27th Brigade transferred to Coulter from the I Corps and moved to Kunu-ri.[30]

While Walker was able to draw troops from the quieter I Corps sector, General Milburn was by no means free of the threat posed by the Chinese attacks. Although the 24th Division far out on Route 1 appeared to have an open road to the Yalu ahead of it, any advance would perch it on a limb that could be chopped off by a deep Chinese penetration farther east. Milburn therefore ordered General Church's attack to a halt. Church meanwhile committed his 5th Regimental Combat Team to the right of his two regiments on Route 1 in a gap between his division and the ROK 1st Division, created and widened as they had moved forward on divergent axes. This move protected against an enemy strike from the T'aech'on area, where General Paik's forces had spent a difficult day beating off several strong Chinese attacks.[31]

In less that twenty-four hours, Chinese attacks thus had achieved effects both wide and deep. The Eighth Army's advance had been brought to a full halt; the ROK II Corps had been knocked completely out of position and almost completely out of action; and along most of the army line, commanders had been obliged to redeploy forces in an attempt to prevent further Chinese gains. By the night of the 26th, however, no one at Eighth Army headquarters had concluded that the Chinese had opened a major offensive. There was concern over the collapse of the ROK II Corps and the possibility that the Chinese might exploit the South Korean withdrawals. The intelligence staff raised the estimate of Chinese strength opposite the Eighth Army from 54,000 to 101,000. But the prediction of the enemy's most likely course of action continued to be that the Chinese would "conduct an active defense in depth along present line employing strong local counterattack."[32] In Tokyo, Maj. Gen. Charles A. Willoughby, the

[29] Rad, GX 30017 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG 1st Cav Div et al., 26 Nov 50; Eighth Army POR 412, 26 Nov 50; Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, 26 Nov 50; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 27 Nov 50.

[30] Rad, GX 30019 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG IX Corps, 26 Nov 50; Rad, GX 30022, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 26 Nov 50.

[31] 24th Div WD, 26 Nov 50; I Corps POR 225, 26 Nov 50.

[32] Eighth Army PIR 137, 26 Nov 50.

Far East Command G–2, tended to agree. Reporting to Washington around noon on the 26th, he stated that "should the enemy elect to fight in the interior valleys, a slowing down of the United Nations offensive may result."[33] The Chinese, meanwhile, prepared to continue what they called their Second Phase Offensive.

The Second Phase Offensive

In opening the offensive on the night of the 25th, *XIII Army Group* commander Li T'ien-yu had aimed his main attack at the IX Corps, in particular at the 2d Division, using units of the *39th* and *40th Armies*. In secondary attacks, forces of the *38th* and *42d Armies* had pushed the ROK II Corps out of position in the east while units of the *50th* and *66th*, mainly the latter, had launched assaults against the I Corps in the west. Li now planned to attack in greater strength. His western effort was to contain Milburn's forces while he continued his main attack against Coulter in the center, and he now planned to exploit the ROK II Corps' withdrawal and envelop the Eighth Army from the east.[34]

The *XIII Army Group* struck all along the Eighth Army line during the night of the 26th and through the 27th except on the west flank, where the *50th Army* was under instructions to contain the 24th Division. Other than aerial observers' sightings of numerous enemy groups in the high land mass above the center of the 24th's sector, General Church's forces had no contact.[35]

At the I Corps right, Su Ching-huai, the *66th Army* commander, struck hard at the ROK 1st Division in the T'aech'on area. Moving strong forces down the east side of the Taeryong River after dark on the 26th, Su quickly pushed the 11th Regiment out of position while a smaller force hit and penetrated the 12th Regiment west of the river. The 12th counterattacked and restored its position by daybreak, and General Paik committed the 15th Regiment to help the 11th on the east side of the Taeryong. But Su strengthened his attack through the 27th and forced the two ROK regiments east of the river to withdraw five miles.[36]

Su's attack posed a distinct threat to the 24th Division since its continuation conceivably could carry the *66th Army* along the east side of the Taeryong through the 24th's rear area. Such a move would cut off General Church's troops, all west of the river. Against this possibility, Church on the 27th moved the 19th Infantry from Napch'ongjong northeastward to Pakch'on, where it would be centrally located in the corps sector on the east side of the Taeryong in good position to block to the north. He also pulled back the 21st Regiment from Chongju to Napch'ongjong.[37]

The *66th Army* commander had had a good day, advancing five miles, forcing the commitment of the ROK 1st Division reserve, and inducing a rearward redeployment within the 24th Division. In addition, Su's forces advancing down the east side of the Taeryong had uncovered the left flank of the 35th Infantry and created an op-

[33] Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, p. 274.
[34] USAFFE Intel Dig, vol. 1, no. 4, 1–15 Feb 53.
[35] Ibid.; 24th Div WD, 27 Nov 50.
[36] I Corps PIR 73, 27 Nov 50; I Corps PORs 227 and 228, 27 Nov 50.
[37] Ibid.; 24th Div WD, 27 Nov 50.

portunity to envelop the 25th Division from the west. This open flank was only one of the problems facing the IX Corps: as the threat developed on the west, the *39th* and *40th Armies* pressed the main attack against the 25th and 2d Divisions from the north, and the *38th Army* started west toward the 2d Division to exploit its previous successes against the ROK II Corps.

On the west wing of the main effort, the *39th Army* attacked south astride the Kuryong River during the first hours of the 27th against the left and center of the 25th Division. The *117th Division* of the *39th* moved down the west side of the Kuryong toward the 35th Infantry while the *115th* and *116th Divisions* advanced against Task Force Wilson on the east side. Light forces leading the *117th* drove in the 35th's outposts around 0300, and an hour later two regiments assaulted the 35th's main defenses. Supported by mortars and machine guns, the Chinese dented the regimental line but lost heavily—374 Chinese bodies later were counted in front of the position—and broke off the engagement around 0800.[38]

East of the Kuryong, the leading forces of the *115th* and *116th Divisions* struck Task Force Wilson at the same hour that the 35th Infantry's outposts were hit. The initial assault carried some Chinese behind the task force line, and after first contact the Chinese increased their attack force to two full regiments.[39]

In response to the intensified assaults on the task force, General Kean ordered forward the 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry, assembled in reserve three miles behind Wilson's front. But before the 2d could move, some of the Chinese who had gotten in rear of Wilson's line reached the battalion's assembly area. The battalion held its own in the ensuing battle but was unable to move north. Others from the same enemy group bypassed the 2d and attacked the 8th Field Artillery Battalion in its firing position near the village of Ipsok, another mile south. Electing to withdraw, the artillerymen first lowered the tubes of their 105-mm. howitzers and fired point-blank into the attackers. The howitzer fire along with that of small arms and automatic weapons stalled the Chinese and enabled the battalion to disengage and move to new positions four miles to the south without losing equipment.[40]

Unlike the *117th Division* west of the Kuryong, the two divisions on the east disregarded losses and launched repeated assaults against Task Force Wilson. Judging Wilson's position no longer tenable and wary of the threat of envelopment posed by the Chinese in the T'aech'on area, Kean in midmorning of the 27th ordered his division to withdraw four miles to an east-west line running through Ipsok. To strengthen his defense, he assigned the 27th Infantry, less the 2d Battalion, to a sector of the new line between Task Force Wilson and the 24th Infantry.[41]

General Wilson used the 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry, to cover the disengagement of his task force and by 1830 had his units in the new position. By that time the 35th and 24th Regiments

[38] 25th Div PIR 131, 27 Nov 50; 25th Div PORs 67 and 68, 27 Nov 50; 35th Inf Hist Rpt, Nar, Nov 50.

[39] 25th Div WD, Nov 50; 25th Div PIR 131, 27 Nov 50.

[40] Ibid.; 25th Div PORs 67 and 69, 27 Nov 50; 27th Inf Hist Nar, Nov 50.

[41] 25th Div WD, 27 Nov 50; 25th Div OI 22, 27 Nov 50.

on the flanks had completed their withdrawals, and Colonel Michaelis had taken his 27th Infantry to its assigned sector. Having reached the Ipsok line, Kean once more had his left flank covered by the ROK 1st Division, and his forces were free, for the moment at least, of the punishing assaults of the *39th Army*.[42]

On the east wing of the main attack, the *40th Army* struck at several points along the 2d Division front. Shortly after dark on the 26th, Chinese forces came off Chinaman's Hat in a two-pronged assault on the 23d Infantry's position just east of the Ch'ongch'on. One prong penetrated the northeastern corner of Colonel Freeman's line and reached the regimental command post, forcing Freeman and his staff back to the 1st Battalion command post a quarter-mile south. Freeman counterattacked, using Company F, in regimental reserve, and the headquarters companies of the regiment and of both forward battalions. He regained the command post area but was driven out again almost immediately by fire from the surrounding high ground.[43]

Electing to await first light before attacking again, Freeman pulled all his forces south to positions around the 1st Battalion command post. At dawn the 1st and 2d Battalions returned to the former regimental headquarters area, found that the Chinese had withdrawn, and recovered most of the headquarters equipment intact. Through the remainder of the day, Freeman worked to reestablish his regiment in approximately the same position it had held the previous evening.[44]

An hour before midnight on the 26th, another strong force of Chinese attacked the 2d Battalion, 9th Infantry, near the center of the regimental line on the west side of the Ch'ongch'on. Supported by fire from mortars, 3.5-inch rocket launchers, and recoilless rifles, the Chinese loosened the 2d Battalion from its position and pushed it against the west bank of the river. In disarray, and at the expense of some weapons and equipment, the battalion forded the river and entered the 23d Infantry's area about the time Freeman was making his first attempt to regain his command post site. As the battalion crossed, Colonel Sloane, the regimental commander, called down artillery fire on the area his men had vacated. The Chinese neither followed the battalion across the Ch'ongch'on nor turned their attack against any other of Sloane's units.[45]

After crossing the river, the men of the 2d Battalion regained some order and reassembled by midafternoon near Kujang-dong. Though the battalion was by no means primed for further action, Colonel Sloane was obliged to recommit it to help protect his left flank, which had been made more susceptible to enemy attack by the 25th Division's withdrawal to Ipsok. By evening of the 27th the 2d Battalion again was on the west side of the Ch'ongch'on, this time

[42] 25th Div POR 68, 27 Nov 50; 25th Div G3 Activ Rpt, 27 Nov 50; 35th Inf Hist Rpt, Nar, Nov 50; 24th Inf Unit Rpt 57, 27 Nov 50; 27th Inf Unit Rpt 82, 27 Nov 50; 2d Bn, 27th Inf, Unit Jnl, 27 Nov 50.

[43] 23d Inf Comd Rpt, Nov 50; 23d Inf S3 Jnl, 26–27 Nov 50; 2d Div G2 Msg File, Msg 1341, 27 Nov 50.

[44] Ibid.

[45] 2d Div WD, 27 Nov 50; 2d Div POR 342, 27 Nov 50; 2d Div G3 Jnl, Entry 197, 26 Nov 50, and Entries 1, 3, 7, 16, 17, and 22, 27 Nov 50; 2d Bn, 9th Inf, Unit Jnl, 26 and 27 Nov 50.

at the extreme left of the regimental line.[46]

While Sloane and Freeman were able to concentrate on well-defined enemy attacks, Colonel Peploe to their right became embroiled in a melee in which the Chinese hit the 38th Infantry from several directions. The battle developed in a west-to-east pattern around the 38th's arch of position at Somin-dong, starting after dark on the 26th when Company C moved west to restore the former Company G position at the regimental left. The company had gone only part way when it was surrounded and split by Chinese coming from the northwest. Some of the Chinese passed by the encircled company, moved east between the front and the Kujang-dong road, and attacked Companies F and L, still holding the regiment's central positions, from the rear. At the same time, the remainder of the 3d Battalion to the southeast came under intense and accurate small arms fire from the east.[47]

This action opened a series of confused engagements lasting the night and the daylight hours of the 27th. Units of the *40th Army* launched hard assaults on the 38th Infantry from the north while forces of the *38th Army* came out of the ROK II Corps sector in strong strikes from the east. Both attack groups, whose total strength was estimated as high as two divisions, tried, with some success, to work troops in behind Peploe's lines.[48]

As Chinese appeared behind the lines and as companies were penetrated or pushed back, Peploe dispatched whatever uncommitted force was available at a given moment to clear the rear area or plug a gap at the front. Battalions gradually lost identity as lettered companies became intermingled. Peploe used the ROK 3d Regiment for extra help. Instructions down the chain of command from army had given him control of the South Korean unit after it had sideslipped westward out of the ROK II Corps sector. Assisted by the 2d Reconnaissance Company, which halted most of the withdrawing South Koreans by blocking the Kujang-dong road not far behind the 38th's lines, Peploe assembled the bulk of the regiment and inserted it piecemeal in his arc of defenses.[49]

Notwithstanding these additional troops, Peploe lost ground on both the north and east, and in the afternoon of the 27th he ordered a withdrawal into the southwestern portion of the regimental sector. Executing a covered withdrawal, the 38th and ROK 3d Regiments at dusk occupied a perimeter two miles in diameter centered midway between Kujang-dong and Somin-dong. The new position allowed Peploe's men still to cover the Kujang-dong road, and the withdrawal gave them a respite from attack.[50]

General Keiser meanwhile decided that the 2d Division could improve its chances of stopping the Chinese by withdrawing into a shorter and tighter

[46] Ibid.

[47] 2d Div G3 Jnl, 26 Nov 50; 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nov 50.

[48] IX Corps PIR 62, 27 Nov 50; IX Corps G2 Spot Rpts 3108 and 3172, 27 Nov 50; IX Corps G3 Spot Rpt 1830, 27 Nov 50; 2d Div G3 Jnl, 26–27 Nov 50; 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nov 50.

[49] Eighth Army POR 412, 26 Nov 50; IX Corps G3 Spot Rpt 1757, 26 Nov 50; 2d Div POR 342, 27 Nov 50; 2d Div G3 Jnl, 26 Nov 50; 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nov 50.

[50] 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nov 50; Sit Overlay with 2d Div POR 342, 27 Nov 50.

line centered on the Ch'ongch'on just above Kujang-dong and lying across a series of hilltops from a point three miles west of the river to a point four miles southeast of it. The 23d Infantry was to defend the left half of the line, including the east bank of the Ch'ongch'on, while the 38th Infantry refused the flank on the right. The 9th Infantry was to assemble in reserve, its bulk at Yongdam-ni five miles below Kujang-dong and one battalion at Pugwon another five miles south. Keiser ordered the move to the new line to begin the following day.[51]

The Threat of Envelopment

By nightfall on the 27th there was little question anywhere in the Eighth Army that the Chinese were on the offensive. The army G–2, Colonel Tarkenton, hedged a bit, describing the simultaneous attacks across the army front and especially the strong daylight attacks against the 38th Infantry as having the "appearance" of a planned enemy offensive. To Col. John A. Dabney, the army G–3, it was "evident that the UN offensive of 24 November had merely anticipated a similar full-scale enemy offensive by about two days."[52]

Plans for continuing the Eighth Army offensive were not yet canceled. But the adjustment of troop dispositions to block further Chinese gains was the order of the day. In the IX Corps sector, General Kean already had pulled the 25th Division to the Ipsok line and General Keiser had ordered the 2d Division to consolidate at Kujang-dong. In the I Corps sector, General Milburn had drawn up orders for a five-mile withdrawal on the 28th by the 24th Division and ROK 12th Regiment so that he would have a more closely knit position on line with the remainder of the ROK 1st Division, which had been pushed back at the I Corps right.[53]

General Walker's attention was directed in particular to the threat of envelopment from the east. That the ROK II Corps could establish effective defenses at Puckch'ang-ni was a forlorn hope. Although General Yu had recovered straggling troops of the ROK 7th and 8th Divisions, no organized units of the two divisions had reached the Pukch'ang-ni area. Yu had new plans for establishing a delaying position at Pukch'ang-ni and a defensive perimeter three miles south of the town with the 7th and 19th Regiments of the ROK 6th Division. But since Yu's corps truly was defunct, General Walker revised his corps sector assignments on the evening of the 27th to give General Coulter's IX Corps responsibility for Yu's area.[54]

While widening Coulter's sector on the east, Walker reduced it on the west by attaching the 25th Division to the I Corps. He marked what had been the boundary between the 25th and 2d Divisions as the new boundary between the I and IX Corps and extended it south past Kunu-ri and Sunch'on, with the two towns and the connecting road resting in the IX Corps sector. To unify fully the effort to block enemy incursions from the northeast and east, he

[51] 2d Div Opn O 11, 27 Nov 50.

[52] Eighth Army PIR 138, 27 Nov 50; Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, 27 Nov 50.

[53] I Corps Opn Dir 25, 27 Nov 50.

[54] Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, 27 Nov 50; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 27 Nov 50; Rad, GX 30039 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA et al., 27 Nov 50.

attached the 1st Cavalry Division to the IX Corps and directed General Yu to give Coulter his "most effective division, or composite . . . equivalent." With these adjustments, the IX Corps order of battle at dark on the 27th included the 2d Division, 1st Cavalry Division, Turkish brigade, British 27th Brigade, and the ROK 6th Division.[55]

General Gay meanwhile had placed two regiments of the 1st Cavalry Division east of Sunch'on. The 8th Cavalry was assembled at Sinch'ang-ni, twelve miles east of Sunch'on, and 7th Cavalry was in position astride the Sunch'on road at Kujong-ni, fifteen miles east and slightly north of Sunch'on. Gay's newest orders, received from Walker just before the division was attached to the IX Corps, called for a seven-mile advance on the 28th to the Pukch'ang-ni area where the cavalrymen were to unite with the ROK 6th Division in blocking the road to Sunch'on.[56]

Northwest of the cavalry division, across twenty miles of ridges relieved only by a westward-flowing stretch of the Taedong River, the Turkish brigade blocked the Kunu-ri road from a position at Wawon. Early on the 27th the Turks, accompanied by a platoon of tanks from the 72d Tank Battalion, had started east from Wawon in accordance with Walker's previous orders to clear Tokch'on. But General Coulter, with Walker's approval, halted this move near midday after receiving several reports of an enemy regiment moving westward from the direction of Tokch'on. To forestall a meeting engagement between the untried Turks and the approaching enemy force, Coulter instructed the brigade commander, Brig. Gen. Tahsin Yasici, to place his unit in defenses seven miles east of Wawon. Misunderstanding Coulter's message, General Yasici turned his forces around and took them to positions astride the Kunu-ri road just east of Wawon. This left the Turks approximately where they had first assembled, ten miles east of Kunu-ri, and now eight miles south of the perimeter into which Colonel Peploe had drawn his 38th and ROK 3d Regiments.[57]

The position of the Turkish brigade, regardless of Yasici's error, and the positions of the 1st Cavalry Division and ROK 6th Division out along the Sunch'on road provided at least some protection against an envelopment by blocking the likely axes of enemy approach. By morning of 28 November, in any case, General Walker's attention was diverted to his northern front where during the night and early morning hours his forces again absorbed strong attacks near Taech'on, in the Ch'ongch'on valley, and at the army east flank.

In the west, the *66th* and *39th Armies* teamed on attack southeast and south between the Taeryong and Kuryong rivers around midnight on the 27th. Each army drove toward Yongsan-dong, a village centered between the two rivers five miles behind the right of the ROK 1st Division and the left of

[55] Ibid.

[56] Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, 27 Nov 50; Rad, GX 30039 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA et al., 27 Nov 50; Rad, GX 30038 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG 1st Cav Div, 27 Nov 50; 1st Cav Div G3 Jnl, 21–30 Nov 50; 7th Cav Regt Hist Rpt, Nov 50.

[57] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 27 Nov 50; IX Corps WD, 27 Nov 50; Rad, IXACT–396, CG IX Corps to Sn Adv 1st TAFC, 27 Nov 50; Rad, IXACT–390, CG IX Corps to CG 1st TAFC, 27 Nov 50.

the 25th Division. Situated at the intersection of roads serving the flank units of the two divisions, Yongsan-dong was a choice objective. Its seizure not only would cut both routes but also would give the Chinese access to good roads leading to Ch'ongch'on River crossings some fifteen miles to the south and southeast near Anju and Kunu-ri.

The *66th Army* enjoyed rapid success against the reduced numbers of the ROK 11th and 15th Regiments. Attacking east and south, the army occupied Yongsan-dong and, before easing its attack near dawn, drove the South Koreans one to two miles below the village. The ROK ground loss, as on the day before, uncovered the left flank of the 25th Division. The flank was exposed at the same time that the *39th Army* pushed a strong attack down the west side of the Kuryong against the 35th Infantry.

In response to both threats, General Kean ordered Col. Henry G. Fisher, commander of the 35th Infantry, to pull his regiment four miles southeast behind the Kuryong. This move would face the 35th to the northwest, thus would refuse the division's left flank, and since the new line crossed the road leading southeast from Yongsan-dong, would obstruct any Chinese attempt on Kunu-ri. After the Chinese assaults against the 35th subsided around daylight, the regiment started south, battalions in column, over a route leading through Yongsan-dong. Unaware that the Chinese had taken the village, the column was surprised by enemy fire. Casualties were not heavy, but a large number of vehicles was lost as the battalions fought through, and Colonel Fisher spent several hours reassembling his regiment near the village of Yongbyon east of the Kuryong.[58]

The *39th Army* also sent forces down the east side of the Kuryong against Task Force Wilson. By dawn Wilson had withdrawn from contact to a position immediately northeast of the 35th Infantry's new location. General Kean meanwhile moved the 27th Infantry to positions in line with and to the right of Wilson's force.[59]

The total result of the Chinese attacks against the I Corps through the night of the 27th was a wedge driven about five miles between the Taeryong and the Kuryong. Any deepening of the wedge portended the isolation of General Milburn's forces west of the Taeryong and the envelopment of those behind the Kuryong.

In the IX Corps sector, the *40th* and *38th Armies* repeated the pattern of their previous attacks by launching several regimental assaults against the 2d Division during the night and in the first daylight hours of the 28th. West of the Ch'ongch'on, two Chinese regiments concentrated on the 2d Engineer Combat Battalion and 1st Battalion of the 9th Infantry. Both battalions withdrew across the Ch'ongch'on. East of the river, three enemy regiments took turns hitting the 38th Infantry from the north and east, gradually forcing Colonel Peploe's forces toward Kujang-dong. As a total effect, the pressure

[58] I Corps PORs 230 and 231, 28 Nov 50; I Corps PIR 74, 28 Nov 50; I Corps Intel Sum 222, 28 Nov 50; 25th Div POR 70, 28 Nov 50; 35th Inf Hist Rpt, Nar, Nov 50; 1st Bn, 35th Inf, WD, 28 Nov 50; 2d Bn, 35th Inf, WD, 27–28 Nov 50; 3d Bn, 35th Inf, Nar of Opns, Nov 50.

[59] 25th Div POR 70, 28 Nov 50; 27th Inf S3 Jnl, 27–28 Nov 50.

from the northwest against the 9th Infantry and from the north and east on the 38th Infantry was folding the wings of the 2d Division's defense.[60]

Attacks against the 38th Infantry were still in progress at midmorning when General Walker radioed withdrawal orders to General Milburn and General Coulter. Electing to break contact long enough to organize more effective defenses, Walker instructed Milburn to occupy a bridgehead over the Ch'ongch'on from the mouth of the river north to Pakch'on, then east to the river. Coulter was to defend a line from Pugwon, on the lower bank of the Ch'ongch'on five miles above Kunu-ri, southeast to the village of T'aeul-li near the Eighth Army–X Corps boundary. The line cut all likely Chinese axes of advance, including a road passing through T'aeul-li which might be used in a deep strike at P'yongyang.[61]

The withdrawal was under way by midafternoon. In the I Corps sector, General Milburn used the ROK 1st Division as cover while the 24th and 25th Divisions moved back to the Ch'ongch'on bridgehead. General Paik employed his 11th and 15th Regiments in the covering operations while his 12th Regiment moved to a bridgehead sector from the east bank of the Taeryong to a point four miles due south of Yongsan-dong. Behind Paik's cover, the 24th Division withdrew easily. At the new line, the 21st Regiment refused the west flank from a semicircular position west of the Taeryong that blocked Route 1 at the left and touched the Taeryong at the right just opposite the ROK 12th Regiment. General Church assembled his remaining forces east of the Taeryong around Pakch'on.[62]

At the I Corps right, General Kean broke contact with the *39th Army* by pulling the 25th Division some two miles south. Dissolving Task Force Wilson, he faced all three regiments to the north astride the Kuryong. The 35th Infantry returned to the west side of the river and occupied positions adjoining those of the ROK 12th Regiment. Eastward from the Kuryong to a point just short of the west bank of the Ch'ongch'on opposite Pugwon, the 27th and 24th Regiments barred the road leading southward from Yongbyon to the Ch'ongch'on crossing three miles below their position and to Kunu-ri seven miles south.[63]

At nightfall on the 28th, as the I Corps completed its occupation of the Pakch'on-Pugwon sector of the new army line, the South Koreans covering the withdrawal were still forward between the Taeryong River and Yongsan-dong. The two regiments had fought off forces of the *66th Army* through most of the day, the 15th Regiment actually managing to regain the Yongsan-dong crossroads. General Paik kept them where they were, instructing them to withdraw to the bridgehead after daylight on the 29th.[64]

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[60] 2d Div PIR 70, 28 Nov 50; 1st Bn, 9th Inf, Nar Diary, Nov 50; 2d Engr Bn, Unit Hist Rpt, Nov 50; 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nov 50.

[61] Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, 28 Nov 50; Eighth Army PIR 139, 28 Nov 50; Rad, GX 30051 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG IX Corps et al., 28 Nov 50; I Corps Opn Dir 26, 28 Nov 50; IX Corps Opn O 5, 28 Nov 50; 25th Div OI 23, 28 Nov 50; 2d Div Opn O 12, 28 Nov 50; I Corps POR 231, 28 Nov 50; IX Corps POR 192, 28 Nov 50.

[62] I Corps Opn Dirs 26 and 27, 28 Nov 50; I Corps PORs 231 and 232, 28 Nov 50; 24th Div WD, Nov 50.

[63] I Corps PORs 231 and 232, 28 Nov 50; 25th Div WD, Nov 50.

[64] I Corps PORs 231 and 232, 28 Nov 50.

In the IX Corps sector, General Coulter directed the 2d Division to delay the Chinese as long as possible as it withdrew to positions between Pugwon and the Turkish brigade at Wawon. Coulter attached the Turks to General Keiser to unify control in the Pugwon-Wawon sector and, as a final feature of the corps withdrawal, moved the reserve British 27th Brigade from Kunu-ri to Chasan, five miles south of Sunch'on, where it would be centrally located to assist either the 2d Division or the 1st Cavalry Division. The cavalrymen were to advance up the Sunch'on road, not withdraw, to join the ROK 6th Division in defenses near Pukch'ang-ni. For the time being, Coulter issued no instructions for placing troops far out to the east at T'aeul-li.[65]

General Keiser planned to occupy his new sector by placing the 9th Infantry temporarily at Pugwon and the 38th Infantry and ROK 3d Regiment about four miles north and northeast of Kunu-ri between the 9th Infantry and the Turks at Wawon. The 23d Infantry and the 72d Tank Battalion were to cover these moves and fight a delaying action as they themselves withdrew. The 23d, once it reached Pugwon, was to relieve the 9th Infantry, and the 9th, now severely reduced by casualties, was then to go into division reserve.[66]

Keiser was unable to get all of his units into their new positions on the 28th because of the time consumed in moving four regiments down the Ch'ongch'on valley road. Much of the time the road between Kujang-dong and Kunu-ri was the scene of a tight traffic jam.

The 38th and ROK 3d Regiments led the withdrawal. Breaking away from Chinese pressing from the north and east, Colonel Peploe took his forces west to Kujang-dong, then south to an assembly about a mile east and slightly south of Kunu-ri. Since it was then 2000, he elected to await daylight before occupying his new positions above Kunu-ri.

Behind Peploe, the 9th Infantry recrossed the Ch'ongch'on onto the valley road and marched south to Pugwon, arriving about 2300. From Pugwon, Colonel Sloane deployed his 1st Battalion on the west side of the Ch'ongch'on opposite the town and to the immediate right rear of the 24th Infantry, 25th Division. Below the river, Sloane's 3d Battalion occupied high ground a mile south of Pugwon and the 2d Battalion blocked the valley road from positions a mile above town.

At the tail of Peploe's column and again at the rear of Sloane's forces, Colonel Freeman had tacked on a battalion of the 23d Infantry. In preparation for relieving the 9th Infantry, these two battalions assembled two miles below Pugwon. Freeman's remaining forces, the 1st Battalion and the 72d tankers, brought up the division rear, fighting off Chinese who sensed Keiser's move and began trailing the slow withdrawal. Company A, Freeman's rear guard, deployed at least five times against enemy assaults. With *40th Army* troops close behind, Freeman's infantry and armored troops passed be-

[65] IX Corps Opn O 5, 28 Nov 50; IX Corps WD, 28 Nov 50.

[66] The account of the 2d Division operations on 28 November is based on the following sources: 2d Div Opn O 12, 28 Nov 50; 2d Div WD, Nov 50; Hist, 9th Inf. Nov 50; Comd Rpt, 23d Inf, Nov 50; 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nov 50; 72d Tk Bn Comd and Unit Hist Rpt, Nov 50.

hind the 2d Battalion, 9th Infantry, at 2330.

Keiser planned to complete his deployment between Pugwon and Wawon after daylight on the 29th, but events dictated otherwise. The *40th Army* forces that had trailed the division's withdrawal began pushing the 2d Battalion, 9th Infantry, behind Pugwon around midnight. At the opposite end of the division line, the Turkish brigade completed a three-mile withdrawal to the village of Sinnim-ni just before midnight following a series of engagements with forces of the *38th Army* at Wawon.[67]

Though General Yasici had held his ground against the Chinese, he chose to withdraw west to Sinnim-ni at dark—a move that did not conform with orders for a new line through Wawon. A lack of communications explained this second instance in which Turk tactics were contrary to instructions. When General Coulter sent the Turks toward Tokch'on, the brigade had direct contact with Coulter's headquarters by radio and wire. But similar connections did not exist between Keiser's headquarters and the Turks when the latter were attached to the 2d Division. Neither Yasici nor his advisers knew of the brigade's attachment to the 2d Division until very late on the 28th, and their wire and radio contacts with corps were out at the time Yasici ordered the withdrawal to Sinnim-ni.[68]

Not long after midnight, *38th Army* forces reached Sinnim-ni and reopened their assaults against the Turks. Hence, both Wawon and Pugwon, the anchor points of the line assigned to the 2d Division, were gone. General Keiser's alternative would be to organize defenses closer to Kunu-ri, how close depending on the outcome of the continuing attacks on both flanks.

Southeast of the Turks, General Gay moved none of his cavalrymen forward to the ROK 6th Division's position three miles below Pukch'ang-ni. Although Gay had been instructed to do so on the 28th, he elected to wait until the 5th Cavalry, then marching south out of the Kunu-ri area, completed its move into the division's sector.

The 5th Cavalry had started that morning, moving south over a road from Kaech'on, five miles east of Kunu-ri. Near the village of Samso-ri, seven miles below Kaech'on, about a hundred Chinese in the bordering high ground opened small arms and machine gun fire on the intelligence and reconnaissance platoon leading the regiment. Only the platoon sergeant and three men escaped. The 2d Battalion, following the platoon, deployed in the high ground on both sides of the road and attacked south to clear the enemy block but encountered an even larger force and failed to advance. Reforming on the road, the cavalrymen bypassed the enemy roadblock and proceeded toward Sunch'on. Because of this entanglement at Samso-ri, the regi-

[67] At least one of the Wawon engagements proved to have been a case of mistaken identity when 125 "prisoners" sent to the rear by the Turks turned out to be members of the ROK 6th and 7th Divisions. The South Koreans apparently moved west after being squeezed out of Tokch'on and blundered into the Turks either ahead of or amidst the Chinese assaults on the brigade. See IX Corps G2 Spot Rpts 3252, 28 Nov 50, and 3301, 29 Nov 50; 2d Div G3 Jnl, 28 Nov 50; 2d Div G2 Jnl, Entry J–1447, 28 Nov 50; Mono, "Turkish U.N. Brigade Advisory Group, 20 November 1950–13 December 1950," copy in CMH.

[68] "Turkish U.N. Brigade Advisory Group, 20 Nov–13 Dec 50."

ment was still assembling near Sunch'on long after dark on the 28th.[69]

As a result of Gay's decision to wait for the 5th, the 7th Cavalry, earmarked to join the South Koreans below Pukch'ang-ni, stood fast at Kujong-ni, seven miles below the ROK position. The regiment was now to move forward on the 29th. The 5th Cavalry meanwhile was to organize defenses north of Sunch'on, and the 8th Cavalry was to move from Sinch'ang-ni to Songch'on and block the area's main lateral road, which passed through Songch'on and reached P'yongyang.[70]

Gay's delay in reinforcing the ROK 6th Division below Pukch'ang-ni, the Turk withdrawal from Wawon, and the loss of Pugwon in the Ch'ongch'on valley all worked against the rather high hopes General Walker held for the line he had delineated. While calling for the withdrawal to that line, he also had instructed his forces to prepare for "the Eighth Army resumption of offensive at early date."[71] With a bridgehead over the Ch'ongch'on and with all main roads blocked, he hoped that he could turn back the Chinese and then revitalize his own march to the border.

Any such achievement, even of turning back the Chinese, began to appear doubtful long before the IX Corps' problems arose. By midday Walker had ample evidence of a strong Chinese push toward Sunch'on. Aerial observers saw at least four enemy regiments pass southward through Pukch'ang-ni toward the ROK 6th Division's position below town. In the hills five miles southeast of Pukch'ang-ni they saw what they believed to be two thousand enemy cavalrymen, and they reported another enemy force to be moving north from Songch'on toward the 7th Cavalry at Kujong-ni. Although a sortie by General Gay's 16th Reconnaissance Company revealed no large force in the Songch'on area, the reconnaissance troops did discover and kill ten enemy soldiers in the town.[72]

Against this growing threat of a deep envelopment, Walker ordered General Milburn to transfer all but one regiment of the 24th Division to the IX Corps and to dispatch it to Sunch'on as soon as all I Corps forces reached the bridgehead line to which they were then withdrawing. To compensate this reduction of Milburn's forces, Walker alerted the British 29th Brigade for a northward move to Anju and attachment to the I Corps.[73]

The Turkish brigade's engagements with *38th Army* forces at Wawon made it clear that the northern wing of the *XIII Army Group*'s enveloping force was headed for Kunu-ri. From all the evidence reaching the army G–2 on the 28th, Colonel Tarkenton judged that the Chinese would sustain their pressure against Kunu-ri and would attempt to envelop the Eighth Army via the Sunch'on road. He placed in a "maybe"

[69] 5th Cav WD, 28 Nov 50; 5th Cav S2–S3 Jnl, 28 Nov 50.

[70] IX Corps G3 Spot Rpts 1962 and 1971, 28 Nov 50; 1st Cav Div POR 378, 28 Nov 50; 7th Cav Hist Rpt, Nov 50; 8th Cav G3 Jnl, 28 Nov 50.

[71] Rad, GX 30051 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG IX Corps et al., 28 Nov 50.

[72] Eighth Army PIR 139, 28 Nov 50; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 28 Nov 50; 1st Cav Div G3 Jnl, 28 Nov 50.

[73] Rad, GX 30051 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG IX Corps et al., 28 Nov 50; Rad, GX 30053 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 28 Nov 50; Rad, GX 30061 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CO 29th Brit Brig, 28 Nov 50; Rad, GX 30068 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 28 Nov 50; Rad, GX 30068 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 28 Nov 50.

category a deep enemy strike at P'yongyang through Songch'on. The possibility of these maneuvers was increased by the findings of observers flying over enemy territory above Tokch'on. In that area they sighted a "continuous train" of enemy troops moving south in small groups through gullies, down ridgelines, and over all roads and trails.[74] The commander of the *XIII Army Group* obviously knew the maxims of offensive operations. Having gained an advantage over Walker by turning the Eighth Army's east flank, he now was hurriedly reinforcing his effort in the zone where so far he had achieved the greatest success.

Tarkenton's conclusions were almost exactly what the enemy group commander had in mind. Li indeed was shifting the emphasis of his attack from a penetration of the Eighth Army line in the Ch'ongch'on valley to the exploitation of his gains in the former ROK II Corps sector. His *42d Army*, in greater strength, was swinging southwest toward Sunch'on, and the bulk of his *38th Army* was now headed for Kunu-ri, from the east and northeast.[75]

The 5th Cavalry's engagement with the roadblock at Samso-ri introduced an important feature of Li's plans. The cavalrymen estimated the force they had encountered at anywhere from a battalion to a regiment, but even the top estimate was only half what the Chinese intended to emplace there. When the *38th Army* had turned west to exploit the collapse of the ROK II Corps, Li had ordered the entire army to occupy the Samso-ri area and cut off UNC forces withdrawing via roads leading south out of Kunu-ri. Colonel Peploe's quick action in turning the 38th Infantry to refuse the army flank and General Walker's employment of the Turkish brigade at Wawon apparently had pulled most of the *38th* away. On the 28th, in any event, just two regiments of the *113th Division* remained under orders to block the roads below Kunu-ri. But two regiments in a well-set ambuscade could raise havoc with any withdrawing Eighth Army column, and their most likely victim, since it probably would move south from Kunu-ri in any future withdrawal, was the 2d Division.[76]

General Walker, understandably, was not particularly concerned at the moment over one roadblock that had troubled one regiment. As the situation stood late on the 28th, the chances that the Chinese pushing in from the east could capture Kunu-ri and Sunch'on were good. Walker's problem and larger interest therefore was to prevent the Chinese from isolating the bulk of the Eighth Army by cutting westward across its rear. The obvious answer was a withdrawal, one deep enough to take the Eighth Army below the Chinese thrusts from the east.

[74] Eighth Army PIR 139, 28 Nov 50.
[75] FEC Intel Dig, vol. 1, no. 4, 1–15 Feb 53.
[76] 5th Cav WD, 28 Nov 50; 5th Cav S2–S3 Jnl, 28 Nov 50; FEC Intel Dig, vol. 1, no. 4, 1–15 Feb 53.

CHAPTER V

The Battle of the Changjin Reservoir

General Walker's 27 and 28 November reports of the Chinese attacks on the Eighth Army and General Almond's messages that the X Corps, too, had been attacked swept away General MacArthur's previous certainty that the Chinese would not intervene in strength. "We face an entirely new war," MacArthur notified the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the morning of the 28th. His "strategic plan for the immediate future" was to pass to the defensive.[1]

To develop defensive moves, he summoned both Walker and Almond to a meeting in Tokyo on the night of the 28th. Listening first to Walker's appraisal of the threat to the Eighth Army, he turned to Almond for a report of developments during and following the X Corps' advance toward Mup'yong-ni the day before.[2]

X Corps Dispositions, 26 November

On the eve of Almond's Mup'yong-ni attack, the 3d Infantry Division with the 1st Korean Marine Corps Regiment attached was protecting port facilities, airfields, and supply routes in the Wonsan-Hungnam area. A primary task of the division commander, Maj. Gen. Robert H. Soule, was to block three roads reaching the coastal region from the Taebaek Mountains to the west, where North Korean guerrillas estimated as high as 25,000 were concentrated. One battalion of the 15th Infantry deployed thirty miles inland from Wonsan blocked the lateral P'yongyang-Wonsan road. *(Map 5)* Some thirty miles north, troops of the 65th Infantry blocked a road from Tokch'on that reached the coastal area midway between Wonsan and Hungnam; another thirty miles north, a battalion of the 7th Infantry at Sach'ang-ni cut a lateral road permitting access to the Hamhung-Hungnam complex.[3]

In the ROK I Corps zone far to the northeast of Hungnam, Brig. Gen. Song Hyo Chan had taken his Capital

[1] Telecon, Gen Hickey and Col Landrum, 1225, 27 Nov 50, in GHQ, UNC, files; Rad, GX 30065 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CINCFE, 28 Nov 50; Rad, C69953, CINCFE to JCS, 28 Nov 50.

[2] Eighth Army WD, Aide-de-Camp Diary, 28 Nov 50; Interv, Appleman with Gen Almond.

[3] This section is based on the following sources: Sit Map, no. 155, Part 1, G3 Sec, CINCFE Comd Rpt, 27 Nov 50; GHQ, FEC, G3 Opns Rpt no. 156, 27 Nov 50; X Corps Comd Rpt, 27 Nov–10 Dec 50; 3d Div Comd Rpt, Nov 50; 7th Div Comd Rpt, Chosin Reservoir, 27 Nov–12 Dec 50; 7th Div Action Rpt, From Hyesanjin to Hungnam Outloading, 21 Nov–20 Dec 50; Max Dolcater, ed., *3d Infantry Division in Korea, 1953*; Appleman, *South to the Naktong*, pp. 730, 732; Lynn Montross and Nicholas A. Canzona, *U.S. Marine Operations in Korea, 1950–1953*, vol. III, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign* (Washington, 1957).


THE X CORPS ZONE
26 November 1950
Forward Positions, Evening, 26 Nov
Airfield
0
40 MILES
TO MUSAN
TO HOERYONG
Tumen R
Ch'ongjin
XX
ROK CAP
CHINA
Yalu R
Hyesanjin
3
32
Samsu
III
17
Hapsu
XX
ROK 3
Kapsan
7
XX
ROK 1
Changjin
Changjin
1 MAR
7
P'ungsan
Kilchu
PUJON RES
EIGHTH
X
CHANGJIN RES
Songjin
Yudam-ni
III
5 MAR
III
7MAR
Hagaru-ri
Kot'o-ri
Tanch'on
Pukch'ong
SEA OF JAPAN
Chinhung-ni
Sinhung
Sudong
Majondong
Sach'ang-ni
Oro-ri
Hamhung
Chigyong
Hungnam
Yonp'o
XX
ELMS
3
Wonsan
CHINA
Tumen R
U.S.S.R.
Hoeryong
Musan
NE KOREA
0
40
Ch'ongjin
MILES

MAP 5



THE CHANGJIN RESERVOIR (NORTH END)

Division five miles beyond Ch'ongjin, the industrial center and port sixty-five miles below the USSR border. Having met only desultory resistance from the North Korean *IV Corps*, General Song intended next to veer inland to Hoeryong, reported to be a mobilization center for new North Korean units, on the Manchurian border forty-five miles due north.

Brig. Gen. Choi Suk had sent the two forward regiments of his 3d Division out of Hapsu at right angles to each other. Against light, sporadic North Korean resistance, the 23d Regiment had moved six miles north of Hapsu toward the border town of Musan, and the 22d Regiment had traveled fifteen miles west toward Hyesanjin. General Choi's 26th Regiment was in Tanch'on, near the coast due south of Hapsu, en route to the 7th Division zone as a substitute for forces of the 7th being shifted to the Changjin Reservoir area to accommodate the 1st Marine Division's advance on Mup'yong-ni.

In the 7th Division's zone, the 17th Infantry occupied Hyesanjin on the Yalu and the area ten miles southwest. The bulk of the 32d Infantry held the Kapsan-Samsu region below the 17th. Division commander Maj. Gen. David G. Barr was in the process of moving a combat team (the bulk of the 31st Infantry; the 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry; all but one battery of the 57th Field Artillery Battalion; and Battery D, 15th



THE HAGARU-RI AREA. *East Hill is in the background.*

Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion) into his newly added zone at the Changjin Reservoir. The 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry, commanded by Lt. Col. Don C. Faith, Jr., already had reached the east side of the reservoir. With Colonel Faith's battalion was a Marine Corps tactical air control party commanded by Capt. Edward P. Stamford. Col. Allan D. MacLean, commander of the 31st Infantry and now commanding the combat team, was still moving the bulk of his regiment and the artillery units south from various locations along the Pukch'ong-Hyesanjin road en route via Hamhung to the new zone.[4]

The lower half of the long supply road between Hungnam and the Changjin Reservoir and a stretch of narrow-gage railway lay in the area assigned to the 3d Division. The northern half of the road and the region beyond rested in the zone of the 1st Marine Division. The 1st Marine Regiment, commanded by Col. Lewis B. Puller, held three key points along the supply road. Farthest south, the 1st Battalion occupied Chinhung-ni, Marine railhead and starting point

[4] Prompted by a X Corps warning order on 24 November to relieve Marine forces on the east side of the reservoir, General Barr had dispatched his nearest unit, the 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry, then at Hamhung en route to join its parent unit in the Kapsan-Samsu area. The 1st Battalion, 31st Infantry, stayed on the Pukch'ong-Hyesanjin road to help protect the open west side of the division's supply road.

of the road's twisting ten-mile climb through Funchilin Pass to Kot'o-ri, where Colonel Puller had established regimental headquarters. The 2d Battalion manned a perimeter around Kot'o-ri and a small airstrip above the village. The 3d Battalion, less Company G still to the south awaiting transportation, was in Hagaru-ri, eleven miles north of Kot'o-ri at the lower end of the reservoir. The battalion and a variety of service and headquarters troops were developing a defense of the division command post, supply dumps, hospital facilities, and airstrip in the Hagaru-ri area.

North of Hagaru-ri, the 5th and 7th Marines had extended the division's holdings up both sides of the reservoir. The bulk of the 7th Marines, commanded by Col. Homer L. Litzenberg, Jr., held Yudam-ni, fourteen miles to the northwest, and the 5th Marines, under Lt. Col. Raymond L. Murray, had gone ten miles north over a road following the east bank of the reservoir. Orders for the Mup'yong-ni attack had halted the 5th at this point. Considering Colonel Murray's regiment fresher than the 7th, division commander Maj. Gen. Oliver P. Smith had designated the 5th to open the advance to the west. Murray's forces consequently had begun to shift west to Yudam-ni, the starting point of the attack. The 2d Battalion was in Yudam-ni, having left the area east of the reservoir upon the arrival of the 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry. The remainder of Murray's regiment remained in place awaiting relief by the balance of Colonel MacLean's combat team.

The Advance Toward Mup'yong-ni

Near the southwest corner of the Changjin Reservoir, roads from the west, north, and southeast met just outside Yudam-ni. Because enemy forces had not defended this rare road junction, the Marine division G–2, Col. Bankson T. Holcomb, Jr., believed the 5th Marines would encounter only weak opposition when they started toward Mup'yong-ni. The absence of enemy patrolling and the failure of ground and aerial reconnaissance to reveal any large enemy concentrations nearby supported his judgment. Contradicting it were reports from civilians of sizable enemy concentrations around Yudam-ni, but these reports were considered misinterpretations of North Korean Army remnants moving away from and around the Yudam-ni area.[5]

The X Corps G–2, Col. James H. Polk, expected the enemy to resist the attack, especially when the Eighth Army and the marines closed on Huich'on and Mup'yong-ni. But Polk's estimate of initial opposition was optimistic. Besides remnants of the North Korean *2d* and *5th Divisions* withdrawing northward off to the west of Yudam-ni, Polk believed just two Chinese divisions, the *89th* and *124th*, were anywhere near the town. The *126th Division* as well as the *124th*, both of the *42d Army*, previously had been identified in the reservoir area. But the *126th* had sideslipped southwestward at least as far as Sach'ang-ni, as evidenced by a 23 November skirmish between troops of the *126th* and the ROK 26th Regiment, then holding the town.

[5] This section based on X Corps WD, Sum, Nov 50; X Corps Comd Rpt, 27 Nov–10 Dec 50; 1st Marine Div Opn O 24–50, 26 Nov 50; 7th Div Opn O 26, 26 Nov 50; Montross and Canzona, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign*.

Polk was not sure where the *124th* was located but believed that the division likely had moved into defenses north of the reservoir. The *89th Division*, whose army affiliation Polk had not yet determined, had briefly opposed the marines at Hagaru-ri on 23 November. He no longer knew the location of the *89th* but considered the division a probable opponent in the Mup'yong-ni venture. While allowing that the *124th* and *89th Divisions* could be reinforced, Polk proposed withdrawal, delaying action, and limited attacks as the extent of enemy capabilities. He offered no order of probability, but he, as well as Colonel Holcomb of the Marine division, seemed to consider an enemy withdrawal to be the most likely event.

General Smith, on the other hand, believed his marines would meet Chinese in strength west of Yudam-ni, a belief that had prompted his decision to pass the fresher 5th Regiment through the 7th in the opening attack. Smith's more cautious attitude had been apparent for some time. He had not shared the mid-November optimism for an early UNC victory, and from the start of his division's advance toward the Changjin Reservoir he had doubted the wisdom of stringing forces over a long, poor, and unprotected mountain road.

Supporting Smith's judgment of probable resistance, three Chinese captured by the 7th Marines on the 26th asserted that the *58th*, *59th*, and *60th Divisions* of the *20th Army* were in the Yudam-ni area and would move south and southeast from Yudam-ni to cut the marines' supply road. This information, however, had no effect on plans for the Mup'yong-ni attack. Neither did incoming reports of strong attacks against the Eighth Army.

Smith ordered the 5th Marines to strike first for the village of Yongnim-dong, twenty-seven miles west of Yudam-ni, where the Marines' route of advance joined a road leading southwest along the upper reaches of the Ch'ongch'on River to Huich'on. The 7th Marines, when passed through, were to protect the division supply road between Yudam-ni and Sinhung-ni, a village located in the Toktong Pass midway between Yudam-ni and Hagaru-ri. Smith appointed the 1st Marines, in and below Hagaru-ri, as division reserve. His reconnaissance company, then pulling west flank security duty off the left rear of the division, was to reconnoiter north of Yudam-ni; the 41st Independent Commando, Royal Marines, only recently attached to the division, was to come forward from Hungnam to protect the marines' left flank by reconnoitering southwest of Yudam-ni.[6]

In planning the advance, Smith had assumed the full relief of the 5th Marines east of the reservoir by noon of the 26th. He apparently expected the entire 7th Division combat team to arrive by that hour; but General Barr had called for the relief of the marines by a minimum of one infantry battalion, an

[6] Earlier, on the night of 12–13 September 1950, the British company had participated in a landing operation at Kunsan on the west coast of South Korea as part of an attempt to distract North Korean attention from the coming landing at Inch'on. The unit had then returned to Japan and been attached to Naval Forces, Far East, until 20 November when, at its own request to serve with American marines, it returned to Korea and was attached to the 1st Marine Division. See Heinl, *Victory at High Tide*, p. 79, and Montross and Canzona, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign*, p. 140.

order satisfied by the arrival of the 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry. In any event, the remainder of Colonel MacLean's forces did not reach the new zone by noon on the 26th, nor by 0800 on the 27th, the scheduled hour of the Marine advance. The full 5th Marines consequently did not reach Yudam-ni on the 26th, and the plan of attack had to be changed. Since Colonel Murray was with his forces east of the reservoir, Colonel Litzenberg, commanding the 7th Marines, took charge of the opening effort.

Forces available to Litzenberg included the bulk of the 7th Marines and the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines. The 7th held a perimeter rimming the valley in which Yudam-ni was located. The 1st Battalion and two companies of the 2d occupied high ground north of town and the terminal heights of two ridges to the south and southeast overlooking the road to Hagaru-ri. The 3d Battalion held the terminal hills of a ridge to the southwest. Between the latter and an unoccupied ridge to the northwest ran the road to Mup'yong-ni. The 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, was to attack over this road from an assembly at the edge of Yudam-ni.

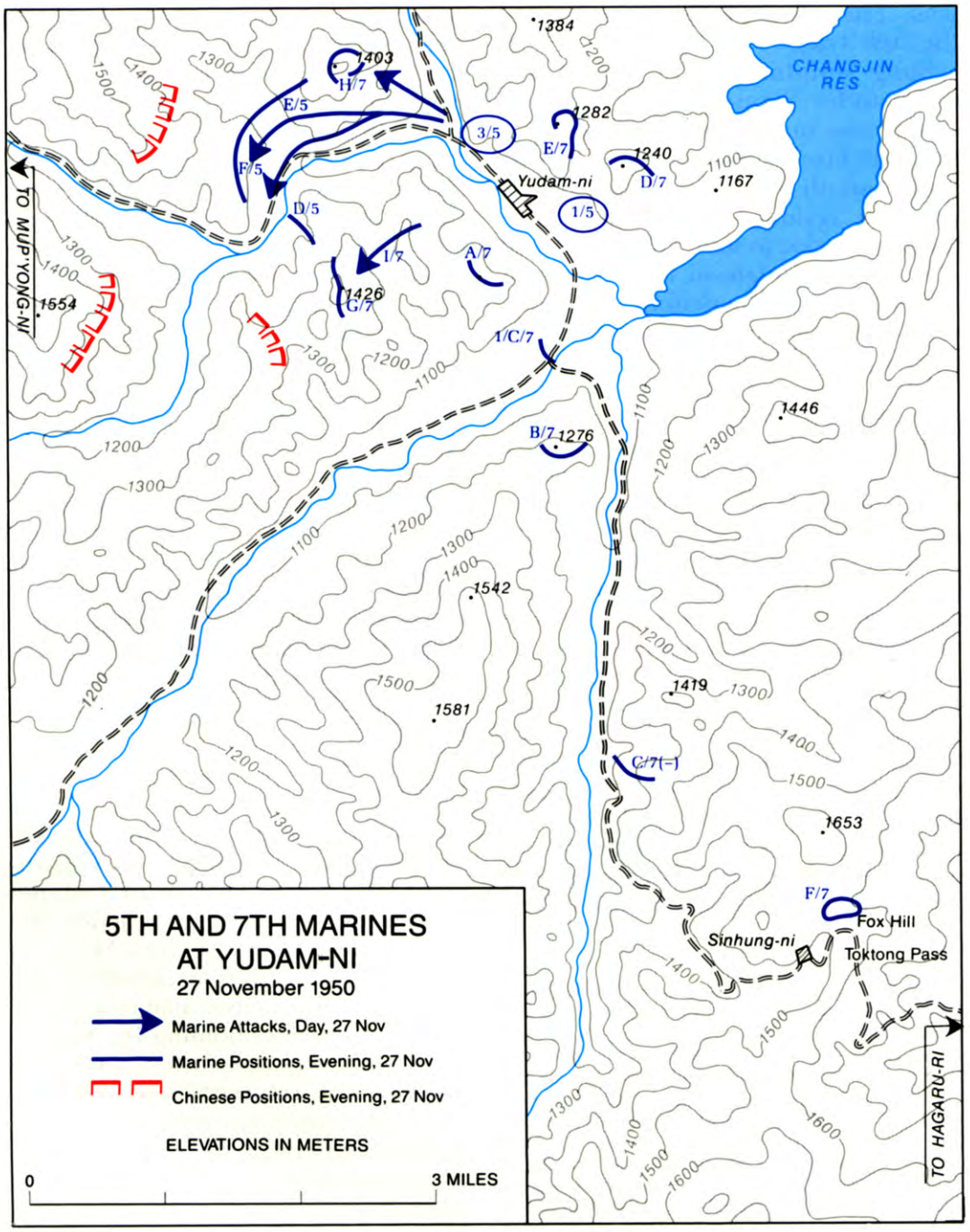
Litzenberg instructed the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, to seize a pass ten miles to the west in its opening attack. The 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, was to make parallel advances along the ridges on either side of the road, and Litzenberg's 1st Battalion was to assume the flank security roles originally assigned to the reconnaissance company and the 41st Commando, neither of which had reached Yudam-ni.

After an uncomfortable night when the temperature dropped to zero degrees, Fahrenheit, and a wind off the frozen reservoir intensified the cold, the marines had their attack under way by 0815 on the 27th. *(Map 6)* On the ridge northwest of the axis road, Company H, 7th Marines, met no opposition and seized the terminal height, Hill 1403, by midmorning. Below the road, Company G, 7th Marines, moved unopposed down the southwest ridge and within thirty minutes occupied the next commanding height, Hill 1426. In the middle, the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, moved over the road in a column of companies, meeting nothing in the first three-quarters of a mile except several undefended obstacles across the road.

The easy march ended there. The forces both on the road and on the southwest ridge came under fire about the time the pilot of an observer plane overhead reported Chinese across the entire Marine front. Help from the ground and air supporting arms allowed the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, to move only another quarter mile before intense enemy fire forced the battalion to discontinue. A similar additional gain was all Company G, 7th Marines, could manage on the southwest ridge. All told, the day's advance netted a mile.

The IX Army Group Attacks

The *124th Division*, contrary to X Corps and Marine estimates, was not in the reservoir area. It had moved southwest into the Eighth Army sector with its parent army, the *42d*. But the *89th Division* was present, and the Chinese captured on the 26th had truthfully identified the *58th, 59th,* and *60th Divi-*


5TH AND 7TH MARINES
AT YUDAM-NI
27 November 1950
Marine Attacks, Day, 27 Nov
Marine Positions, Evening, 27 Nov
Chinese Positions, Evening, 27 Nov
ELEVATIONS IN METERS
0
3 MILES
CHANGJIN RES
Yudam-ni
Sinhung-ni
Fox Hill
Toktong Pass
TO MUPYONG-NI
TO HAGARU-RI
1384
1403
1282
1240
1167
1554
1426
1446
1276
1542
1581
1419
1653
H/7
E/5
F/5
D/5
I/7
A/7
G/7
3/5
E/7
D/7
1/5
I/C/7
B/7
C/7(-)
F/7

MAP 6

sions. These four divisions constituted the *20th Army.*[7]

Sung Shih-lun, the *IX Army Group* commander, launched the *20th* and *27th Armies* in attacks on the night of the 27th. From the north, the *27th Army* moved south on the west side of the reservoir against Yudam-ni and down the eastern side to seize Hagaru-ri. The *20th* struck Yudam-ni from the west and made ever-deepening southeastward swings at the Marine positions and supply road below Yudam-ni.

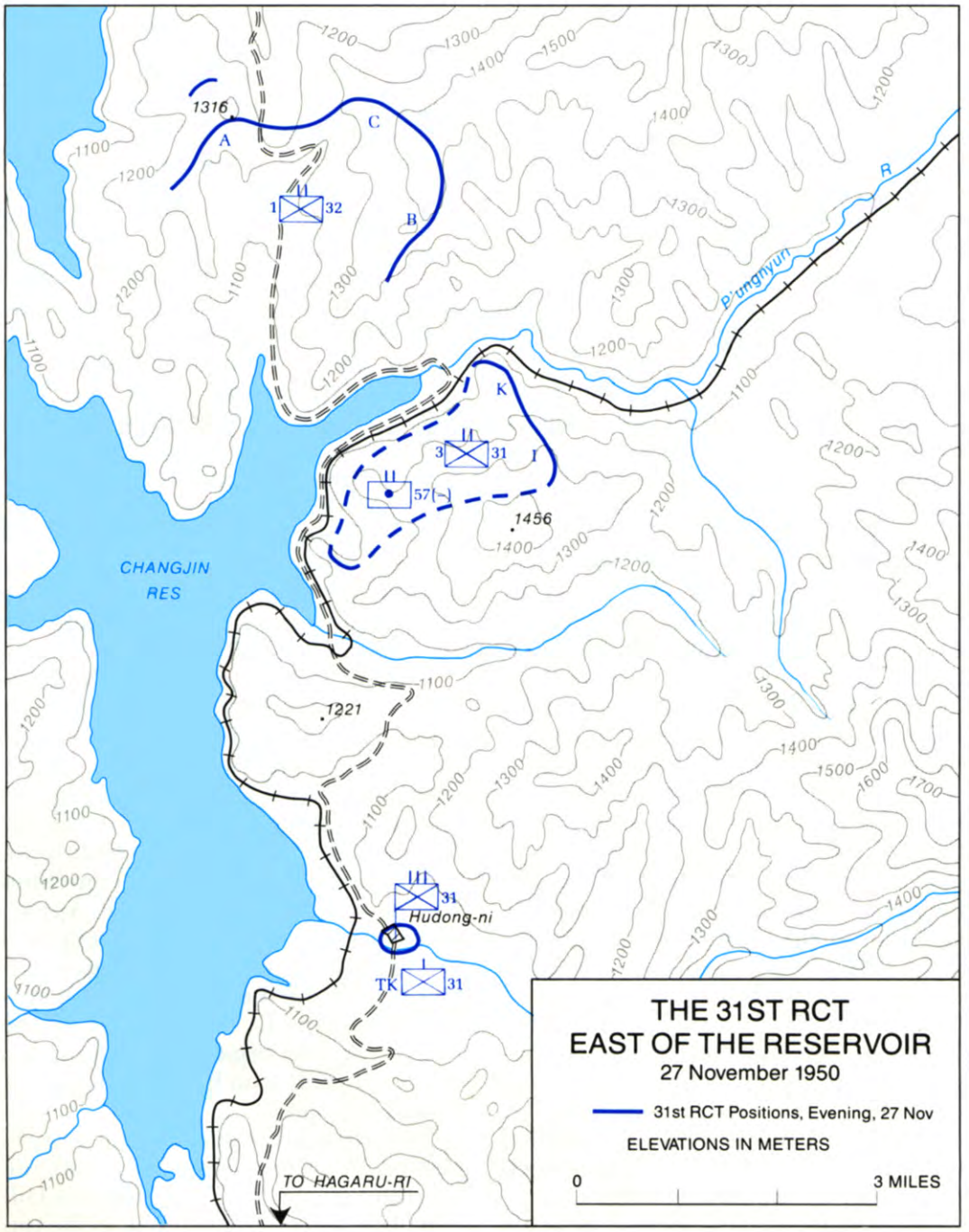
Nieh Feng-chin, commander of the *27th Army*, sent his *79th Division* toward Yudam-ni and his *80th Division* to seize Hagaru-ri. The *80th* first had to eliminate Colonel MacLean's combat team, most of which had gone into position north of Hagaru-ri by dark on the 27th. *(Map 7)* The 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry, sat astride the road ten miles north of Hagaru-ri. Four miles south, the 3d Battalion, 31st Infantry, and the 57th Field Artillery Battalion held positions where the road made a hairpin turn around a narrow finger of the reservoir at the mouth of the P'ungnyuri River. MacLean's command post and tank company were in Hudong-ni, a village another four miles south. The 2d Battalion, 31st Infantry, was still en route. By orders from X Corps headquarters, which controlled all movement of convoys over the reservoir road, the battalion for the time being was halted at Hamhung.

Liu Fei, the *20th Army* commander, committed all four of his divisions to the southeastward attack. At Yudam-ni, all but one regiment of the *89th Division* moved after dark on the 27th toward the marines on the ridge northwest of the road to Mup'yong-ni. The *59th Division* started a shallow swing below Yudam-ni to cut the fourteen-mile stretch of road between Yudam-ni and Hagaru-ri. Below the *59th,* the *58th Division* swung wider to attack Hagaru-ri and cut the road immediately below the town. The *60th Division* took a still deeper route through the mountains toward Kot'o-ri; and, in the deepest move, the remaining regiment of the *89th Division* started over a mountain track leading south from Yudam-ni to Sach'ang-ni in the sector of the 3d Division.

Yudam-ni

Colonel Murray had moved the remainder of the 5th Marines to Yudam-ni on the 27th as more of Colonel MacLean's combat team reached the eastern side of the reservoir. Murray's 1st and 3d Battalions assembled in the valley, creating a substantial reserve for the ten companies holding the heights north, northwest, southwest, and south of town. This reserve, a fairly tight infantry line, and the support of forty-eight artillery pieces and two regimental 4.2-inch mortar companies gave the marines a reasonably good defense. More precariously situated were Companies C and F of the 7th Marines, which had outposted the supply road

[7] This section and the one following are based on USAFFE Intel Dig No. 99, 16–31 Jan 53; Order of Battle Information, Chinese Communist Third Field Army, GHQ, FEC, 1 Mar 51; X Corps Comd Rpt, 27 Nov–10 Dec 50; X Corps WD, Sum, Nov 50; 7th Div Comd Rpt, 27 Nov–12 Dec 50; Mono, "Chosin Reservoir," 1st Bn, 32d Inf, 24–30 Nov 50, 3d Hist Det, copy in CMH; 3d Div Comd Rpt, Nov 50; Dolcater, *3d Infantry Division in Korea*; Captain Russell A. Gugeler, *Combat Actions in Korea* (Washington: Combat Forces Press, 1954), pp. 62–87; *7th Infantry Division in Korea* (Atlanta: Ambert Love Enterprises, n.d.); Montross and Canzona, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign;* MS, Lt. Col. C. P. Miller, "Chosin Reservoir, November–December 1950," copy in CMH.


1316
A
C
B
1
32
K
3
31
I
57
1456
CHANGJIN
RES
1221
31
Hudong-ni
TK
31
TO HAGARU-RI
P'ungnyuri
R
THE 31ST RCT
EAST OF THE RESERVOIR
27 November 1950
31st RCT Positions, Evening, 27 Nov
ELEVATIONS IN METERS
0
3 MILES

MAP 7

from Hagaru-ri. Each company held an isolated perimeter, Company C on a spur five miles southeast of Yudam-ni, Company F at Toktong Pass two miles farther southeast.

At 2100, assault troops of the *89th Division* reached the three Marine companies defending the northwest ridge at Yudam-ni. *(Map 8)* Small enemy groups jabbed lightly at the Marine line for a half hour; grenades and mortar and machine gun fire came next; then bugle calls and whistle blasts; and finally a sharp attack on a narrow front at the boundary between Companies F and E, 5th Marines, the left and center companies. The Chinese quickly penetrated but then found themselves hemmed in by Marine fire from the shoulders of the salient they had created. Losing heavily, they called off their attack around midnight. Another force meanwhile assaulted Company H, 7th Marines, the rightmost company, on Hill 1403. The Chinese knocked the right flank platoon out of position within minutes but delayed further attempts to advance when Marine artillery and mortar fire came down on them.

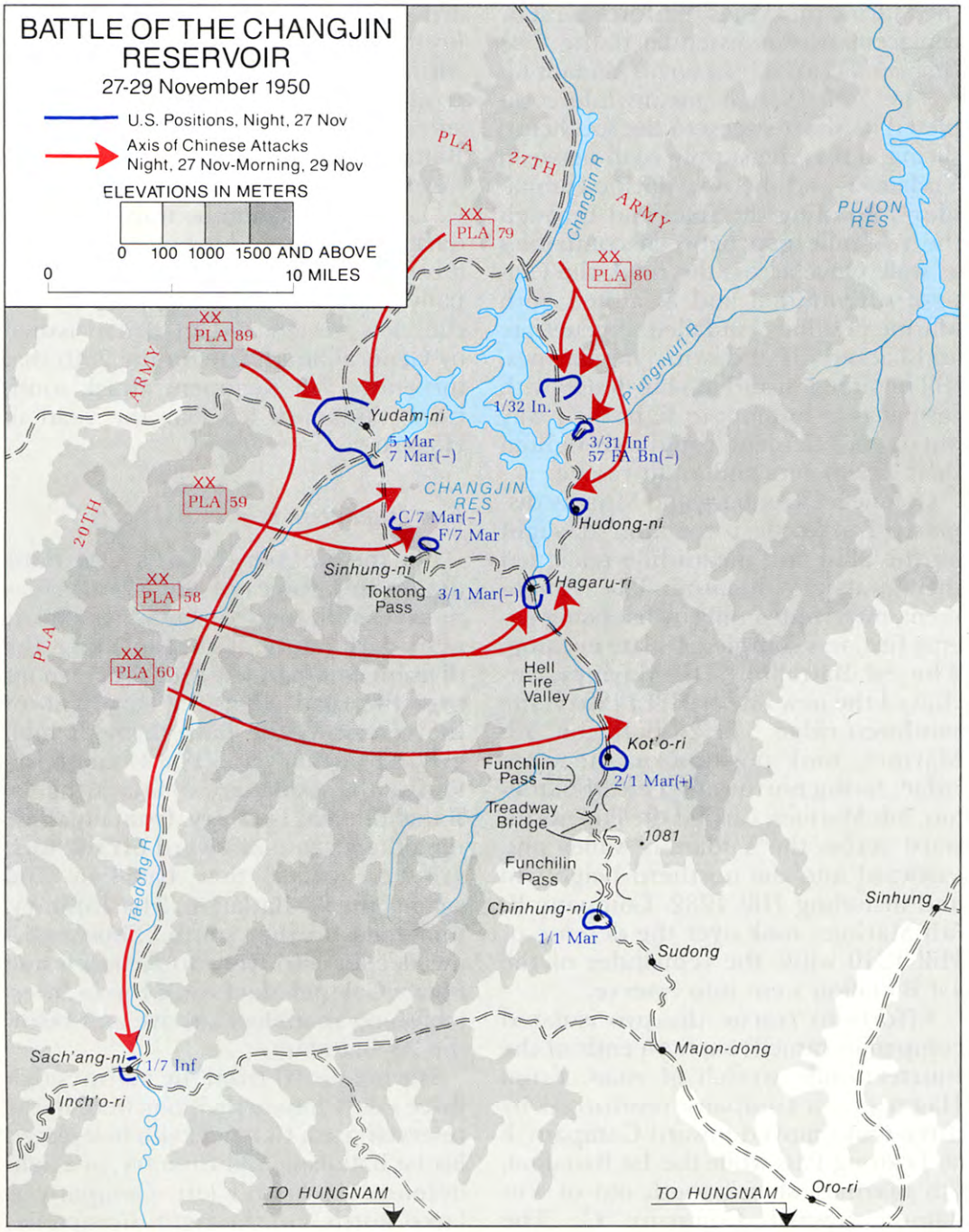
Refilling their forward ranks, the Chinese renewed their attack at 0300, striking all three Marine companies. They went nowhere against the left and center companies but by dawn forced Company H, 7th Marines, off Hill 1403. This gain offered the Chinese an opportunity to sweep behind and isolate the other two companies. Hence, though the Chinese attacks dwindled after daylight, the marines were obliged to give up the northwest ridge.

In company with the *89th*'s attack, the *79th Division* moved south through the mountains confining the reservoir on the west. The division commander committed all three regiments, directing them first to occupy the high ground immediately above Yudam-ni.

Four heights dominated the *79th*'s initial objective, Hill 1167 next to the reservoir and Hills 1240, 1282, and 1384 stair-stepped to the west. Companies D and E, 7th Marines, occupied the central hills, 1240 and 1282. A platoon from Company I, 5th Marines, and an attached platoon of South Korean police held a spur below 1384. The *237th Regiment* moved against Hill 1384 on the west, the *235th* toward Hill 1240 in the center, and the *236th* toward Hill 1167 nearest the reservoir. But the *235th* and *236th* veered too far west and climbed toward Hills 1282 and 1240, respectively, losing an opportunity to flank or envelop the Marine defenses via unoccupied Hill 1167.

Finding 1384 unoccupied, the commander of the *237th* sent a company down the spur to the south. The company pushed the two platoons off the spur, and its fire forced the headquarters and service company of the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, away from a position around the battalion command post in a draw below the spur. Apparently unaware that they had exposed the command post, the Chinese attempted no further gains. This hiatus gave Company G, 5th Marines, of the reserve time to organize and launch a counterattack which by daylight regained the spur.

To the east, repeated frontal assaults between midnight of the 27th and late morning on the 28th failed to win Hill 1282 but carried the Chinese to the top of Hill 1240. High losses so crippled


BATTLE OF THE CHANGJIN RESERVOIR
27-29 November 1950
U.S. Positions, Night, 27 Nov
Axis of Chinese Attacks Night, 27 Nov-Morning, 29 Nov
ELEVATIONS IN METERS
0 100 1000 1500 AND ABOVE
0 10 MILES
PLA 27TH ARMY
Changjin R
XX PLA 79
XX PLA 80
PUJON RES
P'ungnyuri R
XX PLA 89
ARMY
Yudam-ni
1/32 In.
5 Mar
7 Mar(-)
3/31 Inf
57 FA Bn(-)
CHANGJIN RES
XX PLA 59
20TH
C/7 Mar(-)
F/7 Mar
Hudong-ni
Sinhung-ni
Toktong Pass
3/1 Mar(-)
Hagaru-ri
XX PLA 58
PLA
XX PLA 60
Hell Fire Valley
Kot'o-ri
Funchilin Pass
2/1 Mar(+)
Treadway Bridge
1081
Funchilin Pass
Chinhung-ni
1/1 Mar
Sinhung
Sudong
Taedong R
Majon-dong
Sach'ang-ni
1/7 Inf
Inch'o-ri
TO HUNGNAM
TO HUNGNAM
Oro-ri

MAP 8

the Marine units that reinforcement or replacement was essential if the *79th Division* was to be held out of Yudam-ni.

The *59th Division* meanwhile completed its short sweep to the southeast, slicing across the supply road between Yudam-ni and the two Marine companies outposting the road and through the two-mile gap between companies as well. Once across the road, the Chinese surrounded and assaulted both Marine positions but failed to penetrate and backed off at dawn. The marines, still hemmed in and too burdened with casualties to attempt to fight their way out of encirclement, could only tighten their perimeters and await rescue.

Colonels Litzenberg and Murray dispatched a rescue force after daylight on the 28th and meanwhile realigned their units at Yudam-ni. The realignment, interrupted only by harassing enemy fire, was complete by late evening. The 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, anchored the new line at Hill 1426 on the southwest ridge. The 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, took position on the same ridge, facing northwest. The 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, carried the line northward across the Yudam-ni valley and eastward into the northern heights to and including Hill 1282. Company B, 5th Marines, took over the defense of Hill 1240 while the remainder of the 1st Battalion went into reserve.

Efforts to rescue the two isolated companies came from both ends of the fourteen-mile stretch of road. From Hagaru-ri, a company reinforced by three tanks moved toward Company F at Toktong Pass while the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, struck south out of Yudam-ni toward Company C. The Hagaru-ri troops made only half the distance to Toktong Pass before small arms and mortar fire from Chinese on both sides of the road forced their withdrawal. At the other end of the road segment, stiff opposition on both sides of the road so slowed the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, that dark had fallen by the time it reached Company C. Lest the battalion be trapped in the darkness, Colonel Litzenberg ordered it back to Yudam-ni. Hence, only Company C was retrieved. Company F's rescue now rested on an order issued by General Smith late on the 28th that the entire 7th Regiment attack south from Yudam-ni to clear the road to Hagaru-ri.

East of the Reservoir

On the *IX Army Group*'s east flank the leading forces of the *80th Division* moved south toward Hagaru-ri shortly after dark on the 27th. Liu Yung, the division commander, sent some troops over the road along the east bank of the reservoir, the bulk through high ground farther east. The Chinese following the road were to attack the 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry, frontally while the others came westward off the high ground against that battalion and against the 3d Battalion, 31st Infantry, four miles farther south. Those moving deeper also were to separate and isolate Colonel MacLean's forces by establishing roadblocks above and below the 3d Battalion.

Having heard from the marines that three new Chinese divisions were in the reservoir area, Colonel Faith had placed his 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry, in a tight defense. At Faith's left, Company A faced north. On the right, Companies C and B held a line curving south to face the high ground to the east. As

Liu's forces approached, however, Faith was occupied with plans for starting the battalion north toward the border at dawn next day. Colonel MacLean's order for the advance had reached Faith around 2100, and at 2200 he had assembled his company commanders at the battalion command post for instructions.

Chinese patrols brushed the battalion line while Faith was briefing his officers. As company commanders scrambled back to their units, an attack hit Company A from the north while another from the high ground to the east struck at the boundary between Companies B and C. In assaults that lasted the night, the Chinese dented each company position, seized a knob of ground at the boundary between B and C, and managed to move around Company A and force the company mortars out of position. Yet when the Chinese lifted their attacks at dawn, Faith's position was reasonably sound. Through the day Faith reclaimed all ground lost except the knob on the east, which the Chinese, though struck by several combinations of air and ground attacks, refused to yield. Faith's casualties through the night and day approached sixty.

At the lower perimeter, the 3d Battalion, 31st Infantry, and 57th Field Artillery Battalion came under attack near the same hour as Faith's forces. Companies I and K nearest the high groud to the east received the first assaults and were pressed southwest toward the artillery. Those wounded in the close fighting included the commanders of both the 3d Battalion and the artillery battalion. The Chinese next forced the men of Battery A away from their howitzers; but after combinging forces around the guns of Battery B, the infantrymen and artillerymen finally halted the Chinese and turned back further assaults until the Chinese withdrew at dawn. Afterward, the 3d Battalion and the artillery, harassed only by mortar fire, moved into a tight perimeter near the lower bank of the ice-covered finger of the reservoir.

Early in the afternoon of the 28th, General Almond flew by helicopter to Colonel Faith's position. He awarded Faith and two other men the Silver Star and just before leaving appraised the Chinese encountered as only remnants fleeing north and announced that the X Corps attack would continue. But his words apparently were an attempt to raise morale, not a true appraisal of the enemy. On the previous day he had visited Yudam-ni, where Marine commanders informed him that they had encountered strong Chinese forces at three points of the compass. On the 28th, before flying to Faith's position, he had stopped at Hagaru-ri where General Smith brought him up to date on the Marine division's situation, and he had visited Colonel MacLean's command post where the combat team leader briefed him on conditions east of the reservoir. Almond must have been aware that the strong attacks on the marines and MacLean's men represented a southerly surge of fresh Chinese forces.

When he stopped at Hagaru-ri on his return flight to transfer from his helicopter to an L–17 aircraft, Almond may have learned from the marines that a Chinese division was marshaling in the high ground southwest and south of Hagaru-ri. As the L–17 carried him

south to his Hamhung headquarters, he may have seen, as had other aerial observers, that Chinese had blocked the road between Hagaru-ri and Kot'o-ri. The 1st Marine Division indeed had become a group of isolated garrisons.

MacLean's combat team was in the same condition. At 1000 on the 28th Brig. Gen. Henry I. Hodes, the assistant commander of the 7th Division who had posted himself in Hagaru-ri, led the 31st Infantry's tank company, an antitank platoon, a platoon of engineers, and members of regimental headquarters north from Hudong-ni. The small armored force encountered a strong roadblock about a mile above the village and lost two tanks in an unsuccessful effort to reduce it.

Later in the day Colonel MacLean, who earlier had gone by jeep to Colonel Faith's position, discovered when he attempted to return south that the Chinese had set another roadblock between Faith's battalion and the 3d Battalion, 31st Infantry. Unable to proceed, MacLean returned to Faith's command post and radioed a message to the 1st Marine Division for relay to X Corps headquarters requesting that the 2d Battalion, 31st Infantry, be sent immediately to clear the road above Hagaru-ri. Corps apparently missed the urgency of MacLean's request, perhaps because that headquarters already had dispatched Company B of the regiment up the reservoir road to join the combat team. Corps orders to the 2d Battalion, in any event, called for the long move from Hamhung not to begin until the following day. Meanwhile, MacLean's forward battalions remained cut off from Hagaru-ri and from each other.

The Attacks Widen

Fox Hill

A two-inch snowfall hampered operations during the night of the 28th. The *89th* and *79th Divisions* did not contest the marines at Yudam-ni during the night or during the day of the 29th. But forces of the *59th Division* renewed their night assaults on Company F in Toktong Pass. The Marine company held its ground, now called Fox Hill, but casualties grew to more than a hundred.

In considering General Smith's call for an attack by the 7th Marines to reopen the road to Hagaru-ri, Colonels Litzenberg and Murray felt that both the 5th and 7th Marines were needed at Yudam-ni and therefore substituted a composite battalion built from reserve units for the rescue mission. The makeshift battalion started south at 0800 on the 29th but moved no more than three miles before Chinese in the bordering heights opened fire and began an encircling move. When this maneuver was spotted from the air, Litzenberg ordered the composite unit back to Yudam-ni. The road remained closed as a result, and the thinned-out company on Fox Hill faced another night of isolation.

Task Force Faith

East of the reservoir, the *80th Division* resumed its assaults on Colonel MacLean's forces, first against the 3d Battalion, 31st Infantry, then against Colonel Faith's battalion. For twelve hours beginning around 1800 on the 28th, Chinese jabbed the lower perimeter but made no lasting penetra-

tions. High casualties in Companies K and L, however, forced the two units to combine.

To the north, the Chinese first struck the 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry, from the knob of high ground on the east, then opened frontal assaults against each of the rifle companies. Company B on the right lost some ground but regained it. Elsewhere, the battalion's heavy defensive fire beat back repeated Chinese rushes. By 0300 on the 29th, however, Faith's forces had used most of their ammunition. MacLean hence ordered Faith to move south and join the 3d Battalion, 31st Infantry. Faith was to take cargo off battalion trucks to make room for the hundred wounded he now had.

As Faith's forces gained respite from assault, but not fire, they fell back to assemble on the road. The Chinese did not pursue but increased their fire as the battalion broke contact. Starting south at 0430 with a company stumbling in the darkness over snow-covered high ground on either side as flank security for the troops and trucks on the road, the battalion covered three-quarters of the way without opposition. At daylight, as the leading forces entered the upper half of the road segment bending around the frozen finger of the reservoir, they took fire from Chinese located at the tight turn of the road near the P'ungnyuri River crossing. This was the roadblock MacLean had encountered the previous afternoon. Faith halted the column directly across the narrow expanse of ice from the 3d Battalion, 31st Infantry, ordered machine guns and a recoilless rifle into position to return the fire, and dispatched the bulk of two companies through the high ground to the north to flank the Chinese.

While waiting for the maneuvering force to destroy the roadblock, Faith's troops on the road received fire from across the reservoir finger. MacLean, convinced that the fire was coming from his own forces, immediately started over the ice to stop the shooting. He was mistaken. Hit at least four times as he crossed, he walked into the hands of the Chinese who had crept in along the bank of the far shore, apparently in preparation for an attack on the lower perimeter. Once Colonel Faith realized what had happened, he formed a skirmish line and led it across the ice. Faith's men killed at least sixty Chinese and drove off others, but a thorough search of the area uncovered no trace of Colonel MacLean.

Faith's flanking force meanwhile closed in on the Chinese blocking the road and scattered them into the hills to the east. Faith's motor column thus was able to proceed, and the last of Faith's men reached the 3d Battalion, 31st Infantry, by 1230.

While Faith fought through to the lower perimeter, the bulk of the 31st Tank Company and a composite company of riflemen again attempted to reach it from Hudong-ni. As on the previous day, the northward move was stopped, this time by two battalions of Chinese. A stronger effort clearly was required to break through to the isolated force. Now the senior able-bodied officer present, Colonel Faith assumed command of the two infantry battalions and the artillery, designating the consolidated units Task Force Faith. Air-dropped rations and ammunition (but only forty rounds of artillery am-

munition) reached the task force during the afternoon, and Marine aircraft orbited its position constantly, striking Chinese forces in the surrounding high ground with napalm, rockets, and machine gun fire. But while fresh supplies and good air support helped, Faith now pinned his hopes of avoiding defeat on the arrival of the 2d Battalion, 31st Infantry. He apparently was not aware that the 2d Battalion was held up for lack of transportation at Majon-dong, more than thirty miles to the south, he had not realized the extent of the Chinese roadblocks between him and the relief unit, nor had he learned that the Chinese attacks had spread during the previous night to Hagaru-ri.

Hagaru-ri

By evening on the 28th the bulk of the *58th Division* was concentrated about five miles southwest of Hagaru-ri. The remainder had crossed the supply road to the south where some troops blocked the route while others turned north and assembled in the heights east of Hagaru-ri.

Lt. Col. Thomas L. Ridge, commander of the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, and officer in charge of the defense of Hagaru-ri, was well informed of the location, size, and intent of the *58th*, though not of its numerical identity. His S–2, 2d Lt. Richard E. Carey, had had phenomenal success over the past two days with two Korean agents. By interrogating civilians coming into Hagaru-ri from the countryside, the agents learned of the approach of the Chinese. By making a circuit of the high ground around Hagaru-ri, they next determined the enemy's location and approximate size, and while mingling among Chinese troops they heard boasts that the division would occupy Hagaru-ri on the night of the 28th. The roadblock to the south was discovered during the afternoon of the 28th by a platoon of infantry and three tanks who were turned back by enemy fire when they attempted to patrol the road to Kot'o-ri.

Figuring the time it would take the Chinese to reach Hagaru-ri after dark, Carey predicted that the first assault would come around 2130. On this and Carey's other findings Colonel Ridge based his plan of defense. Using his own battalion, which was still short Company G, and a hodgepodge of other Marine and Army units, he fashioned a four-mile perimeter around the Changjin River flats in which Hagaru-ri was located.

To the south and southwest, the most likely area of enemy attack and the site of airstrip construction, Ridge put his 3d Battalion on the lower reverse slopes of the high ground in which the major Chinese strength was located. He faced the remaining troops of the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, and a mixture of Marine artillery, service, and headquarters troops northwest toward Yudam-ni and north toward the reservoir. Ridge considered East Hill, the marines' name for the first mass rising in that direction from Hagaru-ri, to be the second most likely point of enemy attack. He intended that Company G, once it arrived, would hold the hill. In the meantime, he manned it with Marine service units, Company D of the 10th Engineer Battalion (an Army unit), and detachments from X Corps headquarters and signal units.

Liao Chen-chou, commander of the *58th Division*, took longer than predicted to reach the marines. Amid fall-

ing snow, his *172d Regiment* attacked on a half-mile front against the center of the 3d Battalion's line just after 2230. Staggered by high losses to the marines' carefully prepared defensive fire, the Chinese managed only small penetrations, and those who broke through were too disorganized to do much damage. By 0400 the regiment was beaten, and the marines quickly eliminated the Chinese lingering in rear of their positions. Incongruous with the fighting taking place only a short distance to the southwest was the engineers' continuing work on the airstrip, part of the time under floodlights.

Liao had better luck with his secondary effort, driving off the defenders of East Hill in a sharp attack at 0130. Company D, 10th Engineers, took the brunt of the blow. Of the 77 Americans in the company, 10 were killed, 25 wounded, and 9 missing. Among 90 South Koreans attached to the company, about 50 were casualties, mostly missing. The Chinese, however, either had no plans or were too weak to exploit their success and halted their attack after capturing the height.

By 0630 on the 29th Colonel Ridge's forces on the southwestern arc of the perimeter had restored the line everywhere it had been punctured during the night. Maj. Reginald R. Myers, Ridge's executive officer, meanwhile assembled a composite company of Marine and Army service troops and tried to retake East Hill. But inexperience, a slippery and exhausting climb, and Chinese fire stopped the group short. At dusk Major Myers set up defenses on the near military crest of the hill.

Considering enemy control of East Hill to be a grave threat to Hagaru-ri, Ridge intended to replace Myers' makeshift unit with Company G as soon as possible. The company, Ridge knew, had started north from Kot'o-ri that morning in convoy with the British 41st Commando, an Army infantry company, and assorted other troops. But word also had reached Hagaru-ri that the convoy had come under fire and that its commander had requested a decision from General Smith on whether to continue.

Task Force Drysdale

Encounters with Chinese near Kot'o-ri and at Sach'ang-ni on the 28th heralded the arrival of the *60th Division* and the regiment of the *89th Division* in their objectives areas. At Sach'ang-ni, prisoners taken by the 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, during a small skirmish first identified the *89th*, and strong night assaults not broken up until after daybreak on the 29th indicated the size of the force. Reinforcements and new supplies were rushed to the 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, lest this enemy regiment gain access to Hamhung over the road protected only by the Sach'ang-ni position.

The presence of the *60th Division* was discovered by Company D, 1st Marines, and division headquarters personnel who patrolled north from Kot'o-ri during the afternoon of the 28th. The patrol engaged Chinese about a mile above town in the ground bordering the road. The marines fought all afternoon without breaking through but returned to Kot'o-ri with three prisoners from the *179th Regiment, 60th Division.*

This encounter, the experience of the patrol from Hagaru-ri the same afternoon, and air observer reports indi-

cated that Chinese positions along the reservoir road extended, with gaps, south from the outskirts of Hagaru-ri to within a mile of Kot'o-ri. At least parts of two Chinese divisions, the *58th* and *60th*, held the heights on both sides of the road, with their strongest positions on the eastern edge. Any force moving north from Kot'o-ri would run a ten-mile gauntlet.

By evening of the 28th Kot'o-ri was fairly full of troops who had been ordered north, principally the 41st Commando, Royal Marines; Company G, 1st Marines; and Company B, 31st Infantry. In addition, the Marine division headquarters troops who had failed to get through earlier in the day with Company D were still wanted at General Smith's commmand post in Hagaru-ri. An Associated Press photographer, Frank Noel, also was trying to move north. Colonel Puller formed a motorized task force from these units, placed Lt. Col. Douglas B. Drysdale, the commander of the 41st Commando, in charge, and ordered the force to make its way to Hagaru-ri on the following day.

Task Force Drysdale started north at 0930 on the 29th, the British marines in the lead, followed by Company G, Company B, and the headquarters troops. Chinese dug in east of the road about a mile and a half above Kot'o-ri offered the first resistance. They were eliminated, but a mile farther north, fire from a stronger Chinese force in the high ground on the east brought the task force to a full halt by noontime.

Colonel Drysdale, near that hour, received word from Colonel Puller that two Marine tank platoons would be available at 1300. Drysdale waited for the armor, then with the tanks leading resumed his advance about 1400. Heavy small arms and mortar fire struck the column almost immediately, and progress was slow as tankers and foot troops attempted to shoot their way through the resistance. By 1615 the task force again was stopped after having moved only a mile and a half nearer Hagaru-ri.

Two more platoons of Marine tanks meanwhile moved out of Kot'o-ri under Puller's orders to join Drysdale. But even though he was to get additional armor, Drysdale was uncertain whether he should risk moving his men, now numbering about a thousand, the remaining seven miles to Hagaru-ri. By radio, he posed the question to General Smith. In view of the considered need for reinforcements at Hagaru-ri, Smith directed him to continue.

Air-strikes sufficiently dampened enemy fire to permit the task force to resume its march, but when it entered a mile-long valley midway between Kot'o-ri and Hagaru-ri, heavy fire from the ridges to the east again halted the column. As troops jumped from trucks to reduce the resistance, a mortar round set fire to a truck near the middle of the column. The Chinese concentrated small arms and mortar fire around the damaged vehicle to prevent its removal and thus obstruct the road and split Drysdale's column. Ahead of the truck, Drysdale with most of his commandos, two platoons of tanks, Company G, and a few members of Company B managed to move on. Drysdale expected the remainder of the column to close ranks. But behind the burning vehicle, in what Drysdale later dubbed Hell Fire Valley, about sixty commandos, most of Company B, and the division headquarters troops

remained pinned down in ditches and depressions along the road.

Only intermittent fire and one strong Chinese position about a mile and a half below Hagaru-ri obstructed Drysdale's movement north of Hell Fire Valley. Drysdale was wounded while fighting past the Chinese strongpoint, whereupon the Company G commander led the column the remaining short distance to its destination. About an hour after dark Drysdale's four hundred men entered Hagaru-ri. They were surprised, in view of their own day of fighting, to find the town quiet and the engineers working under floodlights at the airstrip to the southwest.

The Chinese meanwhile began the reduction of Drysdale's forces caught in Hell Fire Valley. Before dark a force sliced west across the road between the immobilized troops and the two platoons of tanks coming from Kot'o-ri. Some of the tail-end armored troops, receiving considerable fire themselves, returned to Kot'o-ri during the night; the remainder went back at dawn.

To the north, near the damaged truck, another pre-dark attack isolated about a hundred forty troops from the rest of the trapped men while the latter gradually gathered in three clusters as they sought cover from the fire coming in from east of the road. Thereafter until midnight the Chinese were content to fire on the four separated groups while they looted the trucks on the road.

In the early hours of 30 November they sent small forces armed with grenades against the northernmost group. The latter, led by Marine Maj. John N. McLaughlin, held off the Chinese but took high losses and by 0430 expended most of their ammunition. During this firefight most of the men in the three clusters farther south managed to escape into the high ground west of the road. Though pursued, they managed to reach Kot'o-ri, bringing the total of men who escaped south to about three hundred. At the northern position, only a few British commandos were able to slip away toward Kot'o-ri. When photographer Frank Noel and two other men jumped into a jeep to make a run for it, they were captured before they had moved a hundred yards.

At 0430 the Chinese sent these captives to McLaughlin with a surrender demand. Stalling to enable as many men as possible to escape, McLaughlin finally agreed to surrender himself and the forty able-bodied men remaining. The Chinese allowed him to place his more seriously wounded men in a nearby house as the Hell Fire Valley affair ended. Task Force Drysdale's total casualties exceeded three hundred. About seventy-five trucks were lost during the day and night.

The Tokyo Conference

Not long after Colonel Drysdale and the men with him reached Hagaru-ri, they knew they would soon be making a return trip through Hell Fire Valley. This decision was one result of General MacArthur's conference with General Walker and General Almond in Tokyo on the night of the 28th.[8]

Having heard Walker and Almond on what had happened in their respective sectors, MacArthur judged that the Eighth Army was in greater danger than the X Corps. But he wanted both

[8] This section is based on Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, pp. 278–79.

commands to step back. Walker was to make whatever withdrawals were necessary to escape being enveloped. Almond was to maintain contact with the Chinese but also was to pull the X Corps out of its spread-eagle positions and concentrate it in the Hamhung-Hungnam coastal area.

MacArthur next asked Almond what the X Corps could do to help the Eighth Army. Almond pointed out that the isolated Marine and Army troops at the reservoir had to be retrieved before anything else could be done. MacArthur agreed but then restated his question to ask what Almond could do to relieve the threat to Walker's east flank. The answer to this question held MacArthur's primary interest.

General Wright, MacArthur's G–3, suggested that Almond send the 3d Division west over the road leading through the Taebaeks toward Tokch'on to attack the Chinese pressing Walker's right flank. Almond argued that the road Wright had in mind did not exist (it did, but it was not made for military traffic) and that the severe winter weather combined with any strong Chinese force in the gap between commands might destroy the division. Almond agreed to the move, however, if the Eighth Army would supply the 3d Division after it reached the western slopes of the Taebaeks. General Walker offered no such support, and the conference closed an hour past midnight without a final decision on the proposed move. But owing to MacArthur's clear interest, such a maneuver would come up again after Walker and Almond returned to Korea on the 29th to get their disengagements started.

CHAPTER VI

Disengagement in the West

General Walker reached his P'yongyang headquarters from the meeting in Tokyo during the afternoon of the 29th. The Eighth Army at the time was making a second short withdrawal, organized by his staff not long before he arrived, in response to the threat of envelopment from the east which overnight and through the morning had further enlarged.

The Threat of Envelopment

Toward Sunch'on

On the Sunch'on road at the army right, General Gay's decision against moving the 7th Cavalry up from Kujong-ni to the Pukch'ang-ni area on the 28th left the initiative to the Chinese. Shortly before daylight on the 29th the *125th Division, 42d Army,* whose regiments air observers previously saw passing through Pukch'ang-ni, sent forces against the ROK 6th Division three miles below town. *(Map 9)* The ROK troops immediately withdrew five miles to Walpo-ri, but pursuing Chinese readily flanked the new position, and the South Koreans scattered rearward toward the 7th Cavalry two miles below them.[1]

Col. William A. Harris, the 7th Cavalry commander, had his reserve battalion collect South Korean troops as they came through his forward line. Refugees streamed south with the ROK forces, and either North Korean guerrillas or disguised Chinese regulars who had joined the civilians harassed the cavalrymen as they entered the regimental position. Hand grenades thrown by the infiltrators killed a company commander and wounded eight men.[2]

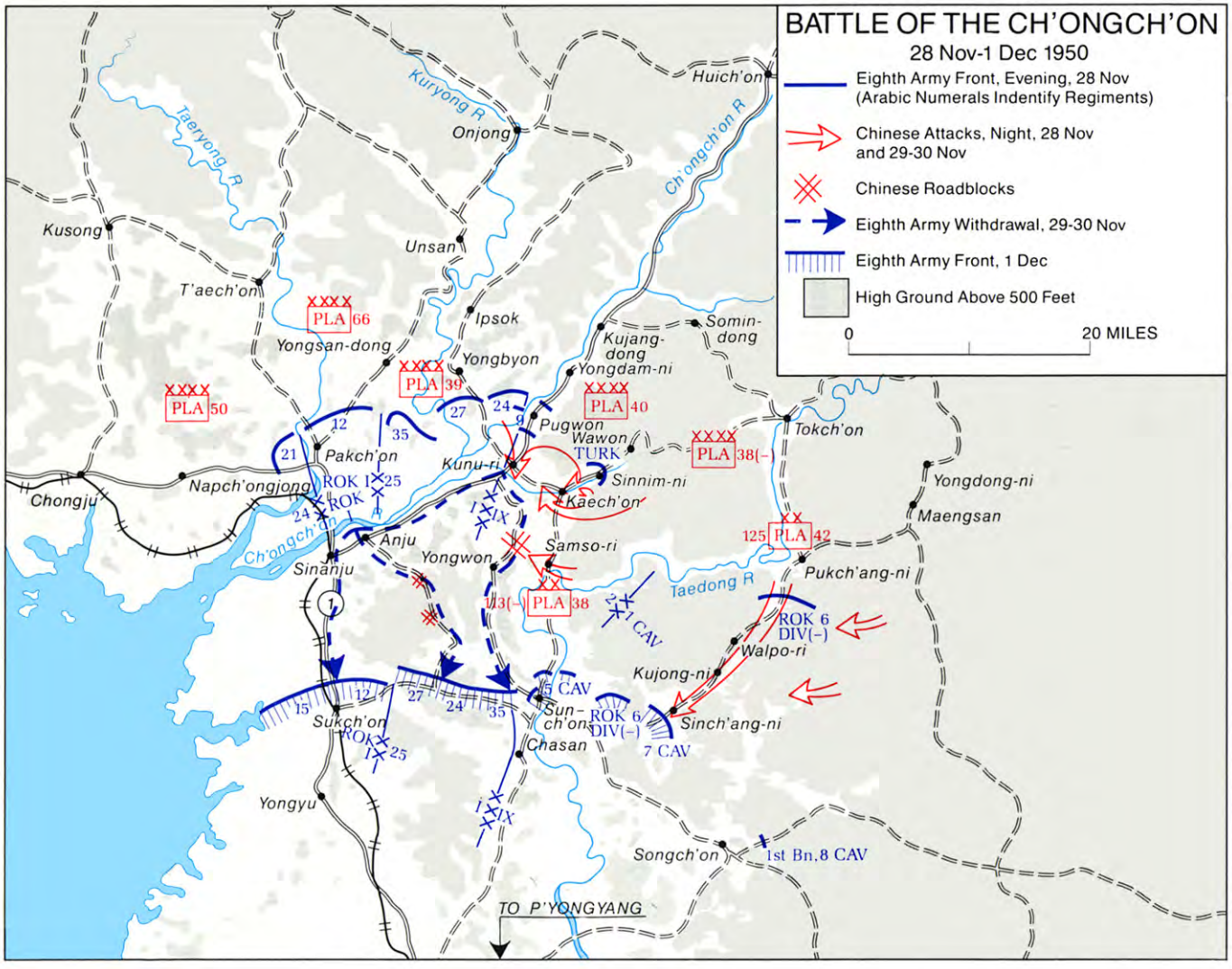
The problem of refugees was not peculiar to the 1st Cavalry Division sector. Throngs of civilians had begun to move south across the entire front. Crowds of refugees on the roads threatened to interfere with the movement of troops and supplies, and drifting columns of civilians everywhere offered the enemy a vehicle for infiltration. Both dangers prompted army orders late on the 28th directing that refugees be diverted before they could enter Eighth Army lines.[3]

The men of the 7th Cavalry found it difficult just to halt the early morning influx in their sector and had only partially restored order by 0630 when leading forces of the *125th Division* opened fire from high ground to the northeast. Exchanges of small arms fire contin-

[1] 1st Cav Div G3 Jnl, 29 Nov 50; IX Corps G3 Spot Rpt 2109, 29 Nov 50; 7th Cav Hist Rpt, Nov 50.

[2] 7th Cav Hist Rpt, Nov 50; 1st Cav Div G3 Jnl, 29 Nov 50; *1st Cavalry Division, Korea, June 1950 to January 1952* (Atlanta: Albert Love Enterprises, n.d.).

[3] Rad, GX 30074 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG IX Corps et al., 28 Nov 50.


BATTLE OF THE CH'ONGCH'ON
28 Nov-1 Dec 1950
Eighth Army Front, Evening, 28 Nov
(Arabic Numerals Indentify Regiments)
Chinese Attacks, Night, 28 Nov
and 29-30 Nov
Chinese Roadblocks
Eighth Army Withdrawal, 29-30 Nov
Eighth Army Front, 1 Dec
High Ground Above 500 Feet
0
20 MILES
Huich'on
Kuryong R
Onjong
Taeryong R
Ch'ongch'on R
Kusong
Unsan
T'aech'on
PLA 66
Ipsok
Somin-dong
Kujang-dong
Yongsan-dong
Yongbyon
Yongdam-ni
PLA 39
PLA 40
PLA 50
Pugwon
Wawon
TURK
Tokch'on
PLA 38(-)
Pakch'on
Kunu-ri
Sinnim-ni
Yongdong-ni
Napch'ongjong
ROK I
Kaech'on
Chongju
Maengsan
Anju
Samso-ri
125 PLA 42
Ch'ongch'on
Sinanju
Yongwon
Pukch'ang-ni
Taedong R
PLA 38
1 CAV
ROK 6 DIV(-)
Walpo-ri
Kujong-ni
5 CAV
Sun-ch'on
ROK 6 DIV(-)
Sinch'ang-ni
Sukch'on
ROK I
Chasan
7 CAV
Yongyu
Songch'on
1st Bn, 8 CAV
TO P'YONGYANG

MAP 9

ued until artillery concentrations silenced the Chinese two hours later. ROK troops and refugees continued to enter the regiment's line during the firefight. Panic spread through an approaching ROK artillery column when its lead vehicle stalled about a quarter mile north of the cavalrymen. Instead of shoving the obstructing truck out of the way, the ROK artillerymen simply abandoned guns and trucks and ran toward the regimental position. The motor officer of the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, and six of his men later went forward and recovered eight howitzers and sixteen vehicles.[4]

At midmorning, after the troopers finally gathered all South Korean forces and cleared their position of refugees, General Gay ordered the 7th Cavalry to withdraw to Sinch'ang-ni, three miles south, unoccupied since the 8th Cavalry had left for Songch'on. The regiment and the ROK 6th Division pulled back during the afternoon, the 7th Cavalry taking position astride the Sunch'on road just above Sinch'ang-ni, the South Koreans occupying adjacent high ground on the west. Acting on Gay's previous instructions, the 5th Cavalry meanwhile organized defenses astride the Taedong River two miles north of Sunch'on, aligned with but not physically adjoining the ROK 6th Division to its right; the 8th Cavalry, en route to Songch'on, placed its leading battalion in the new area by nightfall. The Chinese on the Sunch'on road did not pursue the 7th Cavalry's withdrawal and remained out of contact while Gay's division and the South Koreans deployed along the Sunch'on–Sinch'ang-ni–Songch'on line.[5]

At Kunu-ri

On the eastern side of the river in the Ch'ongch'on valley, the forces of the *40th Army* who, beginning about midnight on the 28th, had pushed the 2d Battalion of the 9th Infantry below Pugwon, were joined in the town after daylight by sister forces that had come down the opposite side of the Ch'ongch'on. The latter forces had turned the right flank of the 24th Infantry, 25th Division, then had moved their main strength southeast across the river into Pugwon.[6]

Ahead of this juncture, Colonel Sloane withdrew the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 9th Infantry around 0600, first taking them behind defenses hurriedly established by the 23d Infantry astride the valley road below Pugwon, then moving them to an assembly two miles southwest of Kunu-ri. Sloane's 1st Battalion, which late on the 28th had taken position at the right rear of the 24th Infantry on the west side of the Ch'ongch'on, rejoined the regiment at the assembly area late on the 29th after a full day of operations with the 25th Division. The *40th Army*, after joining assault forces at Pugwon, meanwhile prepared to attack Kunu-ri on a wide front, spreading units from Pugwon southeastward over Piho-san Ridge four miles above Kunu-ri. This ridge, under General Keiser's plan for defending the Pugwon-Wawon sector, was to have been occupied by the 38th and ROK 3d Regiments.[7]

[4] 7th Cav Hist Rpt, Nov 50; 1st Cav Div G3 Jnl, 29 Nov 50; *1st Cavalry Division, Korea, June 1950 to January 1952.*

[5] Ibid.

[6] 25th Div Hist, Nov 50; 9th Inf Hist, Nov 50.

[7] 9th Inf Hist, Nov 50; 23d Inf Comd Rpt, Nov 50; 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nov 50.

On the right flank of the 2d Division sector, the *38th Army* assaults opened against the Turkish brigade at Sinnim-ni during the first hours of the 29th were still in progress at daylight. Because neither wire nor radio communications existed between the Turk forward units and brigade headquarters in Kaech'on, three miles west of Sinnim-ni, General Yasici knew nothing of the attack until his artillery battalion pulled back to Kaech'on. According to the artillery commander, the three infantry battalions were surrounded. Yasici delayed countermeasures until daylight, then dispatched an infantry company from his replacement battalion and the platoon of tanks attached from the 72d Tank Battalion to clear the road and deliver instructions for a withdrawal to Kaech'on. The task force reached Sinnim-ni easily, and the infantry battalions withdrew without interference. But Chinese forces moved west with the withdrawal, marching over the ridges below the Kaech'on River, which coursed westward just south of and parallel to the Tokch'on–Kunu-ri road.[8]

In response to the nighttime and morning changes in the 2d Division sector—the lose of Pugwon, the enemy's occupation of Piho-san Ridge, and the Turk withdrawal to Kaech'on—General Keiser and his forward unit commanders worked out a new defense line by noon on the 29th. At the left, two battalions of the 23d Infantry blocked the Ch'ongch'on valley road in depth, the 2d holding a forward position two miles below Pugwon, the 3d astride the road two miles north of Kunu-ri. The 1st Battalion was a mile and a half east of the 3d, blocking a valley approach to Kunu-ri.[9]

Immediately east, the 38th Infantry's new line slanted southeast over lesser hills below Piho-san Ridge to the Tokch'on–Kunu-ri road at the northeastern edge of Kaech'on. The attached ROK 3d Regiment held the left sector directly below Piho-san. The 2d and 3d Battalions, facing northeast and east, carried the remainder of the line to the boundary with the Turks at Kaech'on. Colonel Peploe kept his command post and 1st Battalion in the assembly area established the previous night a mile east of Kunu-ri.[10]

The Turks were expected to anchor the 2d Division's right flank. Some were to occupy a bit of high ground at the eastern edge of Kaech'on. The rest were to move below the Kaech'on River to refuse the flank and block a valley where the road from Sunch'on, previously cut by the Chinese at Samso-ri farther south, made its exit before crossing river to enter Kaech'on. But regardless of repeated urgings from the American advisers, General Yasici failed to place troops below the river. At noontime two Turk companies occupied the small hill just east of Kaech'on town. The remainder of the brigade was assembled inside town with sentinels posted along the outer limits.[11]

At the Bridgehead

Unlike the enemy efforts toward Sunch'on and Kunu-ri, the Chinese above the Ch'ongch'on made no concerted daylight attack against the I Corps. The 24th Division had no con-

[8] "Turkish U.N. Brigade Advisory Group, 20 Nov–13 Dec 50."

[9] 23d Inf Comd Rpt, Nov 50.

[10] 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nov 50.

[11] "Turkish U.N. Brigade Advisory Group, 20 Nov–13 Dec 50."

tact at all as General Church started his forces toward Sunch'on, as ordered by General Walker the day before. The only enemy action in the ROK 1st Division's sector was small arms and artillery fire placed on General Paik's delaying forces in and west of Yongsan-dong before they pulled back to the bridgehead during the morning. Eastward in the 25th Division's sector, the *39th Army* launched local assaults on the 27th Infantry in the division center about the same time that *40th Army* forces turned the 24th Infantry's right flank. But these attacks posed no serious threat to the corps bridgehead.[12]

The real danger lay below the river. By noon on the 29th only two battalions of the 23d Infantry stood before the *40th Army* forces on the Ch'ongch'on valley road. Should these be eliminated, a follow-up Chinese thrust down the twenty-mile stretch of road between Kunu-ri and Sinanju would trap General Milburn's forces above the Ch'ongch'on.

To respond to this danger and to tighten the defense against the two arms of the Chinese enveloping maneuver, Colonel Dabney, the army G–3, radioed instructions about an hour past noon for a withdrawal to a line that followed the lower bank of the Ch'ongch'on upstream almost to Kunu-ri, then curved southeast to join the 1st Cavalry Division's new line from Sunch'on through Sinch'ang-ni to Songch'on. The bridgehead and Kunu-ri thus would be abandoned, and the Eighth Army's east flank position would become longer than the front.[13]

[12] I Corps Intel Sums 226 and 227, 29 Nov 50; I Corps PORs 233 and 234, 29 Nov 50; 24th Div WD, Nov 50; 25th Div WD, Nov 50.

[13] Rad, GX 30085 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 29 Nov 50.

The Second Disengagement

Kunu-ri Abandoned

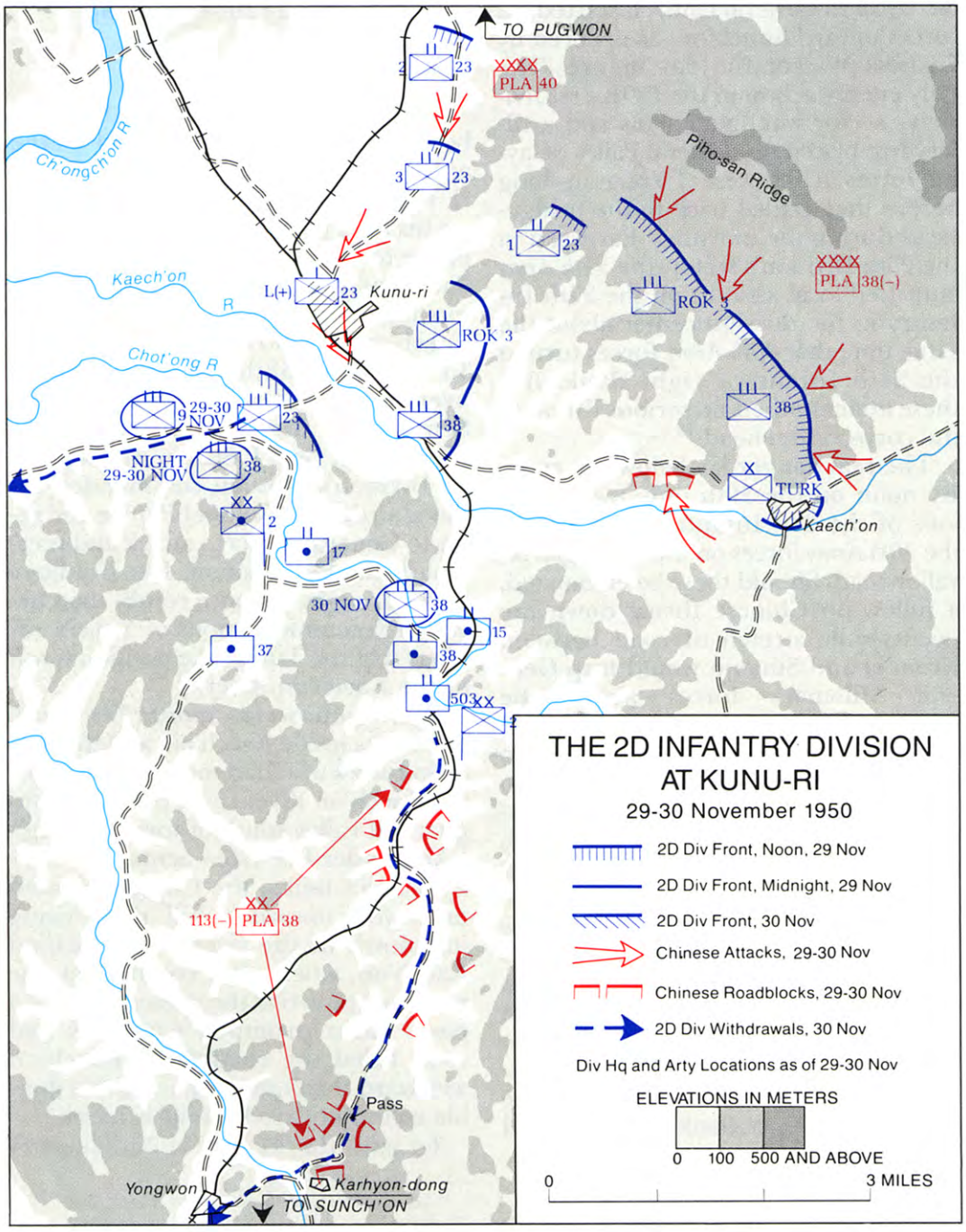
Early in the afternoon of the 29th, before General Keiser learned of the army order to withdraw south of Kunu-ri, the *40th* and *38th Armies* converged on his arch of positions north and east of the town. *(Map 10)* Just north of the Turks at Kaech'on, *38th Army* forces moving west along and above the Tokch'on–Kunu-ri road attacked the 3d Battalion, 38th Infantry, quickly overrunning its right flank position. Sensing the start of a strong enemy effort, Brig. Gen. J. Sladen Bradley, the 2d Division's assistant commander, radioed orders to Colonel Peploe for relay to General Yasici to attack and reestablish the lost position. But Bradley's order brought no more results than the earlier recommendations of Yasici's advisers that the Turks take position south of the Kaech'on River.[14]

Shortly afterwards, mortar fire struck the Turks inside Kaech'on, and the *38th Army* forces who had moved west below the Kaech'on River came out of the unguarded valley south of town. Though taken under fire from across the river by Yasici's tanks, the Chinese slanted northwest toward a hill mass rising just north of the river a mile behind Kaech'on, where they could block the road to Kunu-ri at the western half of a pass. Yasici promptly withdrew and soon filled the road from Kaech'on westward through the pass with a double column of troops and vehicles.[15]

To assist the 2d and 3d Battalions of

[14] 2d Div WD, Nov 50; 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nov 50; "Turkish U.N. Brigade Advisory Group, 20 Nov–13 Dec 50."

[15] "Turkish U.N. Brigade Advisory Group, 20 Nov–13 Dec 50."


TO PUGWON
XXXX PLA 40
Piho-san Ridge
Ch'ongch'on R
Kaech'on R
Chot'ong R
L(+) 23 Kunu-ri
ROK 3
XXXX PLA 38(–)
29-30 NOV
NIGHT 29-30 NOV
TURK
Kaech'on
30 NOV
XX 113(–) PLA 38
Pass
Yongwon
Karhyon-dong
TO SUNCH'ON
THE 2D INFANTRY DIVISION AT KUNU-RI
29-30 November 1950
2D Div Front, Noon, 29 Nov
2D Div Front, Midnight, 29 Nov
2D Div Front, 30 Nov
Chinese Attacks, 29-30 Nov
Chinese Roadblocks, 29-30 Nov
2D Div Withdrawals, 30 Nov
Div Hq and Arty Locations as of 29-30 Nov
ELEVATIONS IN METERS
0 100 500 AND ABOVE
0 3 MILES

MAP 10

the 38th Infantry, both now engaged in a firefight with Chinese to their front and both just as much in danger of being enveloped as the Turks, Colonel Peploe ordered his reserve 1st Battalion, less Company C, to move up on the regimental right. But when the battalion mounted trucks and started east over the road toward Kaech'on, it found the way blocked by the oncoming Turk traffic. Peploe drew the stymied battalion back to a blocking position astride the road a mile east of Kunu-ri and instructed his forward battalions to make their way behind this position as best they could. Forces of the *40th Army* meanwhile struck south of Piho-san Ridge against the ROK 3d Regiment. Peploe pulled the 3d back to a position a little over a mile northeast of Kunu-ri and tied its right flank to the left of his 1st Battalion to strengthen the cover for his forces withdrawing from the east.[16]

While Peploe organized the covering position, his 2d and 3d Battalions disengaged and filed out of the hills above Kaech'on onto the Kunu-ri road with the Turks. The Chinese swinging in from the southeast by that time held the hill mass overlooking the pass from the south and soon halted the westward flow of traffic with a heavy volume of fire. Taking cover north of the road, Americans and Turks in the pass area returned fire until long past dark. But the Chinese fire continued to block all movement except for some tanks and vehicles carrying wounded that managed to move around the pass over a trail to the north.[17]

A B–26 strike finally dampened the Chinese fire. Both the equipment and techniques of the Fifth Air Force were extremely limited for providing close air support at night and in bad weather. Although General Stratemeyer and General Partridge had tried almost from the beginning of the war to obtain sufficient equipment and develop effective procedures for furnishing such support, they now had only the 1st Shoran Beacon Unit, whose operations so far had been unsatisfactory, and three AN/MPQ-2 radar detachments. The successful, if out-of-the-ordinary, B–26 strike carefully brought in on the pass after dark permitted the Turks and Peploe's troops again to move west. Peploe reorganized most of his men behind his covering positions before midnight, but the Turkish brigade was in disorder, with units disorganized, key leaders missing, and Turks scattered in clumps all along the way from the pass through Peploe's position and Kunu-ri to the 2d Division command post six miles south of Kunu-ri.[18]

Amidst this melee east of Kunu-ri, General Keiser issued instructions, instigated by the newest directive from army, for the 2d Division's withdrawal below the town. Partially covered by the ROK 3d Regiment and 38th Infantry northeast and east of town, Colonel Freeman was to move first, pulling his 23d Infantry out of position north of Kunu-ri and taking it south of the Kaech'on River below town. Here, between the Kaech'on and the parallel Chot'ong River about a mile farther south, a low ridge reached northwestward athwart the Kunu-ri–Sinanju

[16] 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nov 50.

[17] Ibid.; "Turkish U.N. Brigade Advisory Group, 20 Nov–13 Dec 50."

[18] Ibid.; Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950–1953*, pp. 328–29, 377–78.

stretch of the Ch'ongch'on valley road. Defenses along this height would block the road and would provide excellent observation and fields of fire across the river flats toward Kunu-ri.[19]

After Freeman was in position, Peploe was to withdraw to a position on the low ridge east of the 23d. But since Peploe's route passed through the southern outskirts of Kunu-ri before turning south over the Kaech'on, Peploe anticipated being cut off if Chinese stormed into Kunu-ri on the heels of Freeman's withdrawal. Against this possibility, he arranged for Freeman to leave a rifle company and a platoon of tanks in Kunu-ri to cover the withdrawal of the 38th and ROK 3d Regiments.[20]

The disintegration of the Turkish brigade spoiled General Keiser's plan to employ the Turks below Kunu-ri along the northern six miles of the division supply road. Located along this road segment, which followed generally the Kunu-ri–Sunch'on rail line, were all the division artillery and, at the most southerly point, the division headquarters. Keiser had intended that the Turks deploy east of this stretch of road. But his order giving the brigade this assignment was not even acknowledged. While confused Turkish troops straggled into and south of Kunu-ri, General Yasici headed out over the road to Sinanju on a roundabout ride to Sunch'on where he hoped eventually to reassemble the brigade. Keiser's supply road, command post, and artillery base meanwhile remained wide open to attack from the east.[21]

In pulling out of position north of Kunu-ri, Colonel Freeman kept his 3d Battalion astride the Ch'ongch'on valley road two miles above town as cover while he moved the remainder of the 23d Regiment during the early evening hours to the new position south of the Kaech'on River. The covering battalion, after being hit hard by Chinese coming down the valley road, withdrew at 2200. Company L and a platoon from the 72d Tank Battalion dropped off at the northern edge of Kunu-ri while the remainder of the battalion continued to the new regimental line.[22]

A Chinese battalion caught up with Freeman's force at the upper edge of Kunu-ri around midnight. The infantrymen and tankers threw back four strong assaults before pulling south and so gave Colonel Peploe the time and protection needed to move vehicles, casualties, and then his main strength through the lower edge of town and south behind the 23d Infantry. Peploe's rear guard, the 1st Battalion of the ROK 3d Regiment, received fire from Chinese following the withdrawal from the east and northeast but broke away in the darkness near 0400 and withdrew cross-country.[23]

Through the remainder of the night Peploe gradually collected the somewhat scattered units of the 38th Infantry a mile southwest of Freeman's position but was unable to locate the main body of the ROK 3d Regiment. He had instructed the South Koreans to take position to the immediate right of the 23d. Instead, they had gathered in small groups along the 2d Division supply road not far from division headquarters. They intended, according to

[19] 2d Div G3 Jnl, Entry 72, 29 Nov 50.
[20] Ibid.; 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nov 50.
[21] Ltr, Lt Col Maurice C. Holden to Maj Roy E. Appleman, 26 Feb 52; "Turkish U.N. Brigade Advisory Group, 20 Nov–13 Dec 50."
[22] 23d Inf Comd Rpt, Nov 50.
[23] Ibid.; 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nov 50.

orders from their own regimental commander, to continue south to an assembly in Sunch'on.[24]

In the Bridgehead

Late in the afternoon of the 29th General Milburn ordered the I Corps to abandon its bridgehead in a two-step withdrawal. The ROK 1st and 25th Divisions first were to fall back after dark to a line running from a western anchor three miles above the Ch'ongch'on northeast to the mouth of the Kuryong River, then along the lower bank of the Ch'ongch'on to the 2d Division's left flank below Pugwon. The two divisions were to pull completely behind the Ch'ongch'on at daylight on the 30th. This second move would be covered by the 5th Regimental Combat Team, now detached from the 24th Division and under corps control, from positions immediately north and northeast of the river crossings in the Sinanju-Anju area.[25]

Milburn's forces occupied the first phase line before midnight. At the far right, the 3d Battalion of the 24th Infantry, which had tied the 25th Division's position to that of the 2d Division about 2100, was left with an open east flank an hour later when the 3d Battalion of the 23d Infantry withdrew after being hit by the Chinese coming down the Ch'ongch'on valley road. Near midnight, when the Chinese battalion opened assaults on Colonel Freeman's blocking force at the northern edge of Kunu-ri, part of the enemy unit also attacked the command post of the 3d Battalion, 24th Infantry, which had been established inside Kunu-ri at city hall. The attack came while the battalion commander was talking by phone with the regimental commander, Colonel Corley, to arrange a withdrawal southwest of Kunu-ri to tie in with the 23d Infantry's new main position below the Kaech'on River. Battalion communications with both regiment and the frontline companies went out soon, thereafter, and the battalion headquarters group withdrew, with some difficulty, to the regimental command post five miles southwest of Kunu-ri. Colonel Corley and the battalion commander then arranged air support and placed guides along the Kunu-ri – Anju road in an effort to help Companies I, K, and L move south past Chinese, who meanwhile had swept to behind them from the east. The three companies finally got out at 1630 on the 30th at a cost of 1 killed, 30 wounded, and 109 missing.[26]

Attack at Sinch'ang-ni

At the army right, the respite gained by the 7th Cavalry when it disengaged at Kujong-ni on the Sunch'on road during the afternoon of the 29th lasted not quite to midnight. At 2230, heavy small arms, machine gun, and mortar fire swept the 7th's new position above Sinch'ang-ni; a half hour later, Chinese following the road wedged between the two forward battalions. Heavy defensive mortar and artillery fire threw back the assault, but not before a hundred fifty Chinese slipped through the opening in the cavalry line and attacked the command posts of both battalions.

[24] 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nov 50.
[25] I Corps Opn Dir 28, 29 Nov 50.
[26] I Corps PORs 234 and 235, 29 Nov 50; 24th Div WD, Nov 50; 25th Div Hist, Nov 50; 24th Inf WD, Nov 50.

Some of the attackers made it all the way into Sinch'ang-ni.[27]

From below Sinch'ang-ni, a rifle company, two tanks, and a motorized section of heavy machine guns of the reserve battalion counterattacked at 0200 and cleared the forward headquarters areas. Near 0230 the Chinese began to pull out of contact, electing only to harass the cavalrymen with mortar fire through the remainder of the night. The 7th Cavalry suffered 38 killed, 107 wounded, and 11 missing during the engagement. Known enemy losses were 350 killed and 10 captured. One prisoner identified the assault unit as the *37th Regiment* of the *125th Division*, whose mission, he asserted, had been to open the road preliminary to an attack on Sunch'on by a larger force.[28]

Trouble on the Lines of Communication

On the Anju-Sunch'on Road

By morning of the 30th the 24th Division, less the 5th Regimental Combat Team, was available to help block any attempt to seize Sunch'on. General Church had started his forces out of the I Corps sector near noon on the 29th. Col. Ned D. Moore's 19th Infantry and its combat team attachments moved first, motoring from Pakch'on to Anju and then down a diagonal road leading southeast toward Sunch'on. Col. Richard W. Stephen's 21st Regimental Combat Team followed late in the afternoon after being relieved at its position at the I Corps left by South Korean Troops.[29]

While the 19th Regimental Combat Team was moving the first four miles down the diagonal road below Anju, Church received aerial observer reports that the road ahead of the team was blocked in two places. He instructed Colonel Moore to destroy the blocks with part of his force and to shift the remainder westward to take Route 1 south to Sukch'on, then a lateral road east to Sunch'on. Leaving the intelligence and reconnaissance platoon, an infantry company, and a tank company to deal with the roadblocks, Moore took the rest of his combat team over the new route, assembling it near Sunch'on shortly after dark. Colonel Stephens' combat team also used Route 1 and the lateral road, taking up the better part of the night to reach the Sunch'on assembly.[30]

Moore's task force meanwhile encountered the first roadblock about 1400, after moving three miles farther down the diagonal road, and drove the Chinese away with only small arms fire. Another three miles southeast, the force spotted Chinese in high ground overlooking the road near an irrigation reservoir. Tank fire, mortar fire, and an air strike killed several Chinese and scattered the remainder. The task force then continued to Sunch'on, reaching the assembly area at 2300.[31]

On the Kunu-ri–Sunch'on Road

The Chinese on the diagonal road evidently had moved in the van of the enemy's westward push toward Kunu-ri. While they proved no real hindrance to the 24th Division's move to Sunch'on, it became clear that forces following

[27] 7th Cav Hist Rpt, Nov 50.

[28] 1st Cav Div G3 Jnl, 29 and 30 Nov 50; 7th Cav Hist Rpt, Nov 50.

[29] 24th Div WD, Nov 50; I Corps POR 234, 29 Nov 50.

[30] 24th Div WD, Nov 50.

[31] Ibid.

them had established a much stronger block farther east on the 2d Division's supply road between Kunu-ri and Sunch'on.

Before daylight on the 29th, Turk soldiers from a convoy carrying supplies to the brigade stopped at the 2d Division command post six miles below Kunu-ri to report that they had encountered a roadblock while traveling north from Sunch'on. At 0900 a patrol from the division military police company moved south to investigate, came under fire about four miles below division headquarters, and lost one man killed and three wounded in attempting to define the enemy position.[32]

General Keiser next ordered his reconnaissance company to clear the obstruction, evidently only a fire block centered in a pass four miles south just above the village and railroad station of Yongwon. Keiser apparently did not know at the time that a platoon of tanks, attached from the 72d Tank Battalion to the British 27th Brigade but not moving with the brigade from Kunu-ri to Chasan on the 28th, had just headed south over the blocked road. Only the protection of armor allowed this platoon to proceed through the pass under intense fire from what appeared to be two enemy companies in the surrounding high ground.[33]

The reconnaissance company reached the pass at midmorning but, despite fire support from a battery of the 503d Field Artillery Battalion, stalled before the Chinese position around noontime. Keiser then called for a rifle company from the 38th Infantry. Colonel Peploe sent Company C, now no more than seventy-five men who, accompanied by a tank platoon from the 72d Tank Battalion, in midafternoon joined the reconnaissance force at the pass. This combination also was unable to eliminate the fire block, and near dusk Keiser ordered the force to withdraw into positions around division headquarters. The Chinese unit in the pass was now believed to be a battalion.[34]

General Coulter meanwhile started part of his reserve north toward the roadblock. Earlier in the morning he had ordered Brig. B. A. Coad, commander of the British 27th Brigade, to send a battalion to Samso-ri to eliminate the Chinese encountered there the previous day by the 5th Cavalry. After learning of the 2d Division's predicament about 0830, he redirected the British against the newer roadblock. The Middlesex Battalion, motorized for its mission, headed toward its new destination shortly after 1000 and in the remaining daylight assembled seven miles south of the blocked pass.[35]

Coulter informed General Keiser that the British battalion would move toward the roadblock from the south at daylight on the 30th and instructed him to mount in concert a vigorous attack from the north. The 2d Division commander needed little prompting. To his front, the *40th Army* was pressing the

[32] Ltr, Holden to Appleman, 26 Feb 52; 2d Div G2–G3 Jnl, Entry J–1456, 29 Nov 50; 2d Div WD, Nov 50.

[33] Ltr, Holden to Appleman, 26 Feb 52; 72d Tk Bn Comd and Unit Hist Rpt, Nov 50; IX Corps G3 Spot Rpt 2107, 29 Nov 50.

[34] Ltr, Holden to Applemen, 26 Feb 52; 2d Div G2–G3 Jnl, Entries J–1459, J–1457, and J–1475, 29 Nov 50; 2d Div Arty WD, Nov 50; IX Corps G3 Spot Rpt 2114, 29 Nov 50.

[35] Rad, IXACT–402, CG IX Corps to CG 27th Brit Brig, 29 Nov 50; IX Corps G3 Spot Rpts 2101 and 2110, 29 Nov 50.

single battalion of the 23d Infantry still north of Kunu-ri; to his right, the *38th Army* had partially enveloped the 38th Infantry and the Turkish brigade; and in the immediate rear area, all of his artillery and division headquarters were vulnerable to attack from the east. *(See Map 10.)* In all likelihood, further withdrawals would become necessary, and the road south, if it was to be used, had first to be opened.[36]

Keiser alerted the 9th Infantry, still assembled two miles southwest of Kunu-ri, for the next attack on the roadblock. When Colonel Sloane reported to division headquarters for instructions around 2000, he advised General Keiser that operations over the past four days had reduced the 9th Infantry to less than half strength and that an attack could be mounted with only the four hundred to five hundred men remaining in the 2d and 3d Battalions. (The 1st Battalion was then still with the 25th Division.) Keiser told Sloane to employ all of these men and to hit the roadblock at daylight on the 30th.[37]

The Middlesex Battalion, according to final plans worked out between Keiser and Coulter, would be in position just south of the pass by 0800 but would not attack unless Keiser so requested. His signal for an attack would be radioed to the British. Last, Keiser worked out a no-fire line so that Sloane's artillery support would not strike the British unit.[38]

[36] Ltr, Holden to Appleman, 26 Feb 52.

[37] Ibid.; 9th Inf Hist, Nov 50; Marshall, *The River and the Gauntlet*, p. 269.

[38] IX Corps G3 Spot Rpt 2164, 30 Nov 50; Ltr, Holden to Appleman, 26 Feb 52.

The Sukch'on-Sunch'on-Songch'on Line

Having returned to Korea from Tokyo with instructions from General MacArthur to prevent the envelopment of the Eighth Army, General Walker late on the 29th called a general withdrawal to a line twenty miles south of Kunu-ri and thirty miles above P'yongyang whose general trace connected the towns of Sukch'on, Sunch'on, and Songch'on. The twenty-mile retirement would take his northernmost forces—the ROK 1st, 25th, and 2d Divisions—out of the path of the Chinese closing in on Kunu-ri from the east and north, and the resulting consolidation of forces would permit a more closely knit defense with which to meet the deeper Chinese thrust down the Tokch'on-Sunch'on road and any similar effort over the Songch'on-P'yongyang route. Walker instructed the I Corps to face north along the Sukch'on-Sunch'on segment of the new line, the IX Corps to occupy the slightly larger sector curving to the southeast between Sunch'on and Songch'on.[39]

The I Corps Withdrawal

General Milburn's move to the rear was uncomplicated since the first phase of his earlier withdrawal out of the Ch'ongch'on bridgehead had taken the I Corps out of contact except on the extreme right near Kunu-ri. Milburn assigned the ROK 1st Division to the left half of the Sukch'on-Sunch'on sector, the 25th Division to the right. Both divisions were to withdraw at daylight on the 30th under cover provided by Col. John L. Throckmorton's 5th

[39] Rad, GX 30090 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 29 Nov 50.

Regimental Combat Team. Throckmorton's team was to remain in the Anju area to protect fords and two bridges over the Ch'ongch'on until the divisions had cleared the river, then was to move into corps reserve at Yongyu, eight miles south of Sukch'on.[40]

Milburn's forces peeled off from the left, moving west and south over the Kunu-ri–Sinanju–Sukch'on route. The ROK 1st Division started at 0600 and moved slowly but without incident toward an assembly near Sukch'on. The 25th Division began moving an hour later toward an assembly nearer Sunch'on. By 1430 all I Corps troops who had been above the Ch'ongch'on were below the river. Less than an hour later 5th Regimental Combat Team troops blew one Anju bridge and about 1800 destroyed the other. Milburn then instructed Colonel Throckmorton to start his withdrawal to Yongyu. But while most I Corps forces by then were moving down the Sinanju-Sukch'on segment of Route 1 by truck or afoot, troops were still coming into Throckmorton's line from the direction of Kunu-ri. Some were from the 3d Battalion, 24th Infantry, which until late afternoon had been blocked off by enemy troops behind its position northwest of Kunu-ri. Others were from Company B, 89th Tank Battalion; Company F, 27th Infantry; and the 25th Reconnaissance Company which had protected General Kean's withdrawal from the area nearer Kunu-ri not occupied by any of Throckmorton's troops. The remainder were from the 23d Regimental Combat Team, which had been covering the 2d Division's withdrawal over the Kunu-ri–Sunch'on road.[41]

Throckmorton therefore continued to man his covering position past midnight. By the time his combat team finally reached its corps reserve assembly at Yongyu on 1 December, the ROK 1st and 25th Divisions had left their temporary assembly areas to occupy their assigned sectors of the new army line.

The 2d Division Plan

In establishing division sectors along the IX Corps' new defense line, General Coulter attached the British 27th Brigade to the 1st Cavalry Division and instructed General Gay to organize positions from Songch'on northwestward to a point six miles short of Sunch'on. The 2d Division was to occupy these last six miles once it could disengage and withdraw from the Kunu-ri area.[42]

In anticipation of such a withdrawal, General Keiser and his G–3, Lt. Col. Maurice C. Holden, on the 29th had considered the alternative of taking the 2d Division south over the Kunu-ri–Sinanju–Sukch'on route through the I Corps sector. This possibility was raised when General Milburn telephoned Keiser during the afternoon to inquire about the 2d Division's situation and at that time offered the use of the I Corps roads. Colonel Holden and the division provost marshal, Lt. Col. Henry C. Becker, took immediate advantage of Milburn's offer to move vari-

[40] Rad, CG I Corps to CG 25th Div et al., 30 Nov 50; I Corps POR 236, 30 Nov 50; I Corps WD, Nar, Nov 50; 25th Div Hist, Nov 50; 24th Inf WD, Nov 50.

[41] I Corps WD, Nar, Nov 50; I Corps WD, 30 Nov 50; 25th Div O1 24, 30 Nov 50; 5th RCT Unit Rpt 109, 1 Dec 50; 5th RCT S3 Jnl, 30 Nov 50; 24th Inf WD, Nov 50; 89th Med Tk Bn Unit Rpt, Nov 50; 25th Div Recon Co WD, Nov 50.

[42] IX Corps Opn O 6 (confirms fragmentary orders already issued), 30 Nov 50.

ous service units and a large number of southbound supply vehicles that had collected on the blocked supply road. A division headquarters advance party joined the column of trucks as it turned back north to get on the road to Sinanju at a junction just behind the position of the 23d Infantry. Colonel Gerald G. Epley, the chief of staff, apparently judged this to be the only use of the road intended by General Milburn: as the service train started over the I Corps route, he refused a division artillery request to base withdrawal plans on that axis on grounds that it was not available to the 2d Division.[43]

Colonel Holden attempted to make it available around 2000 when he radioed the IX Corps G–3 and asked him to clear the 2d Division's unlimited use of the Kunu-ri–Sinanju–Sukch'on route with General Milburn. But although the G–3 reported that he obtained the requested clearance with the provision that Keiser's forces "work in on the road as they can," Colonel Holden later denied having received it. The question of permission, in any event, was soon replaced by doubt that the road's use was possible. Before 2100, Colonel Becker, the provost marshal, reported that Chinese had cut the Kunu-ri–Anju segment. The road actually was still open, but Keiser sought no confirmation of the report and, upon receipt of the IX Corps order about 0100 on the 30th, based his withdrawal plan on the use of the blocked road to the south.[44]

In the hour and a half after receiving Coulter's withdrawal instructions, Keiser and his staff worked out the division's order of movement. As previously planned, the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 9th Infantry were to attack to open the road at daylight. When the road was clear, the remainder of the division was to withdraw in increments: the division and division artillery headquarters first, then the engineer battalion, the remainder of the 9th Infantry with its direct support artillery and the bulk of the division's antiaircraft artillery attached, the two general support artillery battalions, the various pieces of the Turkish brigade, the 38th Infantry and its direct support artillery, the ROK 3d Regiment, and finally the rear guard composed of the 23d Infantry, 15th Field Artillery Battalion, 72d Tank Battalion, Battery B of the Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons 82d Battalion, and 2d Chemical Mortar Battalion.[45]

All of General Keiser's plans so far were based on the assumption that the Kunu-ri–Sunch'on road was blocked only at the pass four miles south of the division command post and that the 9th Infantry would have no particular difficulty clearing it. This assumption was challenged during the night when a Chinese patrol attacked and took a hilltop from a squad of military police on the perimeter protecting Keiser's headquarters and when mortar, machine gun, and small arms fire fell for about an hour on both the division headquarters area and the nearby position of the 503d Field Artillery Battalion. But while all of this heralded the westward approach of *38th Army* forces north of the

[43] Ltr, Holden to Applemen, 26 Feb 52; 2d Div Arty WD, Entry 58, Nov 50.

[44] 2d Div WD, G3 Activ Rpt, Nov 50; IX Corps G3 Spot Rpt 2140, 29 Nov 50; Ltr, Holden to Appleman, 26 Feb 52; 2d Div Arty WD, Entry 61, Nov 50.

[45] The order of march is given in 2d Div Arty POR 98, 1 Dec 50.

pass area, it gave General Keiser no definite evidence that the Chinese had enlarged the fire block. He responded to the nighttime activity by moving the 38th Infantry east and south from its location behind the 23d Infantry to an assembly near the exposed 15th, 38th, and 503d Field Artillery Battalions north of the division command post. Otherwise, his plans to clear the known block to the south using the 9th Infantry, then to dispatch the remainder of his division to Sunch'on, remained in effect.[46]

The Roadblock Below Kunu-ri

To reach the blocked pass four miles south of the 2d Division command post around daylight on the 30th, the 2d Battalion of the 9th Infantry followed in column by the mortar company and the 3d Battalion with a platoon of regimental tanks attached, left the regimental assembly southwest of Kunu-ri at 0330. Colonel Sloane intended to march down the supply road two miles beyond the division command post, then deploy a battalion on either side of the road and advance over the bordering ridges. *(See Map 10.)* But at 0630, no more than a half mile south of division headquarters, the leading 2d Battalion received small arms and machine gun fire from the high ground to the southwest. This fire was the first certain indication that the *38th Army* had extended the fire block north of the pass.[47]

While the mortar company pulled back slightly to positions from which fire could be dropped on the Chinese-held height, Sloane got his vehicles out of range and deployed for assault. The 2d Battalion and Company I climbed the ridge west of the road while the remainder of the 3d Battalion moved over lower ground on the east. The Chinese gunners on the western height pulled away as Sloane's forces climbed toward them, but small arms, machine gun, and mortar fire from the next height south swept and stopped both battalions after their initial rush.[48]

When Sloane's assault foundered, General Keiser sent the ROK 3d Regiment to assist. Sloane used the South Koreans to relieve his forces west of the road. Once the ROK forces passed through, he intended to place all of his own troops east of the withdrawal route and again attack south.[49]

Against the possibility that Sloane's renewed effort would not open the road, Keiser instructed the 38th Infantry and all division artillery except the units attached to the 23d Infantry to move to the division headquarters area. Only combat equipment was to be brought; kitchens, maintenance equipment, personal baggage, and all other nonessential impedimenta were to be left behind. Colonel Peploe's forces, previously scheduled to march near the tail of the divisional column, were now earmarked to lead the way south. Thus stripped and poised, Keiser could if necessary fight his way to Sunch'on.[50]

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[46] Ltr, Holden to Appleman, 26 Feb 52; 2d Div WD, Nov 50; Gugeler, *Combat Actions in Korea*, p.57; 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nov 50.

[47] 9th Inf Hist, Nov 50; Marshall, *The River and the Gauntlet*, p. 270.

[48] 9th Inf Hist, Nov 50; Marshall, *The River and the Gauntlet*, pp. 270–72.

[49] 9th Inf Hist, Nov 50; Ltr, Holden to Appleman, 26 Feb 52; Marshall, *The River and the Gauntlet*, pp. 272–73.

[50] 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nov 50; 2d Div Arty WD, Entry 63, 30 Nov 50; Ltr, Holden to Appleman, 26 Feb 52.

Apparently unable to raise the British by radio, Keiser sent a request through IX Corps headquarters for the Middlesex Battalion to strike north into the pass area. About the same time, Colonel Sloane dispatched his platoon of tanks south to contact the British unit. Sloane's tanks, like the platoon from the 72d Tank Battalion the previous day, weathered enemy fire without loss and reached the British below the pass about 1030. The Middlesex Battalion already had tried to clear the pass, had been stopped by strong mortar and machine gun fire, and had then taken position near Yongwon to cover 2d Division forces when they came through the pass. Sloane's tankers remained with the British to add their guns to the cover.[51]

Near the time that Sloane's tanks reached the British, the ROK 3d Regiment passed through Sloane's 2d Battalion. Supported by an air strike of rockets and napalm and by .50-caliber machine gun fire from a platoon of tanks from the 72d Tank Battalion (previously with the Turks) on the road, the South Koreans drove a small group of Chinese off the first hill south, then failed in two assaults to carry the ridge beyond. Altogether, the ROK regiment gained just under three-quarters of a mile.[52]

By noon Sloane's forces and the South Koreans had gained no more ground. Equally disturbing to General Keiser, Colonel Freeman notified him that Chinese were beginning to press the 23d Infantry just below the Kaech'on River. Although near-continuous air strikes on Kunu-ri and its vicinity so far had helped materially in holding off the enemy, the Chinese strength across the river from the regiment was growing. Freeman also had observed enemy troops moving around his right flank toward Keiser's units to the south.[53]

The combination of conditions above and below Keiser pushed him to the decision to run his forces through the roadblock. Whereas speculation had continued, especially among artillery units, on a withdrawal over the Kunu-ri–Sinanju–Sukch'on route, the latest reports from Freeman discouraged that choice as the way out. To get on that route, almost all of Keiser's forces first would have to move north to the road junction just behind the 23d Infantry which now appeared in immediate danger of seizure by the Chinese accumulating in Kunu-ri. In view of that possibility, the earlier report that the Kunu-ri–Anju road segment had been cut, and General Coulter's orders to the 2d Division to withdraw over the Kunu-ri–Sunch'on road, General Keiser dismissed any further consideration of using the I Corps route.[54]

There were, on the other hand, at least two prospects that favored running the roadblock. Although Sloane had failed to clear the ridges below division headquarters, the Chinese had not exhibited any heavy firepower. The near enemy position also appeared to be shallow. His forces, Keiser reasoned,

[51] IX Corps G3 Spot Rpt 2174, 30 Nov 50; 9th Inf Hist, Nov 50; Marshall, *The River and the Gauntlet*, p. 309.

[52] 9th Inf Hist, Nov 50; Ltr, Holden to Appleman, 26 Feb 52; Marshall, *The River and the Gauntlet*, pp. 273, 276–79.

[53] 23d Inf Comd Rpt, Nov 50; Ltr, Holden to Appleman, 26 Feb 52.

[54] Ltr, Holden to Appleman, 26 Feb 52; 2d Div Arty WD, Nov 50.

probably could rush past it and then face only the problem of negotiating the pass farther south. Even the latter problem might already have been solved. Having no communication with the Middlesex Battalion, Keiser assumed that the British were attacking northward. Hence, the pass might be clear and a linkup with the British occur not far down the road.[55]

Before signaling the start of the run south, Keiser reversed previous instructions that only necessary battle gear be taken. Near noon his assistant, General Bradley, passed the word to all units to bring out all serviceable vehicles and equipment. Keiser evidently believed the Chinese opposition below him could be handled without stripping to bare combat essentials, and for a speedy trip to Sunch'on he could use all transportation available. Keiser's final order of march kept the 38th Infantry in the lead, followed by division headquarters and division artillery headquarters, next all artillery battalions except the 15th with Freeman's regiment, then the engineer battalion, and finally the rearguard 23d Regimental Combat Team. All other forces—the 9th Infantry, Company C of the 72d Tank Battalion, the ROK 3d Regiment, and troops of the Turkish brigade—were expected to work into the column ahead of the rear guard, those on foot hitching a ride wherever they could. The order to all units was to keep moving.[56]

Keiser instructed Colonel Peploe to move about 1245. Since Peploe already had organized the 38th Infantry for the ride south, there was little delay in starting. At the head of the column, Peploe's 2d Battalion riding trucks and regimental tanks passed through the 9th Infantry about 1300. The lead tank bearing three officers and eighteen men in addition to the crew received intermittent bursts of machine gun fire, but no one was hit. The men aboard the tank sprayed return fire into the heights commanding the road as they sped over the first mile and a half, then encountered a barricade. Apparently between the time that Sloane's tanks moved south during the morning and Peploe's forces started an hour past noon, the Chinese had obstructed the road with an M39 carrier, an M4 tank, and a 2½-ton truck lost by Keiser's forces on the 29th. Although the time taken to shove the obstructions off the road was brief, the delay started a chain reaction of halts to the rear that fixed a stop, wait, and go pattern to the entire withdrawal.[57]

The leading tank and its passengers received and returned fire as before while negotiating the next two and a half miles, including the quarter-mile length of the pass. Another quarter mile beyond the pass, a second barricade of trucks and assorted equipment lay across the road, but the driver kept his tank at full speed and rammed through it. Around the next turn of the road he passed behind the outposts of the Middlesex Battalion about 1400.[58]

The tank's successful one-hour run prompted a message from the British that when recorded at army headquarters pronounced the "MSR between

[55] Ltr, Holden to Appleman, 26 Feb 52; Marshall, *The River and the Gauntlet*, pp. 280–81.

[56] 2d Div WD, Nov 50; 2d Div Arty WD, Nov 50.

[57] 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nov 50; 9th Inf Hist, Nov 50; Marshall, *The River and the Gauntlet*, pp. 289–94.

[58] 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nov 50; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 30 Nov 50; Marshall, *The River and the Gauntlet*, pp. 286–87.

Kunu-ri and Sunch'on open as of 1400." But the scene along the road behind the lead vehicle belied this optimism. As Peploe's 2d Battalion with the 3d Battalion and regimental headquarters group immediately behind moved over the four-mile stretch below division headquarters, the two regiments of the *113th Division* in the bordering heights began strengthening their elongated fire block. The heaviest fire fell in the pass, but the Chinese also maneuvered to bring down small arms, machine gun, and mortar fire on much of the road above the defile. The Chinese placed perhaps thirty or forty machine guns and about ten mortars in action. Most of the direct fire was delivered broadside, and much of it plunged onto the road from long range. Peploe's column nevertheless began to lose men and vehicles, especially while at a halt; as more trucks were disabled, the frequency of the halts increased.[59]

At each halt, riders leapt from tanks and trucks for the roadside ditches. Some fired into the heights, others only sought cover. When able to move again, drivers often left passengers behind. Of those left afoot by the destruction of their transportation or by a driver who failed to wait, the able-bodied straggled south, some managing to catch another ride. Wounded were picked up by troops following when there was room in their vehicles; for lack of space or notice, other casualties were left where they had fallen. This scrambling gradually broke down tactical unity and troop control. But despite disorganization and casualties, Peploe's forces, with some South Korean and Turkish troops scattered among them, managed to move in spurts and get through the pass a little before 1500. By the time the tail of Peploe's serial got through, the Chinese in the pass area had greatly increased their fire and were moving guns in an effort to block the quarter-mile cut completely.[60]

Coming next into the pass were the 2d Battalion and mortar company of the 9th Infantry. Colonel Sloane dispatched these two units onto the road about 1330 behind Peploe's lead serial, keeping the 3d Battalion deployed against the Chinese near the division's point of departure. Part of the ROK 3d Regiment and some Turks were mixed in. On the heels of the 9th Infantry troops came General Keiser's headquarters troops and the reconnaissance company who had begun to move immediately after learning that Peploe's first troops had gone through the pass. Right behind were the division artillery headquarters, the bulk of the 82d Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion, the 1st Battalion of the 38th Infantry, and the division military police company. Besides the division rear guard, the division engineers, four artillery battalions, and the rest of the 9th Infantry had yet to take to the road.[61]

The ride south toward the pass was every bit as harrowing for this group as it had been for Peploe's men. Moving through the defile was even more painful. As Sloane's leading troops entered the pass, the Chinese loosed efilading machine gun fire from both ends of

[59] 2d Div G2–G3 Jnl, Entry J–1490, 30 Nov 50; 2d Div Arty WD, Nov 50; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 30 Nov 50; 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nov 50; Marshall, *The River and the Gauntlet*, pp. 287–88.

[60] 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nov 50; Marshall, *The River and the Gauntlet*, pp. 288–90, 306–07.

[61] 9th Inf Hist, Nov 50; Ltr, Holden to Appleman, 26 Feb 52; 2d Div Arty WD, Nov 50; Marshall, *The River and the Gauntlet*, pp. 318, 326.

the cut as well as plunging fire from the embankments on either side. At least twenty disabled trucks already cluttered the roadside when the first of Sloane's forces attempted to negotiate the pass, and as the enemy fire began taking an additional toll of vehicles, the wreckage in the roadway became a barrier impassable to trucks to the rear. Troops amidst and immediately behind the obstructions tried to move afoot through the pass, but the machine gun fire as well as small arms fire and hand grenades pitched down on them from above forced them to cover among the wrecked trucks. For the first time, movement through the pass came to a complete stop.[62]

Doubling the column then stretching two miles to the rear, General Keiser and General Bradley came south to the pass shortly before 1530. They needed no long study to see that further movement depended first on suppressing the fire being poured into the defile. While ground troops in and near the cut were making such an attempt, strong air attacks seemed the only real solution.[63]

Fighter-bombers responding to an earlier call for air support from Keiser began pounding the ground bordering the pass about the time the two generals completed their reconnaissance and returned to their command vehicles now just north of the pass. Near 1630, after movement through the pass had been blocked for more than an hour, Keiser conferred with his G–3, Colonel Holden, and momentarily considered abandoning all vehicles and taking his troops out cross-country. But by then the air strikes were beginning to have an effect. Mosquito control pilots reported that it was impossible to miss the Chinese clustered in the heights on either side of the road, and to make sure of hitting their targets, pilots flew in so low that the men in the pass expected the planes to crash. Machine gun bullets from the aircraft struck the rocky embankments less than seventy-five yards above the men in the cut, and burning napalm spilled onto the road to set several vehicles afire. As the air strikes dampened the Chinese fire, Keiser sent two light tanks from his reconnaissance company to bulldoze a path through the wrecked vehicles in the pass. The column of troops and trucks could move south again, although they continued to receive some fire from the surrounding heights. Darkness fell and forced away the supporting planes before the last of this portion of the division column entered the pass, but the column moved steadily toward safety.[64]

As the last of the military police company and a few troops of the 38th Infantry at the end of this section descended from the quieted pass, some fire ranged in on their left flank. Just below the pass, where the road jogged west, crossed a stream, then turned south again a short distance beyond, was the small village of Karhyon-dong. After receiving the strong air attacks in the pass heights, part of the Chinese blocking force took cover in Karhyon-

[62] Marshall, *The River and the Gauntlet*, pp. 310–311, 318.

[63] Ibid., p. 320.

[64] Eighth Army G3 Briefing Rpt, 1 Dec 50; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entry 2147, 30 Nov 50; Ltr, Holden to Appleman, 26 Feb 52; Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950–1953*, pp. 237–38; Marshall, *The River and the Gauntlet*, pp. 318–19, 326–27, 331–32; 2d Div G2 Jnl, Entry 1490, 30 Nov 50.

dong and trained a few automatic weapons and mortars to the northwest. This fire would be the heaviest faced in the pass area by the last section of Keiser's column, which included four artillery battalions, the division engineers, and the remainder of the 9th Infantry. Whereas the 23d Regimental Combat Team originally was scheduled to bring up the rear over the Kunu-ri–Sunch'on road, the long delay caused by the Chinese fire block to the south coupled with enemy pressure from the north had prompted Colonel Freeman to choose another way out; by dusk his forces already were moving over the Kunu-ri–Sinanju–Sukch'on route.[65]

The 17th Field Artillery Battalion, the only 8-inch howitzer unit in Korea, led the last section of Keiser's column. After passing through sporadic machine gun fire, the battalion halted in midafternoon just below the village of Wa-dong, a little over two miles north of the pass. Following one stiff exchange of fire with nearby Chinese forces, the 17th started to move again at dark. The battalion negotiated the pass without trouble, but, on descending and turning west to ford the stream west of Karhyon-dong, a howitzer tipped over and rolled into a deep gulley. When an artilleryman went into the gulley to destroy the gun, lights turned on to help him see attracted mortar fire from Karhyon-dong. Harassed by continued fire, the remaining tractors and howitzers crossed the stream slowly and one at a time. It was midnight when the battalion got out of the fire, but losses were light in spite of the slowness. The battalion suffered 1 killed and 16 wounded and lost 1 howitzer, 22 vehicles, and 11 trailers.[66]

The 37th Field Artillery Battalion, next in column, suffered more than double the 17th's losses. By the time the 105s of the 37th cleared the ford west of Karhyon-dong, the battalion had lost 35 men killed, wounded, or missing, and had left 10 howitzers, 53 vehicles, and 39 trailers strewn along the road to the rear. But, like the 17th, the 37th was still intact.[67]

To the rear, the story was different. Whereas the 503d and 38th Field Artillery Battalions, 2d Engineer Combat Battalion, and remainder of the 9th Infantry had started down the road behind the 37th, only a trickle of troops and trucks would come through the pass. Although some of the Chinese had climbed down from the bordering heights to firing positions nearer the road, none so far had made an assault on the division column. But after dark, just below the division's point of departure, strong Chinese forces opened attacks against the two remaining artillery battalions and the engineers. Vehicles knocked out during the assaults blocked the raod in considerable depth, and enemy fire during and following the assaults defeated all attempts to remove the obstructions. Only a few troops near the head of the 503d Field Artillery Battalion managed to break away and continue down the road. The others, including the remainder of the 9th Infantry caught at the very end of the division column, abandoned all

[65] Marshall, *The River and the Gauntlet*, p. 340; Ltr, Holden to Appleman, 26 Feb 52; Ltr, Col Paul L. Freeman to CG, 2d Inf Div, 9 Dec 50, sub: Withdrawal of the 23d Infantry From KUNU-RI.

[66] 17th FA Bn WD, Nov 50; Ltr, Holden to Appleman, 26 Feb 52; Gugeler, *Combat Actions in Korea*, pp. 58–60; Marshall, *The River and the Gauntlet*, pp. 342–44.

[67] 37th FA Bn WD, Nov 50; Marshall, *The River and the Gauntlet*, p. 347.



AN 8-INCH HOWITZER AND CREW

guns, equipment, and remaining vehicles and left the road to make their way to Sunch'on cross-country. Not all succeeded in getting past the Chinese around them. Of those who did, the last straggler would not reach safety for some days to come.[68]

In view of this debacle, Colonel Freeman had made a wise choice in electing to withdraw over the Kunu-ri–Sinanju–Sukch'on route. By early afternoon he was convinced of the improbability that the 23d Regimental Combat Team could withdraw via the Kunu-ri–Sunch'on road before dark and was deeply concerned over the pressure being exerted against his forces by the Chinese concentrated in and around Kunu-ri. Twice, at 1430 and an hour later, Freeman reported to division headquarters—although by feeble and interrupted radio contact—that the 23d's situation was becoming increasingly precarious. He made the earlier report to General Bradley and at that time proposed that he be allowed at least two hours before darkness or when in Freeman's judgment the situation became critical to withdraw the combat team using the I Corps roads. Although the weak radio signal caused some confusion at division headquar-

[68] Comd Rpt, 503d FA Bn, Nov 50; Comd Rpt, 38th FA Bn, Nov 50; Hist Rpt, 2d Engr C Bn, Nov 50; 9th Inf Hist, Nov 50; Marshall, *The River and the Gauntlet*, pp. 347–61.

ters as to Freeman's exact plan, General Bradley at 1600 authorized him to put the plan into effect.[69]

In preparation, Freeman invited the commander of the 38th Field Artillery Battalion and the officer in charge of the rearmost troops of the 9th Infantry, both nearby and not yet able to move south over the Kunu-ri–Sunch'on road, to join in withdrawing through the I Corps sector. Both declined. Therefore, only the combat team's attachments—Battery B of the 82d Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion, the 72d Tank Battalion less Company C, and the 15th Field Artillery Battalion—would accompany Freeman's infantry. With the agreement of the commander of the 15th Field Artillery Battalion, Freeman decided not to take the howitzers out. For one reason, the fewer towed pieces on the road, the less chance there would be of having the column blocked by an accident at a sharp turn or defile. Second, he wanted the guns in action up to the moment of withdrawal to discourage any pursuit by the Chinese then pressing his position.[70]

In the hour and a half before sunset Freeman spotted all available transportation on the road behind his rearguard position, then began peeling troops from the front a battalion at a time, beginning with the easternmost. The 15th Field Artillery Battalion meanwhile began a phenomenal shoot, firing all ammunition on hand in just over twenty minutes at deep and close-in targets. After gunners exploded thermite grenades in the already damaged tubes, the artillerymen boarded their trucks and joined the withdrawal. A noticeable and prolonged lull in enemy fire followed the heavy artillery bombardment, and forward observers watched the Chinese hurriedly dig in to the front of the infantry positions being vacated. Colonel Freeman credited the artillery action with having made a safe withdrawal possible. Under continued air cover, his leading troops made their way behind the 5th Regimental Combat Team's position near Anju by sunset; by dark his last troops—from the 3d Battalion and 72d Tank Battalion—were clear of the rearguard position; and just before midnight, the combat team closed in an assembly area near Sukch'on.[71]

A count rendered on 1 December listed 2d Division battle casualties at 4,940 for the last half of November. Of these, 90 percent, or about 4,500, had been incurred since the 25th. Officer casualties alone numbered 237 and touched most grades and branches. These losses represented one-third of the division's actual strength of 15,000 on 15 November, and when reconciled with non-battle casualties, replacements, and returnees, left the division 8,662 men short of authorized strength.[72] Equipment losses were equally heavy. In addition to hundreds of trucks and trailers, the major losses included 64 artillery pieces, almost all of the 2d Engineer Combat Battalion's equipment, and between 20 and 40 per-

[69] Ltr, Col Freeman to CG, 2d Div, 9 Dec 50; Ltr, Maj Gen J. S. Bradley to Maj Roy E. Appleman, 2 Apr 52.

[70] Marshall, *The River and the Gauntlet*, p. 328; Ltr, Col Freeman to CG, 2d Div, 9 Dec 50.

[71] Marshall, *The River and the Gauntlet*, p. 329; Ltr, Col Freeman to CG, 2d Div, 9 Dec 50; 23d Inf Comd Rpt, Nov 50; Comd and Unit Hist Rpt, 72d Tk Bn, Nov 50.

[72] 2d Div Pers Per Rpt no. 12, 1 Dec 50. This report shows the following breakdown:

Unit	*Auth Strength*	*Battle Casualties 15–30 Nov 50*	*Actual Strength 1 Dec 50*
9th Inf	3793	1267	1406
23d Inf	3793	485	2244
38th Inf	3793	1075	1762
Div Arty	3695	1461	1970
72d Tk Bn	681	19	576
2d Engr Bn	977	561	266
2d Med Bn	341	-	329
2d MP Co	187	13	142
2d Recon Co	171	27	115
2d QM Co	252	-	232
702d Ord Co	321	-	283
Div Band	70	-	89
2d Repl Co	34	-	51
Div Hq Co	190	15	166
Div Hq	233	3	249
2d Sig Co	369	10	363
Med Det Div Hq	14	-	13
CIC Det	17	3	13
Total	18,931	4,940	10,269

cent of the signal equipment carried by the various division units.[73]

Although this early tally of losses was not wholly certifiable, the figures clearly showed the 2d Division no longer effective. While the 1st Cavalry Division stretched itself thinner to cover the sector of the new army line originally assigned to the 2d Division, General Keiser on 1 December began moving his depleted division to Chunghwa, about ten miles south of P'yongyang, for rehabilitation.[74]

[73] 2d Div WD, Nov 50; 2d Div Arty WD, Nov 50.
[74] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Dec 50.

CHAPTER VII

Concentration at Hungnam

By 30 November the changing ground situation had in turn altered the course of UNC air and naval operations. General Partridge, whose Fifth Air Force within its own arena now faced a growing challenge from MIG–15 jet aircraft over northwestern Korea, had received a sharp increase in close support requirements. Admiral Ewen, whose Task Force 77 planes previously had been held to interdiction and armed reconnaissance, also had begun to send close support sorties into both the Eighth Army and X Corps sectors.[1]

To meet any increased demand for aircraft carriers and gunfire support, Admiral Joy not only had recalled ships of the line previously redeployed out of the theater but had ordered those under way to their first Korean assignments to sail at maximum safe speed. He also had deployed Task Force 90, dividing Admiral Doyle's amphibious force into one group on each side of the peninsula, so as to be able to evacuate the Eighth Army from western beaches and the X Corps from the east coast.[2]

Joy's deployment of Task Force 90, for the time being at least, was only precautionary. General Walker had pulled the Eighth Army out of the path of the Chinese enveloping maneuver and reduced the likelihood that his forces would have to be sea lifted from some isolated beachhead deep in northern Korea. Nor was General Almond then planning any sea evacuation of the X Corps. Almond's purpose, as General MacArthur had instructed, was to pull his far-flung forces into defenses around Hamhung and Hungnam, a task that had its own complications without regard for what might come next. His ROK I Corps had to backtrack some three hundred miles along the coast, 7th Division forces at Hyesanjin faced a 200-mile withdrawal through the mountains, and the Marine and Army forces in the Changjin Reservoir area could expect to fight their way out at least as far as Kot'o-ri, probably farther.

New X Corps Orders

Almond had begun work on plans to carry out MacArthur's instructions, including a westward move to assist the Eighth Army, while flying back to Korea from the Tokyo conference on the afternoon of the 29th. His staff completed the plans that night.[3]

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[1] Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950–1953*, pp. 230–38; Field, *United States Naval Operations, Korea*, pp. 265–68.

[2] Field, *United States Naval Operations, Korea*, pp. 265–66, 268–69.

[3] This section is based on X Corps Special Report on Chosin Reservoir, 27 Nov–10 Dec 50; X Corps WD, Sum, Nov 50; 7th Div Comd Rpt, 27 Nov–12 Dec 50;

Almond's 30 November order placing these plans in effect left something further to be done with the ROK I Corps. For the time being Almond directed its commander, Brig. Gen. Kim Paik Il, only to protect the X Corps' right flank and secure the east coast road as he brought his forces south.

The 7th Division forces in and around Hyesanjin were to fall back on Hamhung. General Barr was to protect the corps' northern and northeastern flank, establishing an especially strong position around Sinhung, twenty miles north of Hamhung, to block roads leading south out of the area to be vacated. Barr also was to place a regiment and his tank battalion in corps reserve.

Among several assignments given the 3d Division, General Soule's forces were to protect the Changjin Reservoir road from Sudong south to Hamhung and to continue to block the road coming east from Sach'ang-ni. Almond detached the 1st Korean Marine Corps Regiment and one infantry battalion from Soule's division and placed them under corps control. These two units, designated Task Force C and commanded by Brig. Gen. A. D. Mead, the assistant 3d Division commander, were to protect Wonsan and the Wonsan airfield. Except for one other battalion, Soule was to concentrate the remainder of his division between Chigyong and Yonp'o, about four miles southwest of Hamhung and Hungnam. The excluded battalion was to head west over the road leading to Tokch'on. Almond's written order directed Soule to "attack with strong Task Force . . . and assist Eighth Army." But in a conference with Soule and 65th Infantry commander Col. William W. Harris during the morning of the 30th, Almond reduced the mission to a reconnaissance in force by a reinforced battalion from Harris' regiment.

The separated garrisons around the Changjin Reservoir had to be consolidated before any withdrawal from that sector could begin. Toward that end, Almond late on the 29th had placed all forces in the reservoir area, including those at Kot'o-ri, under the control of the 1st Marine Division. To protect further the vital road junction and supplies at Hagaru-ri, he had ordered General Smith to pull in a regiment from Yudam-ni. He also had instructed Smith to gain contact with Task Force Faith, then to work out a coordinated defense based on Hagaru-ri, and, finally, to open and secure the eleven miles of road between Hagaru-ri and Kot'o-ri.

Almond's order on the 30th enlarged these instructions. General Smith now was to pull in both Marine regiments from Yudam-ni and was to find some way to bring Task Force Faith back to Hagaru-ri. He also was to secure a larger segment of the reservoir road from Hagaru-ri south twenty-two miles to the village of Sudong.

During the afternoon of the 30th Almond met with Generals Smith, Barr, and Hodes at Hagaru-ri to urge speed in falling back on Hamhung. Except for the Task Force Drysdale melee in Hell Fire Valley, the reservoir area had been relatively quiet the previous night. But the respite from strong attack likely would be brief, and the Chinese were

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Mono, *Chosin Reservoir*, 3d Hist Det; 3d Div Comd Rpt, Nov 50; Montross and Canzona, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign*; Interv, Appleman with General Almond; X Corps OI 19, 29 Nov 50; X Corps Opn O 8, 30 Nov 50.

becoming active along the reservoir road at and below Kot'o-ri. Just after dark on the 29th a Chinese force had struck but failed to penetrate the Kot'o-ri perimeter, and on the 30th the marines at Chinhung-ni discovered and drove off a Chinese battalion in the heights west of town. Almond consequently wanted Smith to accelerate the movement of the Yudam-ni forces to Hagaru-ri, and he directed both Smith and Barr to come up with a plan and timetable for extricating Task Force Faith. He authorized Smith to destroy all equipment whose removal would delay his consolidation and withdrawal, promising him any needed resupply by air.

Despite the requirement for speed, neither Smith nor Barr saw any quick way of consolidating forces at Hagaru-ri, especially of retrieving Task Force Faith. Almond personally had ordered the 2d Battalion, 31st Infantry, to move northward immediately from Majon-dong to help extricate the task force. But in view of Task Force Drysdale's experience, the infantry battalion most certainly faced serious trouble in running the gauntlet above Kot'o-ri. Forces from Hagaru-ri could hardly be spared for a rescue mission lest Chinese, known still to be concentrated in strength around the town, hit the weakened garrison and capture the vital base. The two division commanders agreed that a relief force could be sent to Task Force Faith only after the Yudam-ni marines returned to Hagaru-ri, and the latter faced the task of fighting over fourteen miles of mountain road while bringing out hundreds of casualties. The alternative, none too attractive, was to order the casualty-ridden task force to fight its way out.

Shaping the Hamhung-Hungnam Defense

To protect Hamhung and Hungnam while the distant X Corps forces made their way south, General Almond had moved forces of the 3d Division into the port complex. He lost his protection on 1 December when General MacArthur took control of the 3d Division and ordered Almond to assemble it in Wonsan preparatory—presumably—to sending it westward to assist the Eighth Army. Almond complied (dissolving General Mead's Task Force C in the process) but on the 3d sent to Tokyo staff members who appealed and obtained a rescission of MacArthur's action. Upon regaining the 3d Division, Almond canceled the westward reconnaissance previously assigned to the 65th Infantry, a pointless venture now that the Eighth Army had withdrawn to the Sukch'on-Sunch'on-Songch'on line. Except for establishing another task force that he kept under his own control, Almond returned the division to the Hamhung-Hungnam area. The task force along with a Marine shore party group was to protect Wonsan and outload the supplies and equipment stockpiled there, whereupon the port was to be abandoned.[4]

For the 3d Division, the changes in orders over the first three days of De-

[4] X Corps Opn O 8, 30 Nov 50; X Corps OI 20, 1 Dec 50; X Corps OI 21, 1 Dec 50; TLCN 558, FEC–X Corps, 3 Dec 50; X Corps OI 24, 3 Dec 50; X Corps Special Report on Chosin Reservoir, 27 Nov–10 Dec 50.

cember were confusing, especially for the troops of subordinate units who without knowing why shuttled like yo-yos to, from, and back to the Hamhung-Hungnam complex. But by nightfall on the 4th General Soule concentrated the bulk of his division in the Hamhung-Hungnam area. With the 1st Korean Marine Corps Regiment attached, he deployed on the 5th to defend a sector anchored below Yonp'o airfield southwest of Hungnam and arching northwest through Chigyong southwest of Hamhung to the village of Oro-ri on the Changjin Reservoir road eight miles northwest of Hamhung.[5]

By dark on the 5th the greater part of the 7th Division also reached the Hamhung-Hungnam area. To assist the 7th's evacuation of Hyesanjin, the attached 26th ROK Regiment had taken covering positions astride the main Hyesanjin-Pukch'ong withdrawal route about midway between the terminal towns. But General Barr's forces came south without enemy contact. They demolished bridges and cratered the road behind them as far as the South Korean position and in continuing their withdrawal prepared similar demolitions to be exploded by the South Koreans bringing up the rear. Barr's forces, after completing their withdrawal, put up defenses north and northeast of Hamhung adjacent to those of the 3d Division. The leftmost position was not far east of Oro-ri, astride the road leading south from the Pujon Reservoir; the rightmost blocked the coastal road.[6]

Barr's block at the right was temporary. General Almond's plan for ringing Hamhung and Hungnam now called for the ROK I Corps to hold the northeast sector, including the coastal road. But the nearest ROK I Corps troops were still a hundred miles up the coast at Songjin, the rearmost another forty miles north in Kilchu. To assist the Korean withdrawal, General Almond arranged on the 5th through Admiral Doyle to send five ships to Songjin to pick up the tail-end ROK 3d Division. The ROK I Corps headquarters and the leading Capital Division meanwhile continued to withdraw overland.[7]

Concentration at Hagaru-ri

On 1 December, as General Almond began to shape the defense of Hamhung and Hungnam, the marines at Yudam-ni and Colonel Faith's forces east of the Changjin Reservoir started back toward Hagaru-ri. General Smith, now commanding all forces in the reservoir area, had given the two regiments at Yudam-ni their withdrawal order the previous evening following his afternoon conference with Almond. Smith placed neither Colonel Litzenberg nor Colonel Murray in charge but merely directed both to "Expedite . . . movement RCT–5 and RCT–7 to Hagaru prepared for further withdrawal south. Destroy any supplies which must be abandoned during this withdrawal."[8]

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[5] 3d Div Comd Rpt, Dec 50; Dolcater, *3d Infantry Division in Korea*, pp. 88–91; X Corps Opn O 9, 5 Dec 50.

[6] Action Rpt, 7th Div, 21 Nov to 20 Dec 50, From Hyesanjin to Hungnam Outloading; X Corps Comd Rpt, Dec 50; X Corps Opn O 9, 5 Dec 50.

[7] X Corps Opn O 9, 5 Dec 50; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Dec 50, Briefing for CG, 6 Dec 50; Field, *United States Naval Operations, Korea*, pp. 285–89.

[8] Msg, CG 1st Marine Div to COs 5th and 7th Marines, 1920, 30 Nov 50.

Smith sent withdrawal instructions to Task Force Faith at 1100 on the 1st. By that time Smith had dropped all plans for sending a rescue force to Faith, whose forces had taken strong assaults around their lakeshore perimeter during the night of the 30th. Although they had defeated these attacks, it was doubtful they could withstand more. Hence, Smith judged, waiting to dispatch reinforcements to Faith until the Yudam-ni troops returned to Hagaru-ri would be too late. Nor could he use the 2d Battalion, 31st Infantry, ordered forward from Majon-dong by General Almond the day before, since that battalion was only at Kot'o-ri and had had to fight to get that far foward. The two previous failures of the 31st Infantry's rear troops to reach Faith from Hudong-ni even when accompanied by tanks proved them too weak for a rescue mission. In fact, they had been recalled to Hagaru-ri on the 30th lest they be destroyed by the Chinese below Faith's position. Finally, Smith's previous judgment that none of the Hagaru-ri troops could be spared seemed even more sound by morning of the 1st after the forces defending the base again had beaten back several night assaults at the southwestern arc of the perimeter and at East Hill. Smith's only course was to arrange ample close air support and order Colonel Faith to fight his way south.[9]

Task Force Faith

Colonel Faith started south at 1300 on the 1st, right after his supporting aircraft came on station. *(Map 11)* The 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry, now commanded by its former executive officer, Maj. Crosby P. Miller, led the way. Then came the 57th Field Artillery Battalion, the heavy mortar company of the 31st Infantry, and at the tail of the column the 3d Battalion, 31st Infantry. Battery D of the 15th Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion interspersed its .50-caliber and 40-mm. guns among the other units. Faith kept his column short, taking only twenty-two vehicles to carry his six hundred wounded. Before moving, his troops destroyed the remaining vehicles, excess supplies, and the 105-mm. howitzers of the field artillery battalion.[10]

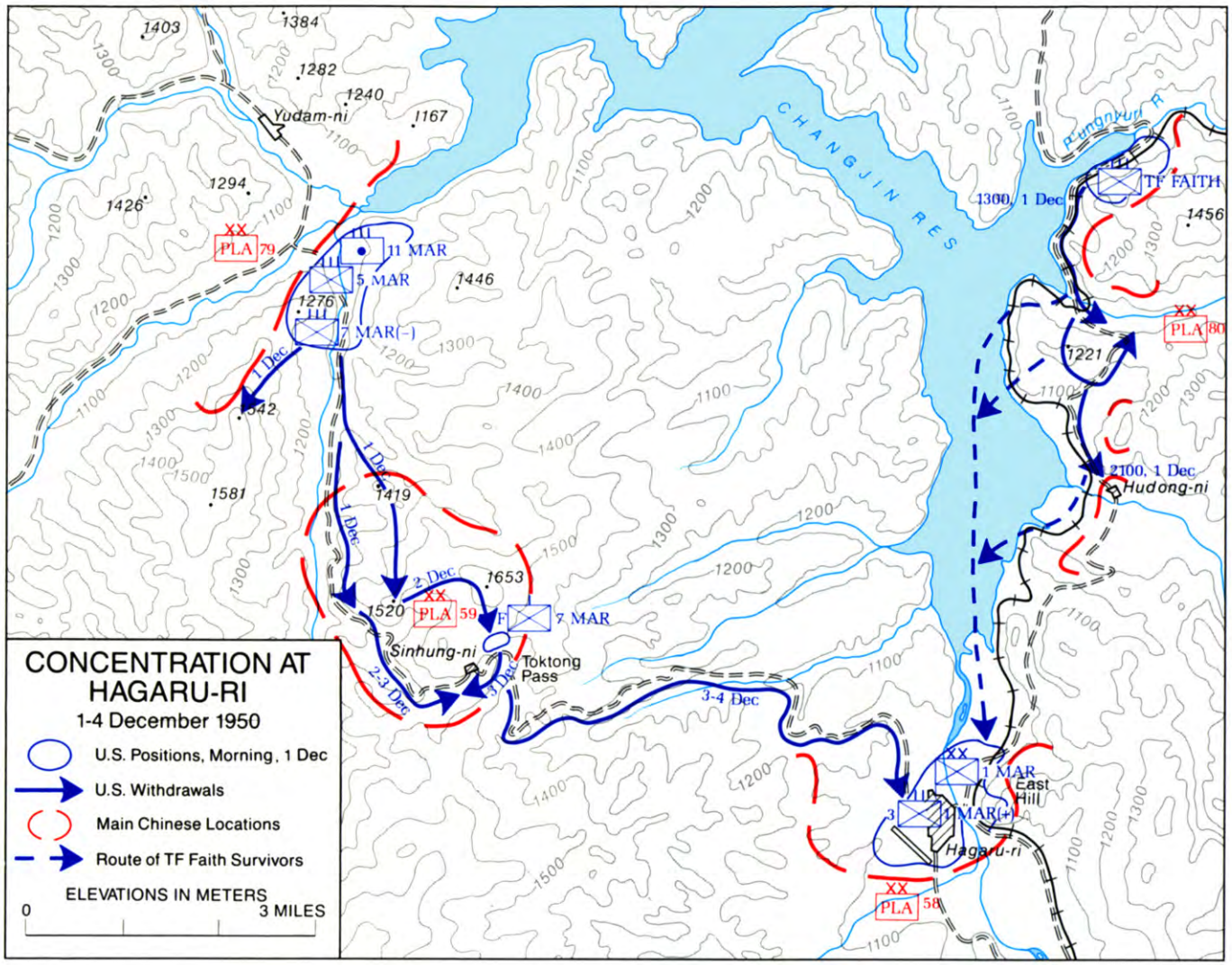
The leading battalion moved one rifle company down the road, the other two in column over the high ground east of the road as flank security. Faith's column received fire almost from the minute it started, and four pilots overhead made the rough start rougher when they miscalculated their runs and dropped napalm on the leading troops. Several men burned to death, and the two front companies became disorganized while scattering to escape their own air support.[11]

After some delay while Colonel Faith steadied his force, the column pushed past small groups of Chinese along the road until midafternoon when the lead troops came upon a destroyed bridge two miles below the point of departure. After a crude bypass was constructed, a half-track towed each truck across.

[9] 7th Div Comd Rpt, 27 Nov–12 Dec 50, Chosin Reservoir; Montross and Canzona, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign*, pp. 240–43; Gugeler, *Combat Actions in Korea*, pp. 75–76; Field, *United States Naval Operations, Korea*, p. 277.

[10] 7th Div Comd Rpt, 27 Nov–12 Dec 50, Chosin Reservoir; Gugeler, *Combat Actions in Korea*, pp. 77–78. See also, MS, Lt. Col. C. P. Miller, Chosin Reservoir, November–December 1950.

[11] Gugeler, *Combat Actions in Korea*, p. 78.


CONCENTRATION AT HAGARU-RI
1-4 December 1950
U.S. Positions, Morning, 1 Dec
U.S. Withdrawals
Main Chinese Locations
Route of TF Faith Survivors
ELEVATIONS IN METERS
0
3 MILES
CHANGJIN RES
Yudam-ni
Sinhung-ni
Toktong Pass
Hudong-ni
Hagaru-ri
East Hill
TF FAITH
1300, 1 Dec
2100, 1 Dec
XX PLA 79
XX PLA 80
XX PLA 59
XX PLA 58
XX 1 MAR
1 MAR(+)
11 MAR
5 MAR
7 MAR(-)
7 MAR
1 Dec
2 Dec
2-3 Dec
3 Dec
3-4 Dec
1403
1384
1282
1240
1167
1294
1426
1276
1446
1542
1581
1419
1653
1520
1456
1221

MAP 11



AREA ALONG EAST SIDE OF THE CHANGJIN RESERVOIR *occupied by Task Force Faith (viewed from the southeast).*

Small arms fire ranged in during the crossing, but by late afternoon the last vehicle was south of the stream. A few of Faith's men meanwhile left the column, walked westward to the reservoir, and started south over the ice toward Hagaru-ri. The napalm episode, the near-constant enemy fire, and the delay at the bridge had begun to test Faith's ability to retain control of his column.[12]

Just below the bridge, the road south climbed into the lower northern slopes of Hill 1221 for a quarter mile, turned east for half a mile for a more gentle ascent, then made a hairpin turn at a saddle and descended to the southwest. As Faith moved east over the half-mile stretch leading to the saddle, small arms and machine gun fire from the sharp turn and the high ground on either side struck the column head on and broadside, damaging some of the trucks and halting all of them. Moving along the stalled column, Faith got an attack started, first to clear the 1221 mass directly above him from where heavy fire was raking his column, then to eliminate the remainder of the Chinese blocking force by an enveloping move via Hill 1221 and an assault from the rear.[13]

[12] Ibid., pp. 80–82.

[13] 7th Div Comd Rpt, 27 Nov–12 Dec 50, Chosin Reservoir; Gugeler, *Combat Actions in Korea*, pp. 81–82.

Faith pushed a conglomeration up Hill 1221. The first seventy-five to a hundred men cleared the peak, a half mile west of the hairpin turn in the road. Because they believed some of the Chinese holding the high ground farther east had come in behind them, these troops then moved west to the reservoir and south on the ice toward Hagaru-ri.[14]

Behind the initial assault, Faith climbed 1221 with a hundred men; behind him Maj. Robert E. Jones, the S–2 of the 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry, started up with two hundred more. Just before dark Major Jones joined Faith, who by then had moved down the southeastern slopes of 1221 to a point on the road perhaps a quarter mile south of the hairpin turn. Here Faith put troops on both sides of the road and attacked north. Faith himself fell seriously wounded by grenade fragments before his assault force reached the road turn, but his troops fought through the Chinese position and opened the road so that the trucks again could move south.[15]

Jones took charge of what was left of the column. The dispersion of troops during the effort to open the road, plus casualties that included leaders from platoon to task force level, had now nearly completed the disintegration begun when the first troops trickled off toward the reservoir. Besides the seriously wounded, Jones had no more than two hundred men to take south. The others, in small groups and individually, had wandered off to the reservoir or down the road to find their own ways south.[16]

Almost all of the trucks had flat tires, and several were beyond repair. Jones' men eventually got about fifteen to run, not enough to carry all of the casualties. Jones made the difficult decision to leave guards with the wounded for whom there was no room on the trucks and to continue south in the hope that the marines at Hagaru-ri, once informed of the abandoned men, could somehow retrieve them.[17]

Not much beyond a half mile south of the hairpin turn, two burned-out tanks lost earlier by the 31st Infantry troops based at Hudong-ni partially blocked the road and slowed Jones' column as the trucks squeezed by. Otherwise, the column, except for overtaking several knots of men who had started south on their own, moved without incident until 2100 when it reached the northern end of Hudong-ni, halfway to Hagaru-ri. Here, fire from Chinese inside the village applied the final disintegrant to the withdrawing column. Major Jones and about half the able-bodied and walking wounded left the road and moved west to follow a narrow-gage rail line near the reservoir shore. These men followed the tracks for perhaps a mile before machine gun fire forced most of them onto the reservoir ice. Back on the road, an artillery officer led seventy men into Hudong-ni but was pushed out. For about an hour the troops still with the trucks stood fast, then elected to run the vehicles through the village. Chinese fire killed the drivers of the first three trucks and raked the remaining

[14] Ibid.; Action Rpt, 7th Div, 21 Nov to 20 Dec 50, From Hyesanjin to Hungnam Outloading; Mono, Martin Blumenson, "Chosin Reservoir," copy in CMH.
[15] Ibid.
[16] 7th Div Comd Rpt, 27 Nov–12 Dec 50, Chosin Reservoir; Gugeler, *Combat Actions in Korea*, p. 82.
[17] Ibid.



MARINES BEGIN WITHDRAWAL FROM YUDAM-NI

troops and vehicles. Everyone who could, scattered. Most of the men headed for the reservoir. By midnight only the dead and seriously wounded remained at Hudong-ni. Among them was Colonel Faith, who sat dead of his wounds in the cab of a 2½-ton truck.[18]

Survivors straggled into Hagaru-ri for the next three days, almost all of them coming off the frozen reservoir. The Chinese seemed to consider those who reached the ice as out of the game and molested them little. At Hudong-ni the Chinese administered aid to some of the wounded and released them. After the first survivors reached Hagaru-ri, motorized Marine parties searched the reservoir and brought back others. A company-size task force of Army troops and tanks also attempted to move up the road toward Hudong-ni but turned back after meeting strong resistance. A few more than 1,000 of about 2,500 troops who originally composed Task Force Faith eventually got back to Hagaru-ri. Just 385 of the survivors were able-bodied. They received new equipment from 1st Marine Division stocks and with the other Army troops in Hagaru-ri became a provisional battalion attached to the 7th Marine Regiment after the 5th and 7th

[18] Ibid. Colonel Faith was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

Marines completed their withdrawal from Yudam-ni.[19]

Withdrawal From Yudam-ni

When Colonels Litzenberg and Murray received General Smith's order to withdraw from Yudam-ni, they already were regrouping their regiments under Smith's previous order for one regiment to clear the supply road and rescue the marines on Fox Hill. By midmorning of 1 December all of Litzenberg's and Murray's forces were concentrated astride the road about two miles below town.[20] (*See Map 11.*)

The two colonels planned to move down the road toward Hagaru-ri as a single column during the day of the 1st, leaving a rear guard to barricade the front entrance to their position while the main body unlocked the rear door. The key was judged to be Toktong Pass. The two commanders intended to send one battalion cross-country east of the road after dusk to relieve the Fox Hill troops and secure the pass before the main column arrived.

The leading marines started south at 0900 and by 1930 were four miles below Yudam-ni, having wedged aside Chinese forces holding heights flanking the road. An hour and a half later the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, started through the mountains toward Fox Hill and Toktong Pass. Darkness and snow cover made maintaining direction through the rugged terrain difficult; climbs and descents exhausted the men, and a minus 16° Fahrenheit temperature numbed them, especially when they stopped to rest. But after pushing Chinese forces off two mountaintops, the cross-country force reached Fox Hill about 1130 on 2 December and a short time later secured the heights overlooking Toktong Pass.

The marines on the road needed a day longer to fight their way to the pass, reaching it about 1300 on the 3d. After a brief rest, and again in single column, they continued over the road toward Hagaru-ri. Largely because of excellent air support, no serious opposition developed on the last leg of the withdrawal, although eight 155-mm. howitzers and the prime movers had to be abandoned when the latter ran out of fuel. Marine aircraft later destroyed them. At 1630 on the 3d, British commandos accompanied by tanks came out of Hagaru-ri to clear a short stretch of the withdrawal route, and about two and a half hours later the leading marines marched in cadence into the Hagaru-ri perimeter. The rear guard entered at 1400 the next day. Between the two regiments were some fifteen hundred casualties.

Withdrawal From the Reservoir

The Hagaru-ri perimeter had been quiet for four days by the time the last troops from Yudam-ni arrived. After failing to take the base during the night of 30 November, the *58th Division* had made no more attempts to force its way in. About fifteen hundred dead Chinese counted so far by the marines along with information from prisoners, indicated that the enemy division

[19] Blumenson, "Chosin Reservoir"; Gugeler, *Combat Operations in Korea*, p. 85; Montross and Canzona, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign*, pp. 244–45, 288.

[20] This subsection is based on Montross and Canzona, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign*, pp. 249–75.



C–47 AIRCRAFT BEGAN EVACUATING CASUALTIES *from the Hagaru-ri airstrip on 1 December.*

needed reinforcement and new supplies.[21]

During those four days and on the 5th, the evacuation of casualties was a major activity at Hagaru-ri. As of the 1st some six hundred casualties already taxed the base medical facilities, a total that would enlarge considerably upon the arrival of the Yudam-ni force and the survivors of Task Force Faith. Evacuation so far had been by helicopter and light plane with the highest daily total reaching no more than sixty casualties. With a view to increasing this figure, General Smith on the 1st authorized a trial landing by larger aircraft on the airstrip southwest of town even though it was only 40 percent complete, the runway measuring 50 by 2,900 feet. A C–47 landed successfully that afternoon, and by dark on the 5th some forty-three hundred casualties had been airlifted south.[22]

General Almond on 2 December had ordered General Smith to leave Hagaru-ri as soon as the evacuation of casualties permitted. Since few casualties remained after the airlifts of the

[21] Ibid., pp. 242, 278.

[22] Ibid., pp. 245–46, 278–79.

5th and his forces from Yudam-ni had had a day of rest, Smith ordered the withdrawal to begin the following morning.[23]

General Tunner, commander of the Far East Air Forces' Combat Cargo Command, flew into Hagaru-ri on the 5th with an offer to lift Smith's troops out—at the expense of Marine equipment. But although Tunner believed he could fly ten thousand Marine and Army troops out of Hagaru-ri, and although a withdrawal by air might have minimized troop losses, Smith refused the offer in favor of moving overland so that he could take out the bulk of his equipment, including about a thousand vehicles. General Almond had been briefed by Smith on 2 and 4 December, and, although he earlier had authorized Smith to destroy equipment, he apparently was satisfied with Smith's intention.[24]

To assist the overland withdrawal, Smith since the 1st had flown in over five hundred replacements on the planes coming for casualties and had brought in supplies at least sufficient to move as far at Kot'o-ri, where resupply would be available. When room on the planes permitted, he sent out valuable but unneeded equipment; before leaving Hagaru-ri, he ordered the destruction of all items that had to be left behind.[25]

Smith's 5 December order detailed the withdrawal as far as Kot'o-ri and set the scheme for moving all the way to Hamhung. In the overall plan, the forces at Hagaru-ri were to pass south through those at Kot'o-ri and continue withdrawing with the Kot'o-ri contingent bringing up the rear. On the first leg the 7th Marines, with the battalion formed from Task Force Faith survivors and the other Army troops at Hagaru-ri attached, would lead the way to Kot'o-ri. The 5th Marines, the 3d Battalion of the 1st Marines, and the British commandos would be the rear guard and would man the Hagaru-ri perimeter until Colonel Litzenberg's forces were clear. Smith divided the remaining division troops and vehicles into two trains, attaching one to each of the Marine regiments for the withdrawal.[26]

To insure constant artillery support, the Marine batteries at Hagaru-ri were to leapfrog south, about half the guns always in firing position. Marine artillery at Kot'o-ri was to provide additional support. Overhead, a daytime umbrella of twenty-four planes was to cover the entire length of the withdrawing column while other aircraft searched the ridges east and west of the road. Night hecklers were to come on station to insure round-the-clock support.[27]

Once his Hagaru-ri forces were well started, General Smith intended to take his staff by air to Kot'o-ri, where he would complete the detailed planning for the remainder of the withdrawal. He already had taken steps to meet two problems connected with the next phase. By the 6th his intelligence indi-

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[23] Ibid., p. 399; X Corps OI 22, 2 Dec 50; 1st Marine Div Opn O 25–50, 5 Dec 50.

[24] X Corps Special Report on Chosin Reservoir, 27 Nov–10 Dec 50; Field, *United States Naval Operations, Korea*, p. 280; Montross and Canzona, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign*, pp. 281, 307.

[25] Montross and Canzona, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign*, pp. 280–82, 285.

[26] Ibid., pp. 283–88, 300.

[27] Ibid., pp. 286–87.

cated that at least two *26th Army* divisions, the *76th* and *77th,* had moved south into the mountains east of the Changjin Reservoir road between Hagaru-ri and Kot'o-ri. They apparently had relieved the *20th Army*'s *60th Division* near Kot'o-ri, and the *60th* in turn had moved farther south to block the reservoir road in and around Funchilin Pass. On the other side of the withdrawal route, the bulk and perhaps all of the *20th Army*'s *89th Division* now appeared to be southwest of Kot'o-ri. Forces of the *89th* had followed the withdrawal of 3d Division troops from Sach'ang-ni when the latter were pulled back to Hamhung, and the Chinese were reported to be moving east on Chinhung-ni and Majon-dong.[28]

Because Smith believed the Chinese might offer their strongest resistance along the winding road between Kot'o-ri and Chinhung-ni, he wanted to move the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, north from Chinhung-ni to clear those ten twisting miles ahead of the withdrawal from the north. To do this and at the same time protect Chinhung-ni, Smith on the 5th asked General Almond to furnish a relief force for the Chinhung-ni garrison. Almond turned to the 3d Division for the needed troops, directing General Soule to shape a motorized force around a battalion of infantry, a battalion of artillery, and a complement of engineers. Commanded by assistant division commander General Mead and designated Task Force Dog, this group was to assemble in Majon-dong prepared to move forward on six hours' notice after 0600 on the 6th.[29] Soule also ordered the 2d Battalion, 65th Infantry, and the 999th Armored Field Artillery Battalion forward to cover Task Force Dog's advance and to protect the reservoir road from positions in and north of Majon-dong.[30]

Smith's second problem was a sixteen-foot chasm in the road three and a half miles south of Kot'o-ri. Here, where the road had been cut into the side of a steep slope at the northern end of Funchilin Pass, water from the Changjin Reservoir poured in warmer weather from a pipeline north of the road into four penstocks that carried the torrent down the mountainside to a power plant. A gatehouse covered the upper ends of the penstocks, and where the roadway crossed the penstocks immediately below the gatehouse now lay only the rubble of the original concrete bridge, the remains of a wooden crossing, and the broken sections of an M–2 steel treadway bridge. Since the beginning of their offensive the Chinese had successively destroyed all three, knocking down the treadway spans on either 4 or 5 December.[31]

[28] TLCN 668, FEC–X Corps, 3 Dec 50; Montross and Canzona, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign*, pp. 285–313.

[29] Task Force Dog included the 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry; 92d Armored Field Artillery Battalion (self-propelled); Company A, 73d Engineer Combat Battalion; a platoon of Company A, 10th Engineer Combat Battalion; 3d Platoon, 3d Reconnaissance Company; 52d Transportation Truck Battalion; a detachment from division headquarters; a detachment from the 3d Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion (self-propelled); a bomb disposal detachment; a tactical air control party; and a detachment from the 3d Signal Company.

[30] X Corps Special Rpt on the Chosin Reservoir, 27 Nov to 10 Dec 50; Montross and Canzona, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign*, pp. 308–09; X Corps OI 26, 5 Dec 50; 3d Div Comd Rpt, Dec 50; Dolcater, *The 3d Division in Korea*, p. 92.

[31] Montross and Canzona, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign*, pp. 309–11.

Because the gatehouse and the sheer slope prevented the construction of a bypass on either side of the gap, new bridging had to be installed before Smith's trucks, tanks, and guns could proceed below Kot'o-ri. Smith's engineer officer, Lt. Col. John H. Partridge, surveyed the site from the air on 6 December, then made an unusual request of corps for an airdrop of eight 2,500-lb. treadway bridge sections at Kot'o-ri, where Army engineers had two Brockway trucks designed to put them in place. After an unsuccessful trial drop at Yonp'o airfield in which several small parachutes were attached to the test span, a special crew of Army parachute riggers flown in from Japan attached two larger chutes to each section, and on 7 December eight of General Tunner's C–119s delivered the bridging to Kot'o-ri. One span fell in Chinese territory, and another was damaged; but only four of the remainder would actually be needed to bridge the gap. Plywood center sections also were dropped so that the bridge could carry all types of vehicles.[32]

From the Reservoir to Kot'o-ri

Since some of the Chinese positions on East Hill dominated the Marine withdrawal route, General Smith's rear guard attacked the height on the morning of 6 December as the 7th Marines moved out of Hagaru-ri. The assault cleared the hill but also prompted hard counterattacks from ground farther east that cost the Chinese over twelve hundred killed before they subsided near dawn on the 7th.[33]

From the moment they started south the 7th Marines met resistance, particularly just below Hagaru-ri and in Hell Fire Valley. (*See Map 12.*) But the air umbrella, artillery and tank fire, and coordinated assaults by the foot troops against Chinese strongpoints permitted steady if slow progress. Behind the lead battalion, which reached Kot'o-ri about the time the East Hill battle closed, the remainder of Colonel Litzenberg's force completed its withdrawal before 1700 on the 7th.

By midmorning of the 7th, all of the rear guard except a detachment of engineers, a tank platoon, and the 2d Battalion of the 5th Marines had left Hagaru-ri. These last troops set fire to the Marine ration dump, which on the day before had been smashed and saturated with fuel oil, and touched off explosives to destroy all other abandoned supplies. As the last of the rear guard withdrew just past noon, small groups of Chinese entered Hagaru-ri and began picking over the debris.

Hundreds of refugees who had collected in and around Hagaru-ri followed the rear guard, risking their lives to cross bridges before Marine engineers destroyed them. Aside from this interference with demolitions, the rear guard withdrew easily. Chinese opposition amounted only to small arms fire as far as Hell Fire Valley and a few mortar rounds in the valley itself. Once below this point, Colonel Murray's forces met almost no resistance and entered Kot'o-ri before midnight. As the first stage of the withdrawal closed

[32] X Corps Special Rpt on the Chosin Reservoir, 27 Nov to 10 Dec 50; Montross and Canzona, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign*, p. 311.

[33] This subsection is based on Montross and Canzona, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign*, pp. 286–303.



SITE OF THE DESTROYED BRIDGE SOUTH OF KOT'O-RI

about thirty-eight hours after it began, Marine battle casualties totaled 103 dead, 493 wounded, and 7 missing.

From Kot'o-ri to the Coast

To permit the rapid evacuation of casualties incurred during the move from Hagaru-ri, Colonel Puller, the commander of the Kot'o-ri garrison, on 6 December had set his engineers to lengthening the Kot'o-ri airstrip to accommodate C–47s. The strip was long enough by morning of the 8th, although a heavy snowstorm on that date canceled all but one flight. On the following two days the larger aircraft, observation planes, and helicopters took out all of the casualties, the last shortly before Puller's force left Kot'o-ri to bring up the rear during the last phase of the withdrawal.[34]

General Smith and his staff had flown to Kot'o-ri during the afternoon of the 6th to complete plans for withdrawing the remaining distance to the coast. Late that night he asked General Almond to move Task Force Dog to Chinhung-ni by the following afternoon. Smith now intended that the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, would move northward through Funchilin Pass at 0800 on the 8th, the same time that the

[34] Ibid., pp. 306–35, 356, 382; 3d Div Comd Rpt, Dec 50; X Corps OI 26, 5 Dec 50.

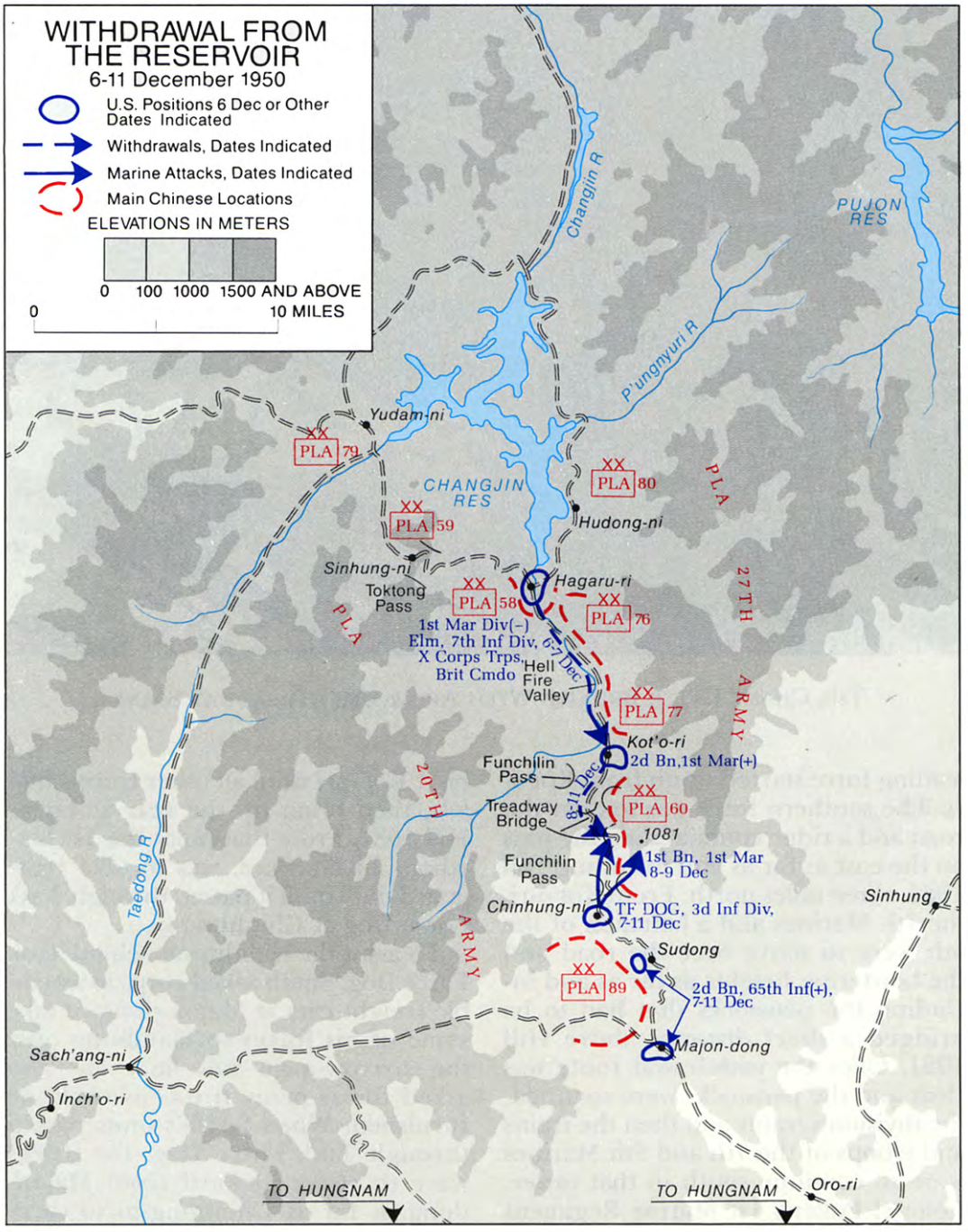


THE CHASM LATER BRIDGED WITH AIRDROPPED TREADWAY SPANS

leading force started south from Kot'o-ri. The southern force was to clear the road and a ridge commanding the pass on the east as far as and including Hill 1081, three miles north. From Kot'o-ri, the 7th Marines and a battalion of the 5th were to move over the road and the bordering heights as far as and including the penstocks that had to be bridged a short distance above Hill 1081. Once the withdrawal route was clear and the penstocks were spanned, the division's trains and then the trains and troops of the 7th and 5th Marines were to continue south in that order. Colonel Puller's 1st Marine Regiment (less the 1st Battalion), the 2d Battalion of the 31st Infantry, and the forty tanks of the several armored units were to hold Kot'o-ri until all other troops had left, then bring up the rear as far as Hill 1081. From that point the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, was to take rear-guard duty until it passed through Task Force Dog at Chinhung-ni.

To assist the withdrawal behind Task Force Dog, Smith asked corps to assemble freight cars at Majon-dong to take some of his forces to Hamhung over the narrow-gage rail line. He also asked for as many trucks as could be furnished. When Smith's units passed through Task Force Dog, the trucks were to come forward from Majon-dong as far as Chinhung-ni to carry the troops either to the Majon-dong railhead or all the way to Hamhung.

After receiving General Almond's or-


WITHDRAWAL FROM THE RESERVOIR
6-11 December 1950
U.S. Positions 6 Dec or Other Dates Indicated
Withdrawals, Dates Indicated
Marine Attacks, Dates Indicated
Main Chinese Locations
ELEVATIONS IN METERS
0 100 1000 1500 AND ABOVE
0 10 MILES
Changjin R
PUJON RES
P'ungnyuri R
Yudam-ni
XX PLA 79
CHANGJIN RES
XX PLA 59
XX PLA 80
Hudong-ni
PLA
27TH ARMY
Sinhung-ni
Toktong Pass
XX PLA 58
Hagaru-ri
XX PLA 76
1st Mar Div(-)
Elm, 7th Inf Div,
X Corps Trps,
Brit Cmdo
7 Dec
Hell Fire Valley
XX PLA 77
Kot'o-ri
2d Bn,1st Mar(+)
Funchilin Pass
8-11 Dec
20TH ARMY
Treadway Bridge
XX PLA 60
1081
1st Bn, 1st Mar
8-9 Dec
Funchilin Pass
Chinhung-ni
TF DOG, 3d Inf Div,
7-11 Dec
Sinhung
Sudong
XX PLA 89
2d Bn, 65th Inf(+),
7-11 Dec
Majon-dong
Taedong R
Sach'ang-ni
Inch'o-ri
TO HUNGNAM
TO HUNGNAM
Oro-ri

MAP 12

der to dispatch Task Force Dog, General Soule first moved the 999th Armored Field Artillery Battalion to Majon-dong on the morning of the 7th. Under the fire support of this battalion, Soule next sent the 2d Battalion, 65th Infantry, forward to secure high ground west of the road between Majon-dong and the village of Sudong to protect Task Force Dog's movement. Task Force Dog left Majon-dong an hour before noon and without encountering opposition reached Chinhung-ni about three hours later. The 2d Battalion, 65th Infantry, except Company G, then moved back to protect Majon-dong.

Task Force Dog's prompt arrival permitted General Smith to start the second phase of withdrawal on time and as conceived. But the snowstorm on the 8th kept his close air support on the ground and, in combination with moderate to strong Chinese resistance, slowed the forces approaching each other. The 7th Marines, with the Army provisional battalion still attached, and the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, cleared the road and bordering high ground south within a mile of the penstock bridge site by nightfall; at the same time, the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, supported by Task Force Dog's artillery and accompanied by General Mead's engineers and self-propelled antiaircraft guns, moved north into Funchilin Pass within a half mile of Hill 1081.

The sky cleared before morning of the 9th. With good support from the air again available, the 7th Marines pushed to the bridge site about a half hour past noon. The marines from the south meanwhile fought a stiff battle for Hill 1081, capturing the height around 1500. Shortly afterward a patrol from the 7th Marines reached 1081 to make first contact with the southern force.

Behind this scene Colonel Partridge, the Marine engineer, accompanied by both Army and Marine troops, the Brockway trucks, an the treadway sections, reached the bridge site right after the penstock area was cleared. Three hours later the bridge was in place, and near 1800 the Marine division trains began to cross.

Only a few vehicles had used the bridge before a tractor broke through and destroyed the plywood center panels. Colonel Partridge's adjustment of the spacing of the steel treadway sections to accommodate the treads of all vehicles prevented further difficulty at the crossing. Led by the 1st Battalion of the 7th Marines, the trains, the remainder of the 7th Regiment, the bulk of the Marine artillery, and the 5th Marines, with refugees interspersed, passed over the span during the night of the 9th and the following day. Receiving only a few scattered shots en route, the leading battalion reached Chinhung-ni at 0245 on the 10th, the 5th Marines about the same time on the 11th.

The last troops left Kot'o-ri at midafternoon on the 10th. Behind them came the bulk of the refugees. Task Force Dog's artillery fired on the town after it was vacated, and no serious opposition developed as the last units started toward the penstock bridge. But progress was slow. By 0100 on the 11th tanks and a platoon of the Marine division's reconnaissance company at the tail end of the column were still more than a mile above the treadway span. Frozen brakes halted the ninth tank from the rear at that point, and as



TASK FORCE DOG ARTILLERY IN CHINHUNG-NI FIRING POSITION

tankers worked to free the vehicle, Chinese troops among the refugees and in the nearby high ground opened fire. The last seven tanks, the crews of the last two, and three men from the reconnaissance platoon were lost in the melee that followed.

After the remaining tanks and reconnaissance troops passed over the penstocks, Marine engineers demolished the treadway bridge. Denied the use of the crossing, the trailing refugees got past the gap by walking through the gatehouse north of the road. The marines on Hill 1081 were scheduled to bring up the rear after all Kot'o-ri forces passed by but mistakenly took to the road before the last tanks and reconnaissance troops reached their position. The rearmost troops nevertheless reached Chinhung-ni safely during the morning of the 11th.

By the time these rear forces passed behind Task Force Dog, the deepest Chinese effort to obstruct the withdrawal already had been encountered at Sudong. Between late afternoon on the 10th and dawn on the 11th, Chinese forces struck Company G, 65th Infantry, three times in the heights west of town, and during the second attempt, launched about an hour past midnight, opened fire from houses inside Sudong and swarmed onto the road as the regimental train of the 1st Marines started through town. Lt. Col.

TABLE 3—X CORPS BATTLE CASUALTIES, 27 NOVEMBER–10 DECEMBER 1950

Unit	*Killed in Action*	*Wounded in Action*	*Missing in Action*	*Total*
X Corps headquarters and service	5	20	15	40
Corps combat troops	3	8	—	11
1st Marine Division	393	2,152	76	2,621
Army attached	1	2	1	4
41st Royal Marine Commando	8	31	39	78
2d Engineer Special Brigade	—	—	—	0
1st Marine Air Wing	2	2	2	6
3d Division	50	206	147	403
ROKs attached	17	76	94	187
7th Division	70	185	2,505	2,760
ROKs attached	1	41	1,560	1,602
1st Korean Marine Corps Regiment	13	80	—	93
Headquarters, I ROK Corps	1	3	0	4
ROK Capital Division	126	318	334	778
3d ROK Division	15	127	6	148
Totals	705	3,251	4,779	8,735

Source: Personnel Section of X Corps Special Rpt, Chosin Reservoir.

John U. D. Page, the X Corps artillery officer, who had moved down from Kot'o-ri with Colonel Puller's train, and Pfc. Marvin L. Wasson, a Marine driver, made a two-man assault against some twenty Chinese during the battle, killing about sixteen. But Page himself was killed and Wasson was wounded.[35] Lt. Col. Waldron C. Winston, commander of Task Force Dog's 52d Transportation Truck Battalion, then organized a stronger counterattack using both Marine and Army troops and finally cleared the road and bordering buildings by daybreak.

No further fighting took place while the men from Kot'o-ri completed their withdrawal behind Task Force Dog. The last of them left Chinhung-ni near 1300 on the 11th and cleared Majon-dong by 1730. Freight cars and trucks carried all but the tank column to the Hamhung-Hungnam perimeter by 2100; the slower-moving armor closed a half hour before midnight. Task Force Dog, bringing up the rear from Chinhung-ni, reached Majon-dong at 2000. Here the task force disbanded and its units along with the other 3d Division forces involved in supporting the withdrawal from the reservoir moved back to help defend Hamhung and Hungnam.

The Marine division's battle casualties during the move from Kot'o-ri to

[35] Colonel Page was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross, and also the Medal of Honor in 1956 after Congress passed a special bill to allow the award so many years past the event.

the coast numbered 75 dead, 256 wounded, and 16 missing.[36] These brought the division's battle losses for the entire 6–11 December period to 178 dead, 749 wounded, and 23 missing. The marines also had suffered 1,534 non-battle casualties, a very large percentage of whom were frostbite cases. Marine losses thus totaled 2,484, or just over 20 percent of the 11,686 marines involved in the withdrawal from Hagaru-ri. *(Table 1)*

Between 27 November and 11 December the Marine and Army troops in the reservoir area had met all three armies, the *20th, 26th* and *27th*, of the *IX Army Group* and had engaged eight of the twelve divisions constituting these armies. They had exacted an especially large toll on the *20th* and *27th*. From evidence gained later through captured documents and prisoner interrogations, high Chinese casualties, both battle and non-battle, had "rendered militarily non-effective a large part of the 9th CCF Army Group."[37]

On 10 December General Smith and members of his staff had flown out of Kot'o-ri to Hungnam. Until that date Smith's next assignment had been to put his division in position on the southwestern end of the Hamhung-Hungnam perimeter. But on arriving at the coast Smith learned that developments and decisions in the Eighth Army sector, in Tokyo, and in Washington over the first eight days of December had changed the plans not only for the 1st Marine Division but for the entire X Corps; on the 11th he received a new corps order that proved Admiral Joy's late November deployment of Task Force 90 to have been a well-conceived and timely precaution.

[36] No breakdown is available for losses sustained among the 2,353 Army troops, 125 Royal Marine Commandos, or 40 ROK police.

[37] Marine Corps Board Study, II–C–125, quoted in Montross and Canzona, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign*, p. 356.

CHAPTER VIII

Redeployment South

The Eighth Army Leaves North Korea

The Chinese did not pursue the Eighth Army's twenty-mile withdrawal from the Ch'ongch'on to the Sukch'on-Sunch'on-Songch'on line. Only light enemy patrolling occurred along the new line on 1 December, mostly at its eastern end where there had been no deep withdrawal the day before. General Walker nevertheless believed that the Chinese would soon close the gap, resume their frontal assaults, and again send forces against his east flank.[1]

Walker now estimated the Chinese opposing him to number at least six armies with eighteen divisions and 165,000 men. Of his own forward units, only the 1st Cavalry; 24th, 25th, and ROK 1st Divisions; and the two British brigades were intact. The ROK 6th Division could be employed as a division but its regiments were tattered; about half the ROK 7th and 8th Divisions had reassembled but were far less able than their strengths indicated; and both the 2d Division and Turkish brigade needed substantial refurbishing before they could again function as units. Of his reserves, the four ROK divisions operating against guerrillas in central and southern Korea were too untrained to be trustworthy on the line. His only other reserves were the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team and its attached Filipino and Thai battalions then guarding forward army supply installations; the Netherlands battalion, which had just completed its processing at the U.N. Reception Center; and an infantry battalion from France, which had just debarked at Pusan.[2]

By Walker's comparison of forces, the injured Eighth Army could not now set a successful static defense. Considering delaying action to be the only course open, a course in which he should not risk becoming heavily engaged and in which he should anticipate moving out of Korea, Walker began to select delaying lines behind him. He intended to move south from one to the next well before his forces could be fixed, flanked, or enveloped.[3]

Though the *XIII Army Group* remained out of contact on 2 December, Walker received agent and aerial observer reports that Chinese were moving into the region east of Songch'on and that either they or North Korean guerrillas infesting that area had established blocking positions below the P'yongyang-Wonsan road from

[1] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Dec 50; Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, Dec 50.

[2] Ibid.; Eighth Army PIR 142, 1 Dec 50; Sawyer, *KMAG in Peace and War*, p. 146; Appleman, *South to the Naktong*, pp. 618, 667.

[3] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Dec 50; Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, Dec 50.

Songch'on eastward twenty-five miles to Yangdok. They could be trying to secure a portion of the lateral route in advance of a drive toward either or both coasts, and should the drive go west into P'yongyang, they could trap the Eighth Army above the city. In view of the latter possibility, Walker elected to withdraw before the thrust materialized. P'yongyang was to be abandoned.[4]

Walker's use of relatively slight intelligence information in deciding to withdraw below P'yongyang reflected the general attitude of the Eighth Army. According to some accounts, Walker's forces had become afflicted with "bug-out fever," a term usually used to describe a tendency to withdraw without fighting and even to disregard orders.[5] Because it implied cowardice and dereliction of duty, the term was unwarranted. Yet the hard attacks and high casualties of the past week and the apparent Chinese strength had shaken the Eighth Army's confidence. This same doubt had some influence on Walker's decision to give up P'yongyang and would manifest itself again in other decisions to withdraw. But the principal reason for withdrawing had been, was, and would continue to be the constant threat of envelopment from the east.

P'yongyang Abandoned

As Walker started his withdrawal from the Sukch'on-Sunch'on-Songch'on line on 2 December, Maj. Gen. Doyle O. Hickey, acting chief of staff of the Far East Command and United Nations Command, arrived with word from General MacArthur that, in effect, allowed Walker to leave behind any equipment and other materiel that he chose as long as they were destroyed.[6] Walker, however, planned not to drop behind P'yongyang until the army and air force supply points in the city had been emptied and the port of Chinnamp'o cleared. To provide time for the removal he ordered a half step to the rear, sending his forces south toward a semicircular line still twenty miles above P'yongyang. *(Map 13)* While service troops rushed to evacuate supplies and equipment from the North Korean capital and port, line units reached the temporary line late on the 3d with no enemy interference beyond being harassed by North Korean guerrillas on the east flank.[7]

Walker meanwhile pushed reserves eastward onto Route 33, the next P'yongyang-Seoul road inland from Route 1, to protect his east flank and to guarantee an additional withdrawal route below the North Korean capital. He deployed the 24th Division at Yul-li, twenty-five miles southeast of P'yongyang, and the partially restored ROK II Corps at Sin'gye in the Yesong River valley another thirty miles to the southeast. South and east of Sin'gye, units of the ROK 2d and 5th Divisions previously had occupied Sibyon-ni and Yonch'on on Route 33, P'och'on on Route 3, and Ch'unch'on on Route 17

[4] Ibid.; Eighth Army PIR 142, 1 Dec 50; Eighth Army PIR 143, 2 Dec 50.

[5] For example, British historian David Rees, in *Korea: The Limited War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964), on page 171 entitled a section covering the Eighth Army's withdrawal "The Big Bug-Out" and on page 176 stated, "At the Front throughout December the moral collapse of the Eighth Army was complete, as bug-out fever raged everywhere."

[6] General Almond officially remained the chief of staff.

[7] Interv, Appleman with Hickey, 10 Oct 51; Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, Dec 50; Rad, GX 30141 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 2 Dec 50.

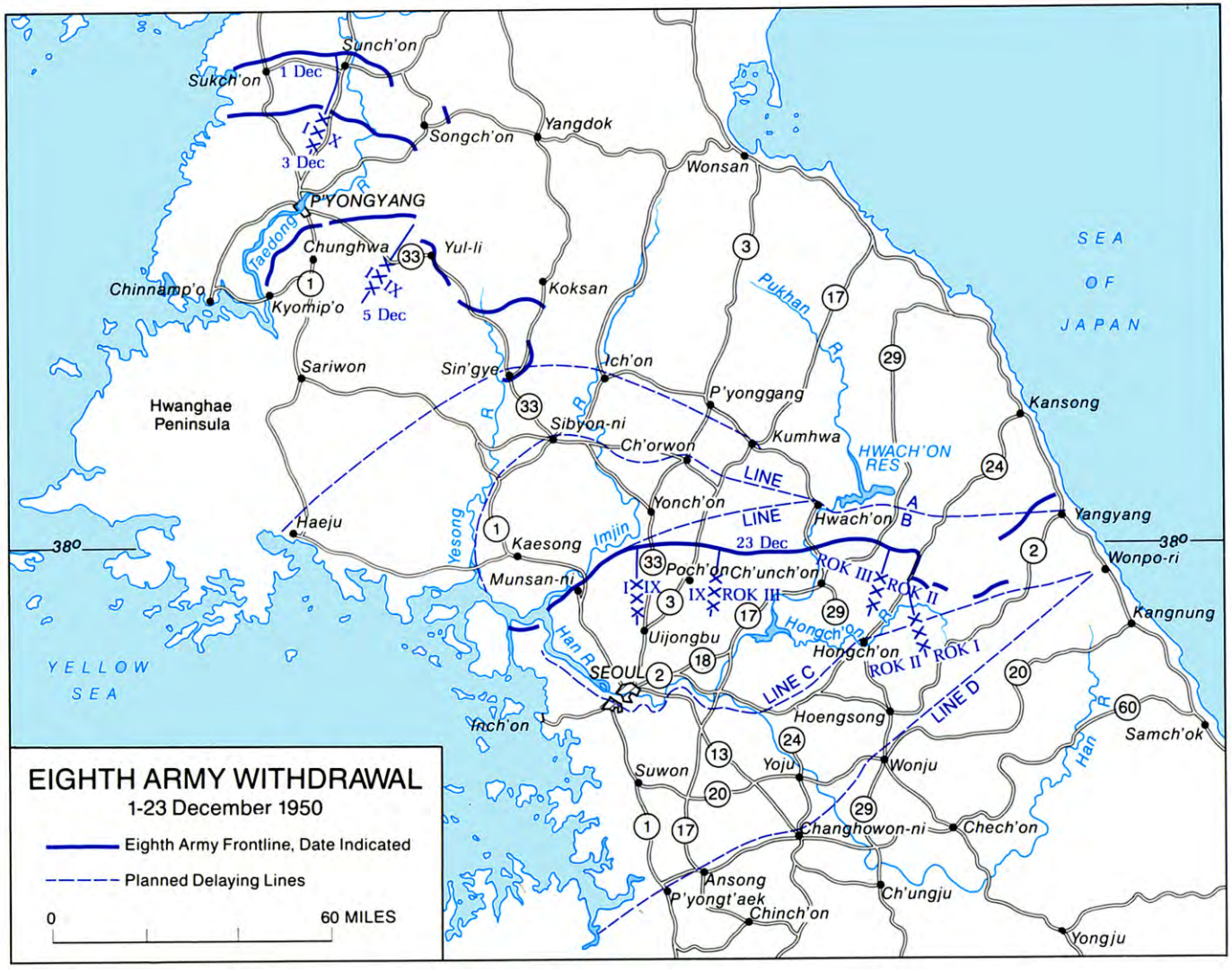


EIGHTH ARMY TROOPS WITHDRAWING SOUTH *from Sunch'on toward P'yongyang.*

in the Pukhan River valley during antiguerrilla operations. Route 33 thus was protected at important road junctions, and Walker at least had the semblance of an east flank screen all the way from P'yongyang to Seoul.[8]

Walker moved the damaged 2d Division from Chunghwa into army reserve at Munsan-ni on the Imjin River twenty-two miles north of Seoul, where General Keiser, with priority on replacements, was to rebuild his unit. But while Keiser's immediate and main task was to revive the 2d Division, Walker wanted him also to reconnoiter as far as Hwach'on, more than fifty miles east of Munsan-ni, in case it became necessary to employ 2d Division troops in those areas guarded by South Korean units of doubtful ability. Walker attached the Turkish brigade to the 2d Division. Hurt less by casualties than by disorganization and equipment losses, the Turks had collected bit by bit at several locations, mostly at P'yongyang. On 2 December, after General Yasici had recovered some thirty-five hundred of his original five thousand men, Walker ordered the brigade to Kaesong, fifteen miles north of Munsan-ni, to complete refurbishing under General Keiser's supervision as

[8] Ibid.; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Dec 50.


EIGHTH ARMY WITHDRAWAL
1-23 December 1950
Eighth Army Frontline, Date Indicated
Planned Delaying Lines
0
60 MILES
Sunch'on
Sukch'on
1 Dec
3 Dec
Songch'on
Yangdok
Wonsan
P'YONGYANG
Taedong R.
Chunghwa
Yul-li
Chinnamp'o
Kyomip'o
5 Dec
Koksan
Pukhan R.
SEA OF JAPAN
Sariwon
Sin'gye
Ich'on
Hwanghae Peninsula
P'yonggang
Kansong
Sibyon-ni
Ch'orwon
Kumhwa
HWACH'ON RES
LINE A
LINE B
Yonch'on
Hwach'on
Yangyang
Haeju
38°
Yesong R.
Kaesong
Imjin R.
23 Dec
Wonpo-ri
Munsan-ni
Poch'on
Ch'unch'on
ROK III
ROK II
ROK III
Kangnung
Uijongbu
Hongch'on R.
Hongch'on
YELLOW SEA
Han R.
SEOUL
ROK II
ROK I
LINE C
LINE D
Inch'on
Hoengsong
Samch'ok
Han R.
Suwon
Yoju
Wonju
Changhowon-ni
Chech'on
Ansong
P'yongt'aek
Chinch'on
Ch'ungju
Yongju

MAP 13

more of its members were located and returned.[9]

Walker held the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team and its attachments in the P'yongyang area to protect his supply routes and installations. In preparation for the coming withdrawal south of the city, the airborne troops also were to keep civilians from moving over four ponton bridges spanning the Taedong River, two inside P'yongyang and another pair three miles east of the city, and to take whatever other precautions were necessary to insure an uninterrupted flow of military traffic over the crossings.[10]

On 3 December, after receiving more reports of sizable enemy movements and concentrations east and northeast of the Eighth Army position, Walker anticipated not only a westward enemy push into P'yongyang but also a deeper thrust southwest through the Yesong valley and across the army withdrawal routes in the vicinity of Sin'gye. Induced to haste by this possibility, he ordered his line units to drop fifteen miles behind P'yongyang beginning on the morning of the 4th, to a line curving eastward from Kyomip'o on the lower bank of the Taedong to a point short of Koksan in a subsidiary valley of the upper Yesong River. Walker warned them to be ready to withdraw another fifty miles on the west and twenty miles on the east to a line running from Haeju on the coast northeastward through Sin'gye, then eastward through Ich'on in the Imjin River valley. The latter withdrawal would set Walker's rightmost units athwart the Yesong valley in fair position to delay an enemy strike through it and would eliminate concern for the army left flank, which, after the initial withdrawal below P'yongyang, would open on the large Hwanghae peninsula southwest of Kyomip'o.[11]

In withdrawing south of P'yongyang, the IX Corps, now with the 24th Division attached, was to move on Route 33, occupy the right sector of the new army front, and reinforce the weak ROK II Corps in protecting the army east flank in the Yesong valley. The I Corps was to withdraw to the west sector of the new line over Route 1 and, while passing through P'yongyang, destroy any abandoned materiel found within the city.[12]

General Milburn's demolition assignment was likely to be sizable. Aside from organizational and individual equipment lost by the line units, the only notable materiel losses since the Chinese opened their offensive had been fourteen hundred tons of ammunition stored at Sinanju and five hundred tons at Kunu-ri. But now Walker's forces were about to give up the locale of the Eighth Army's main forward stockpiles, and although the smaller stores at Chinnamp'o might be evacuated, it was less likely that the larger quantities brought into P'yongyang over the past several weeks could be completely removed on such short

[9] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Dec 50; Eighth Army G1 SS Rpt, Dec 50; Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, Dec 50; "Turkish U.N. Brigade Advisory Group, 20 Nov–13 Dec 50"; Rad, GX 30139 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG 2d Div, 2 Dec 50; Rad, GX 30142 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG IX Corps et al., 2 Dec 50.

[10] Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, Dec 50; Rad, GX 30146 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 2 Dec 50.

[11] Eighth Army PIRs 143, 2 Dec 50, and 144, 3 Dec 50; Rad, CG 30162 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 3 Dec 50.

[12] Rad, GX 30162 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 3 Dec 50.



ALL BRIDGES OVER THE TAEDONG RIVER AT P'YONGYANG WERE DESTROYED *after the Eighth Army withdrew south of the city.*

notice. The improbability of clearing the P'yongyang stocks was increased by the necessity to give priority on locomotives to trains carrying casualties and service units, by heavy demands on trucks for troop movements as well as for hauling materiel from supply point to railroad yard, and by the problems of loading and switching trains in congested yards that earlier had been severely damaged by UNC air bombardment.[13]

With almost no enemy contact, Walker's forces moved south of P'yongyang within twenty-four hours. Much of the city was afire by 0730 on 5 December when the rear guards destroyed the last bridges over the Taedong and set off final demolitions in the section of P'yongyang below the river. Colonel Stebbins, Walker's G–4 who supervised the removal of materiel from Chinnamp'o and P'yongyang, would have preferred a slower move by seventy-two or even forty-eight hours. Given that additional time, Stebbins believed, the service troops could have removed most of the eight to ten thousand tons of supplies and equipment that now lay abandoned and broken up or burning inside P'yongyang. More time also

[13] Eighth Army G4 SS Rpt, Dec 50; Eighth Army, "Logistical Problems and Their Solutions."

could have prevented such oversights as leaving at least fifteen operable M–46 tanks abroad flatcars in the railroad yards in the southwestern part of the city. Fifth Air Force planes struck these overlooked tanks on 6 December, but differing pilot claims left obscure the amount of damage done.[14]

Although Chinnamp'o was exposed after early morning of the 5th, evacuation of the port continued until evening without harassment from enemy forces. Pressed only by time and the wide range of the Yellow Sea tides, the port troops from 2 through 5 December loaded LSTs, transports of the Japanese merchant marine, a squadron of U.S. Navy troop and cargo transports, and at least a hundred Korean sailboats. Aboard these craft went casualties, prisoners, and materiel sent from P'yongyang; the supplies and equipment on the ground around the port; the port service units themselves; and some thirty thousand refugees (most of them on the sailboats). Four American destroyers took station off Chinnamp'o, and aircraft from the British carrier *Theseus* appeared overhead on the 5th to protect the final outloading. That morning the port commander received word from Colonel Stebbins to get the last ships under way on the favorable tide at 1700. The last three ships pulled away from the docks near that hour. Demolition crews set off their last explosives, and shortly afterward the last men ashore drove an amphibious truck out to a waiting ship. Some two thousand tons of supplies and a few items of port equipment, small amounts by comparison with the losses at P'yongyang, had had to be destroyed for lack of time to remove them.[15]

The men and materiel sea lifted from Chinnamp'o were landed either at Inch'on (port personnel, rations, and petroleum products) or Pusan (patients, prisoners, and remaining supplies). Most of the stock evacuated from P'yongyang was shipped to depots at Kaesong and around Seoul. Some was kept forward aboard the railcars on which it had been loaded to institute a mobile system of meeting day-to-day requirements of the line units. These daily needs, mostly rations and petroleum products, were to be issued from the cars at railheads whose locations could be changed as rapidly as the line units withdrew. This system would reduce the likelihood of further materiel losses.[16]

The trace of the new army position vaguely resembled a question mark. I and IX Corps defenses between Kyomip'o and Yul-li formed the upper arc, IX Corps positions on the east flank from Yul-li southeastward to Sin'gye shaped the shank, and clumps of army reserves below Sin'gye supplied several dots. The figure traced was appropriate since Walker now had been out of meaningful contact with enemy forces for five days, had no clear idea of the location or movement of the main Chinese body, and could only speculate on what the *XIII Army Group* commander could or intended to do next.[17]

[14] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Dec 50; Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, Dec 50; Eighth Army, "Logistical Problems and Their Solutions."

[15] Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, Dec 50; Eighth Army G4 SS Rpt, Dec 50; Eighth Army, "Logistical Problems and Their Solutions"; Field, *United States Naval Operations, Korea*, pp. 272–74.

[16] Eighth Army G4 SS Rpt, Dec 50; Mono, Eighth Army, "Activities of the 3d Transportation Military Railway Service—The Withdrawal From Pyongyang," copy in CMH.

[17] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Dec 50; Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, Dec 50.

In an attempt to fill the intelligence gap deriving from the withdrawals and the Chinese slowness to follow, Walker on the 5th ordered General Milburn and General Coulter to send strong reconnaissance patrols, including tanks, north as far as the Taedong River. But only the 1st Cavalry Division reported any noteworthy deep patrolling, on 6 December when two battalions sortied northeast up the Yesong valley and into Kokson, where they fought a minor skirmish with North Korean troops, and on 7 December when two companies made another, but uneventful, visit to the town.[18]

Most of Walker's information continued to come from agents and aerial observers. The latter reported on the 6th that enemy troops were moving into Chinnamp'o and south across the Taedong estuary by ferry to the Hwanghae peninsula. Agents on the same day verified the presence of Chinese troops in P'yongyang and reported that North Korean regulars were joining North Korean guerrillas to the east and right rear of the Eighth Army. To escape the trouble these reports portended, Walker instructed his forward units to withdraw on 8 December to the Haeju-Sin'gye-Ich'on line and to extend that line east to Kumhwa. The west flank would again be anchored on the sea, and Walker's forces would be able to present a front instead of a flank to the North Korean units reported gathering on the east.[19]

But what now worried Walker most were the whereabouts and intentions of the Chinese he previously had suspected were maneuvering into attack position just beyond his east flank. Because his forces at no time since 30 November had captured or even sighted a Chinese soldier during the sporadic encounters along the army right, he was beginning to believe that all enemy troops immediately east of him were North Korean. Chinese forces, then, possibly were moving south, not into position for a close-in envelopment but around the Eighth Army some distance to the east through the X Corps' rear area. Since General Almond's forces were concentrating at Hamhung and Hungnam far to the northeast, any such march by the Chinese would be unopposed, and if the Chinese moved through the open area in strength, they possibly could occupy all of South Korea with little or no difficulty. Walker anyway granted the Chinese this capability and against the possibility of such a sweep took steps on 6 December to deploy troops across the entire peninsula. He planned no static defense. His concept of fighting a delaying action without becoming heavily engaged remained unchanged except that he now would delay from preselected lines stretching coast to coast.[20]

As a preliminary, Walker obtained General MacArthur's agreement to erase the southern segment of the Eighth Army–X Corps boundary so that the Eighth Army's sector spanned the peninsula below the 39th parallel,

[18] Rad, GX 29613 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps and CG IX Corps, 5 Dec 50; Rad, GX 29660 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG IX Corps, 5 Dec 50; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 6 and 7 Dec 50.

[19] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Dec 50; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 5 Dec 50; Eighth Army G2 SS Rpt, Dec 50; Eighth Army G2 Brief, 6 Dec 50; Eighth Army PIR 147, 6 Dec 50; Rad, GX 29685 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 6 Dec 50; Rad, GX 29706 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA et al., 6 Dec 50.

[20] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 5 and 6 Dec 50.

more generally south of a line between P'yongyang and Wonsan. He also arranged air and naval surveillance of the east coast south of the X Corps' position to detect enemy coastal movements while he was extending his line. He chose coast-to-coast positions running from the mouth of the Yesong River, almost forty miles behind Haeju, northeastward through Sibyon-ni, southeastward through Ch'orwon and Hwach'on, then eastward to Yangyang on the Sea of Japan. This line, later designated line A, was roughly a hundred fifty miles long and at its most northerly point reached just twenty miles above the 38th parallel. Walker ordered five South Korean divisions—the two of the ROK II Corps and three others then in central and southern Korea—to occupy the eastern half of the line and to start moving into position immediately. The I and IX Corps, scheduled eventually to man the western portion of line A, remained for the time being under orders to withdraw only as far as the Haeju-Kumhwa line.[21]

CINCUNC Order Number 5

The apprehensions evident in Walker's appraisals and plans were apparent in Tokyo as well. General MacArthur, although his main intention may have been to coax reinforcement, already had notified the Joint Chiefs of Staff that the United Nations Command was too weak to make a successful stand when he informed them on 28 November that he was passing to the defensive. The Joint Chiefs fully approved MacArthur's adoption of defensive tactics but were not convinced that a successful static defense was impossible. They suggested that MacArthur place the Eighth Army in a continuous line across Korea between P'yongyang and Wonsan. MacArthur objected, claiming such a line was too long for the forces available and that the logistical problems posed by the high, road-poor mountains then separating the Eighth Army and X Corps were too great. By concentrating the X Corps in the Hamhung area, MacArthur countered, he was creating a "geographic threat" to enemy lines of communication that made it tactically unsound for Chinese forces to move south through the opening between Walker and Almond. In any event, he predicted, the Chinese already arrayed against the Eighth Army would compel it to take a series of steps to the rear.[22]

The Joint Chiefs of Staff disagreed that the X Corps' concentration at Hamhung would produce the effect MacArthur anticipated. In their judgment, the Chinese already had demonstrated a proficiency for moving strong forces through difficult mountains, and the concentration of the X Corps on the east coast combined with the predicted further withdrawals of the Eighth Army would only widen the opening through which the Chinese could move. They again urged MacAr-

[21] Rads, GX 29621 KGOO and GX 29661 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CINCFE, 5 Dec 50; Briefing for CG, in Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 6 Dec 50; Rad, CTF 95 to CTG 95.7, 070206 Dec 50; Rad GX 29684 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA, 6 Dec 50; Rad, GX 29685 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 6 Dec 50; Rad, GX 29706 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA et al., 6 Dec 50; Rad, GX 29733 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG IX Corps et al., 7 Dec 50; Rad, GX 29794 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 8 Dec 50.

[22] Rad, C 69953, CINCFE to JCS, 28 Nov 50; Rad, JCS 97592, JCS to CINCFE, 29 Nov 50; Rad, C 50095, CINCUNC to DA for JCS, 30 Nov 50; Rad, C 50105, CINCFE to DA, 30 Nov 50.

thur to consolidate the Eighth Army and X Corps sufficiently to prevent large enemy forces from passing between the two commands or outflanking either of them. But MacArthur defended his view of a P'yongyang-Wonsan line, pointing out that he and Walker already had agreed that P'yongyang could not be held and that the Eighth Army probably would be forced south at least as far as Seoul. Turning his reasoning in support of a request for ground reinforcements "of the greatest magnitude," he emphasized on 3 December that his present strength would allow him at most to prolong his resistance to the Chinese by making successive withdrawals or by taking up "beachhead bastion positions" and that a failure to receive reinforcements portended the eventual destruction of his command.[23]

The response to MacArthur's estimate was as gloomy as his predictions. Prompted by earlier dismal reports to visit the Far East for a firsthand appraisal, Army Chief of Staff General Collins informed MacArthur on 4 December that no reinforcement in strength, at least in the near future, was possible. The remaining Joint Chiefs meanwhile replied from Washington that preservation of the U.N. Command was now the guiding consideration and that they concurred in the consolidation of MacArthur's forces into beachheads.[24]

Beachhead sites that in varying degrees could facilitate a withdrawal from Korea were Hungnam and Wonsan for the X Corps, Inch'on and Pusan for the Eighth Army. General Collins, while touring Korea between 4 and 6 December, heard General Walker and General Almond on the best beachheads and on how best to handle their respective commands. Almond believed that he could hold Hungnam indefinitely and wanted to stay there out of certainty that by doing so he could divert substantial Chinese strength from the Eighth Army front. Walker, on the other hand, believed the preservation of the Eighth Army required a deep withdrawal. Walker attempted to forestall any order to defend Seoul, insisting that tying his forces to the ROK capital would only allow the Chinese to encircle the Eighth Army and force a slow, costly evacuation through Inch'on. He favored pulling back to Pusan, where once before he had broken an enemy offensive and where now, if reinforced by the X Corps, the Eighth Army might hold out indefinitely.[25]

MacArthur's G–3, General Wright, meanwhile recommended Pusan as the best beachhead for both the Eighth Army and X Corps on grounds that should UNC forces be compelled to leave Korea, they should leave the distinct impression of having delayed the enemy as long and as well as possible. Wright also pointed out that defending successive lines into the southeastern tip of the peninsula would afford UNC air forces the greatest opportunity to hurt the Chinese; further, if a withdrawal from Korea became necessary during the remaining winter months, MacArthur's command could escape extreme weather conditions at Pusan; finally, an evacuation at any time

[23] Rad, JCS 97772, JCS to CINCFE, 1 Dec 50; Rad, C 50332, CINCUNC to DA for JCS, 3 Dec 50.

[24] Chief of Staff, FEC, Memo for Gen Collins, 4 Dec 50; Rad, JCS 97917, JCS to CINCFE, 4 Dec 50.

[25] Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, p. 283; Ltr, Lt Gen Edward M. Almond (Ret) to Col C. H. Schilling, 21 May 1965, copy in CMH.

could be effected faster through the Pusan facilities than through any other port. To permit the longest delaying action possible and to enable an evacuation from the best port, Wright recommended that the X Corps be sea lifted from Hungnam as soon as possible and landed in southeastern Korea, that the X Corps then join the Eighth Army and pass to Walker's command, and thereafter that the U.N. Command withdraw through successive positions, if necessary to the Pusan area.[26]

On 7 December in Tokyo, Generals MacArthur, Collins, and Stratemeyer, Admirals Joy and Struble, and Lt. Gen. Lemuel C. Shepherd, the commander of all Marine forces in the Pacific, considered the various views generated during the week past and agreed on plans that embodied in largest part the recommendations of General Wright. MacArthur set these plans in effect on the 8th in CINCUNC (Commander in Chief, United Nations Command) Order Number 5. He listed nine lines to be defended by the Eighth Army, the southernmost based on the Naktong River in the general trace of the old Pusan Perimeter. But he insisted that Walker not surrender Seoul until and unless an enemy maneuver unquestionably was about to block the Eighth Army's further withdrawal to the south. Related to this stipulation, four lines lay above Seoul, the last of which, resting on the Imjin River in the west and extending eastward to the coast, was MacArthur's first delineation of positions across the entire peninsula. Here the peninsula was somewhat narrower than in the P'yongyang-Wonsan region and offered a road net that could accommodate supply movements.[27] Earlier pessimistic reports to Washington notwithstanding, MacArthur apparently believed that the Eighth Army and the X Corps combined could man this line; indeed, he expected Walker to make an ardent effort to hold it.

Through correspondence and interviews, MacArthur meanwhile had responded publicly to charges appearing in a substantial segment of the press that he was responsible for the reverse his forces were suffering at the hands of the Chinese. In defense of his strategy and tactics, he insisted that his command could not have fought more efficiently given the restrictions placed upon it by the policy of limiting hostilities to Korea. This criticism of administration policy rankled President Truman, particularly because MacArthur voiced it publicly and frequently enough to lead "many people abroad to believe that our government would change its policy."[28] Truman issued instructions on 5 December by which he intended to insure that information made public by an executive branch official was "accurate and fully in accord with the policies of the United States Government."[29] Specifically applicable to General MacArthur, "Officials overseas, including military commanders, were to clear all but routine statements with their departments, and to refrain from direct communication on military or foreign policy with newspapers, mag-

[26] Memo, FEC G3 for FEC C/S, 6 Dec 50.

[27] Field, *United States Naval Operations, Korea*, p. 288; Rad, CX 50635, CINCFE to CG Eighth Army et al., 7 Dec 50; Rad, CX 50801 (CINCUNC Opn O No. 5), CINCUNC to CG Eighth Army et al., 8 Dec 50. The JCS formally approved MacArthur's plan on 9 Dec 50 per Rad, JCS 98400, DEPTAR (JCS) to CINCFE, 9 Dec 50.

[28] Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope*, p. 383.

[29] *MacArthur Hearings*, p. 3536.

azines or other publicity media in the United States."[30] The Joint Chiefs of Staff forwarded the president's instructions to MacArthur on 6 December.

Withdrawal to Line B

On 7 December General MacArthur had radioed a warning to both Walker and Almond of the next day's order for successive withdrawals, the defense of Seoul short of becoming entrapped, and the assignment of the X Corps to the Eighth Army. So guided, Walker on the 8th laid out line B, which duplicated line A eastward from Hwach'on but in the opposite direction fell off to the southwest to trace the lower bank of the Imjin and Han rivers, some twenty miles behind the Yesong River. This line was at least twenty miles shorter than line A, fairly coincided with the northernmost coast-to-coast line designated by MacArthur, and now became the line toward which Walker began to move his forces for the defense of Seoul.[31]

On 11 December MacArthur made his first visit to Korea since he had watched the start of what was hoped would be the Eighth Army's final advance. He was now on the peninsula for a firsthand view of the Eighth Army and X Corps after their setbacks at the hands of the Chinese and for personal conferences with Walker and Almond on the steps the two line commanders had taken or planned to take in carrying out the maneuvers and command change he had ordered three days before.

When MacArthur reached Walker's headquarters (having first stopped in northeastern Korea to confer with General Almond), he was able to see not only the Eighth Army plan for withdrawing to line B but also Walker's plans in case the Eighth Army again was squeezed into the southeastern corner of the peninsula. Reviving an unused plan developed by the Eighth Army staff in September, Walker reestablished not only the Naktong River defenses but also three lines between the old perimeter and Pusan, each arching between the south coast and east coast around the port. Nearer Pusan, the Davidson line curved northeastward sixty-eight miles from a south coast anchor at Masan; next southeast, the Raider line stretched forty-eight miles from the south coast resort town of Chinhae; and just outside the port, the Pusan line arched twenty-eight miles from the mouth of the Naktong. Walker instructed General Garvin to fortify these lines using Korean labor and all other means and manpower available within Garvin's 2d Logistical Command.[32]

On the day following MacArthur's visit Walker established two more lettered lines. Line C followed the lower bank of the Han River just below Seoul, curved northeast to Hongch'on, thirty miles below Hwach'on, then reached almost due east to the coast at Wonpo-ri, fifteen miles behind Yangyang. Line D,

[30] Ibid.

[31] Rad, CX 50635, CINCFE to CG Eighth Army et al., 7 Dec 50; Rad, CX 50801 (CINCUNC Opn O no. 5), CINCUNC to CG Eighth Army et al., 8 Dec 50; Rad, GX 29794 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 8 Dec 50.

[32] Rad, GX 29857 KGOP, CG Eighth Army to CG 2d Log Comd and C/S ROKA, 9 Dec 50; Ltr, CG Eighth Army to CG 2d Log Comd, 11 Dec 50, sub: Construction of the Naktong River Defense Line and Completion of Construction of the Davidson and Raider Lines; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Dec 50.

next south, ran from a west coast anchor forty-five miles below Seoul northeast through the towns of Py'ongt'aek, Ansong, Changhowon-ni, and Wonju to Wonpo-ri, the same east coast anchor as for line C. These lines were to be occupied if and when enemy pressure forced the Eighth Army to give up Seoul but before any deep withdrawal as far as the Naktong was required.[33]

Amid this contingency planning and through 22 December Walker gradually pulled his forward units south and pushed ROK forces north into positions generally along line B. The I and IX Corps, withdrawing over Routes 1 and 33, bounded in three-day intervals through the Haeju-Kumhwa line and line A toward sectors along the western third of line B. The withdrawal was uncontested except for minor encounters with North Korean troops on the IX Corps' east flank, but thousands of refugees moving with and trailing the two corps had to be turned off the main roads lest they block the withdrawal routes. By 23 December both corps occupied stable positions in their new sectors. The I Corps, with two divisions and a brigade, stood athwart Route 1 along the lower banks of the Han and the Imjin; the IX Corps, with two divisions, blocked Routes 33 and 3 right at the 38th parallel.[34]

Spreading ROK forces along the remainder of the line proved more frustrating. Transportation requirements exceeded available trucks; resistance from North Korean troops in the central region slowed the South Koreans; and general confusion among the sketchily trained ROK units caused further delay. But by 23 December General Walker managed to get the ROK III Corps up from southern Korea and, with three divisions, emplaced in a central sector adjoining the IX Corps on the east. The South Korean front lay below line B, almost exactly on the 38th parallel, with its center located about eight miles north of Ch'unch'on. In more rugged ground next east, the ROK II Corps occupied a narrow one-division front astride Route 24, which passed southwestward through the Hongch'on River valley. The corps thus blocked what otherwise could provide enemy forces easy access south through central Korea over Route 29 and to lateral routes leading west to the Seoul area.[35]

By 20 December the ROK I Corps had been sea lifted in increments out of northeastern Korea, landed at Pusan and near Samch'ok close to the east coast anchor of line B, and transferred to Eighth Army control. Walker immediately committed the additional corps to defend the eastern end of the army line. By the 23d the ROK I Corps, with two divisions, occupied scattered positions blocking several mountain tracks and the east coast road.[36]

Regardless of his success in stretching forces across the peninsula, Walker lacked confidence in the line he had built. His defenses were shallow and there were gaps. He mainly mistrusted

[33] Rad, GX 35046 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 12 Dec 50.

[34] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Dec 50; Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, Dec 50; Rads, GX 29874 KGOO and GX 35071 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 9 Dec and 13 Dec 50, respectively.

[35] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Dec 50; Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, Dec 50.

[36] Ibid.; Rad, AG IN BSF–1305, CTF 90 to CG Eighth Army et al., 20 Dec 50.

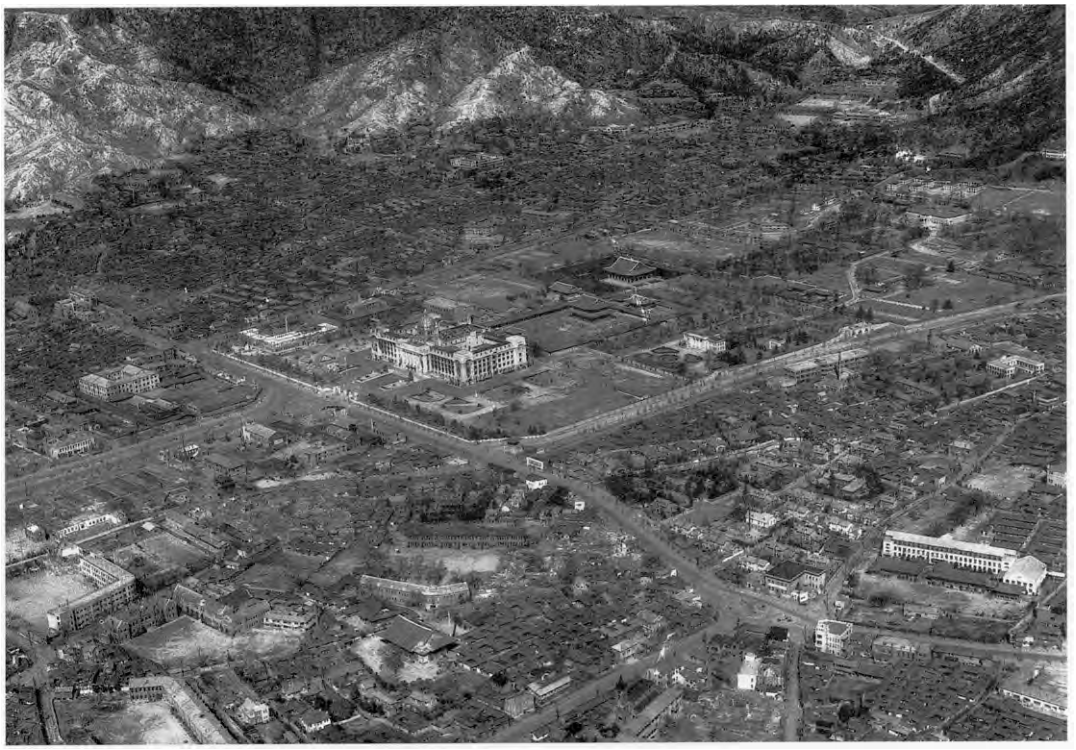


EIGHTH ARMY TROOPS DIG IN NORTH OF SEOUL

the ROK forces along the eastern two-thirds of the line. He doubted that they would hold longer than momentarily against a strong enemy attack, and, should they give way, his forces above Seoul in the west would be forced to follow suit. It was to meet this particular contingency that he had established lines C and D on 12 December. On the 15th he extended his effort by dispatching the 1st Cavalry Division out along the connected Routes 2-18-17 northeast of Seoul as added protection against any strike at the capital city from the direction of Ch'unch'on.[37]

The same day, he started army headquarters, less a small group to remain in Seoul, south to Taegu. He already had directed the removal of major supply stores located in or above Seoul to safer positions below the Han River and had ordered the reduction of stocks held in the Inch'on port complex. On the 18th he assigned corps boundaries along line C and described the deployment of army reserve units to cover a withdrawal to this first line below Seoul. Two days later he ordered the still-weak 2d Division, which by then had stepped back from Munsan-ni to Yongdungp'o, a suburb of Seoul just below the Han, to move to the town of Ch'ungju, some sixty miles southeast of Seoul. From there the division was to be ready to move against any enemy force breaking through South Korean lines in cen-

[37] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Dec 50; Rad, GX 35176 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG IX Corps and CG 1st Cav Div, 15 Dec 50.



SEOUL. *The capitol is at center.*

tral or eastern Korea and was to protect the flank of Walker's western forces in any withdrawal prompted by such an enemy thrust. General Keiser in the meantime had been evacuated because of illness, and Maj. Gen. Robert B. McClure now commanded the 2d Division.[38]

To General MacArthur, the elaborate preparations for a withdrawal below Seoul indicated that Walker had decided against a determined defense of the city. When MacArthur raised the question, Walker assured him that he would hold Seoul as long as he could. But, Walker pointed out, sudden collapses of ROK forces twice before had placed the Eighth Army in jeopardy. Nor had the ROK Army shown any increased stability even after strenuous efforts to improve it. If, as he suspected, the ROK units now along the eastern two-thirds of line B failed to stand against an attack, his positions north of Seoul could not be held and the then-necessary withdrawal would have to be made over an obstacle, the Han River. In Walker's mind these two dangers, of another sudden ROK Army collapse and of making a river crossing in a withdrawal, made his extensive preparations a matter of "reasonable prudence."[39]

[38] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Dec 50; Rad, GX 35255 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 18 Dec 50; Rad, GX 35300 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG 2d Div, 20 Dec 50; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 20 Dec 50.

[39] Rad, CX 51694, CINCFE to CG Eighth Army, 20 Dec 50; Rad, GX 35321 KCG, CG Eighth Army to CINCFE, 21 Dec 50.

Walker also was convinced that his adversaries were now capable of opening an offensive at any time. He still had no solid contact with enemy forces, but by pressing intelligence sources over the previous two weeks he had obtained sufficient evidence to predict an imminent attack and to forecast the strength, paths, objective, and even possible date of the next blow.[40]

Between 8 and 14 December Walker caught a southeastward shift of the North Korean *II Corps*, the bulk of which previously had been concentrated in and operating as a guerrilla force out of the mountains between Koksan and Inch'on. Apparently having retaken regular status, the corps paralleled the Eighth Army's southeastern withdrawals below P'yongyang. As Walker's forces spread out along line B, the North Korean unit followed suit, occupying positions just above the 38th parallel in the central sector, principally between Yonch'on in the Wonsan-Seoul corridor and Hwach'on, due north of Ch'unch'on. It also seemed that earlier reports of reconstituted North Korean units joining the *II Corps* were correct. Several renewed North Korean divisions apparently had assembled immediately behind the *II Corps* to make a total strength of sixty-five thousand plausible for the North Korean troops directly opposite the Eighth Army's central sector as of 23 December.[41]

As late as 17 December Walker was still completely out of contact with Chinese forces and by the 23d had encountered only a few, these in the I and IX Corps sectors in the west. General Partridge, who had shifted the emphasis of Fifth Air Force operations to armed reconnaissance and interdiction about the time Walker had given up P'yongyang, was able to verify that Chinese forces had moved south in strength from the Ch'ongch'on battlefields, but not how far.[42] Until mid-December his fighter pilots and light bomber crews discovered and attacked large troop columns moving openly in daylight over main and secondary roads between the Ch'ongch'on and P'yongyang. But then, to escape Partridge's punishing attacks, the Chinese reverted to their strict practices of concealment and camouflage and halted virtually all daytime movement.[43]

Walker, consequently, had no clear evidence that the main body of the *XIII Army Group* had moved any farther south than P'yongyang. But on the basis of repeated reports from agents and air observers that Chinese troops and supplies were moving southeastward from the North Korean capital, by the 23d he considered it possible that three or four Chinese armies with about a hundred fifteen thousand troops were bunched within a day's march of the Eighth Army's central front. This possibility brought the estimate of enemy strength above Walker's central positions to a hundred eighty thousand. Furthermore, Walker judged, these troops could be reinforced by any units of the *XIII Army Group* remaining in the P'yongyang area within four to eight days and by the Chinese and

[40] Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, Dec 50; Eighth Army PIRs 149–156, 8–15 Dec 50; Rad, GX 35266 KGI, CG Eighth Army to CINCFE, 18 Dec 50; Eighth Army PIRs 163, 22 Dec 50, and 164, 23 Dec 50.

[41] Eighth Army G2 SS Rpt, Dec 50; Eighth Army PIRs 148–164, 8–23 Dec 50.

[42] Bomber Command meanwhile halted its attacks on the Yalu bridges and devoted its main effort to the interdiction of rail lines.

[43] Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, pp. 243–45. The FEAF estimate of enemy troops killed in December was 39,694.

North Korean units currently operating in the X Corps sector within six to ten days.[44]

To Walker, the apparent concentration and disposition of enemy forces opposite his central front clearly suggested offensive preparations in which the North Korean *II Corps* was screening the assembly of assault forces and supplies. Small North Korean attacks below Yonch'on and from Hwach'on toward Ch'unch'on seemed designed to search out weaknesses in the Eighth Army line in those areas and indicated the possibility of a converging attack on Seoul south along Route 33 and southwest over the road from Ch'unch'on. A likely date for opening such an attack, because of a possible psychological advantage to the attackers, was Christmas Day.[45]

Walker's largest hope of holding Seoul for any length of time in these circumstances rested on the arrival of the remainder of the X Corps from northeastern Korea. Once he had General Almond's forces in hand, Walker planned to insert them in the Ch'unch'on sector now held by the untried ROK III Corps. This move would place American units athwart the Ch'unch'on-Seoul axis, one of the more likely enemy approaches in an attack to seize the South Korean capital. Whether the X Corps would be available soon enough depended first on how closely Walker had estimated the opening date of the threatening enemy offensive and second on how long it would take General Almond to get his forces out of northeastern Korea and to refurbish them for employment under the Eighth Army.[46]

The X Corps Evacuates Hungnam

By the time General Almond received General MacArthur's 8 December order to evacuate the X Corps through Hungnam, two sideshows to the coming main event were well under way. Out of the earlier decision to concentrate X Corps forces at Hungnam, the evacuation of Wonsan had begun on 3 December. In a week's time, without interference from enemy forces, the 3d Division task force and a Marine shore party group totaling some 3,800 troops loaded themselves, 1,100 vehicles, 10,000 tons of other cargo, and 7,000 refugees aboard transport ships and LSTs provided by Admiral Doyle's Task Force 90. One LST sailed north on the 9th to Hungnam, where its Marine shore party passengers were to take part in the forthcoming sea lift. The remaining ships steamed for Pusan on the 9th and 10th.[47]

The Task Force 90 ships dispatched to Songjin on 5 December to pick up the tail-end troops of the ROK I Corps meanwhile had reached their destination and by noon on 9 December had taken aboard the ROK 3d Division (less the 26th Regiment, which withdrew to Hungnam as rear guard for the 7th Division); the division headquarters, di-

[44] Eighth Army G2 SS Rpt, Dec 50; Eighth Army PIRs 148–164, 8–23 Dec 50.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Rad, GX 35226 KGOP, CG Eighth Army to CG X Corps, 17 Dec 50; Rad, GX 35321 KCG, CG Eighth Army to CINCFE, 21 Dec 50; Eighth Army PIRs 160, 19 Dec 50, and 163, 22 Dec 50.

[47] Rad, CX 50635, CINCFE to CG Eighth Army et al., 7 Dec 50; Rad, CX 50801 (CINCUNC Opn O No. 5), CINCUNC to CG Eighth Army et al., 8 Dec 50; Cagle and Manson, *The Sea War in Korea*, pp. 183–84; Field, *United States Naval Operations, Korea*, pp. 286–88.

vision artillery, and 18th Regiment of the ROK Capital Division; and some forty-three hundred refugees. This sea lift originally had been designed to assist the X Corps' concentration at Hungnam, but the intervening order to evacuate Hungnam changed the destination for most of the South Koreans to Pusan. On 10 and 11 December the convoy from Songjin anchored at Hungnam only long enough to unload the Capital Division's headquarters and artillery for employment in the perimeter and to take aboard an advance party of the ROK I Corps headquarters before proceeding to its new destination.[48]

On the 11th, as the South Koreans from Songjin as well as the Marine and Army troops from the Changjin Reservoir came into Hungnam, the perimeter around the port was comprised of a series of battalion and regimental strongpoints astride the likely avenues of enemy approach some twelve to fifteen miles outside the city. The 3d Division still held the large sector assigned to it when General Almond first shaped the perimeter, from positions below Yonp'o airfield southwest of Hungnam to defenses astride the Changjin Reservoir road at Oro-ri northwest of the port. Battalions of the 7th Division stood in breadth and depth athwart the Pujon Reservoir road north of Hungnam, and three regiments of the ROK I Corps guarded approaches near and at the coast northeast of the port.[49]

Although Almond had begun to pull these units into defenses around Hungnam at the beginning of December, enemy forces as of the 11th had not yet made any significant attempt to establish contact with the perimeter units. But Almond expected his beachhead defenses would be tested by enemy units approaching Hungnam along the coast from the northeast, from the Wonsan area to the south, and especially from the direction of the Changjin Reservoir.[50]

The likelihood that enemy forces pushing to the coast to reoccupy Wonsan would block the routes south of Hungnam had prompted Almond to discard any thought of an overland withdrawal to southern Korea. (Nor had MacArthur ordered such a move.) Almond also considered the roads inadequate to permit the timely movement of large forces. His warning order, issued 9 December, alerted his forces for a "withdrawal by water and air without delay from Hungnam area to Pusan–Pohang-dong area."[51] The larger exodus was to be by sea, with the Hungnam defenses contracting as corps forces were outloaded, but airlift was to be employed for as long as the airfield at Yonp'o remained within the shrinking perimeter.[52]

Evacuation Planning

In deciding how to evacuate his forces and still successfully defend his perimeter, Almond considered two alternatives. He could place all divisions on the perimeter and then withdraw portions of each simultaneously, or he could pull out one division at a time

[48] X Corps Comd Rpt, Sum, Dec 50; X Corps POR 74, 9 Dec 50; X Corps G3 Jnl, Entry J–31, 9 Dec 50; X Corps G3 Jnl, Entry J–28, 11 Dec 50; Field, *United States Naval Operations, Korea,* pp. 286, 288–89.

[49] X Corps POR 75, 11 Dec 50.

[50] X Corps PIRs 74–76, 9–11 Dec 50; X Corps Comd Rpt, Sum, Dec 50.

[51] X Corps OI 27, 9 Dec 50.

[52] X Corps Comd Rpt, Sum, Dec 50.

and spread his remaining forces to cover the vacated sector on a shorter front. Since some units were more battle worn than others, especially the 1st Marine Division, he elected the latter method and intended to ship the marines first. They were to be followed by the 7th Division, then the 3d Division.[53]

Almond planned to phase out the ROK I Corps, corps support units, bulk supplies, and heavy equipment simultaneously with the American Army divisions. This was to be done carefully enough to keep a proper balance between combat and support troops and to insure adequate logistical support. To maintain this balance yet guarantee that the evacuation proceeded as rapidly as possible, he established three points of control. From X Corps headquarters, his G–3 and G–4 together guided the dispatch of units to the beach. To supervise the actual loading of troops and materiel at water's edge, he organized a control group under Col. Edward H. Forney, a Marine officer serving as Almond's deputy chief of staff. Under Colonel Forney's direction, the 2d Engineer Special Brigade was to operate dock facilities, a reinforced Marine shore party company was to operate the LST and small craft beaches and control the lighterage for ships to be loaded in the harbor anchorages, and some five thousand Korean civilians were to work as stevedores. On the Navy's end of the outloading procedure, Admiral Doyle, through a control unit aboard his flagship *Mount McKinley*, was to coordinate all shipments, assign anchorages, and issue docking and sailing instructions. Direct liaison was established between Almond's control group ashore and Doyle's control group at sea to match outgoing troops, supplies, and equipment with available ships. Almond also dispatched a control group under Lt. Col. Arthur M. Murray from corps headquarters to Pusan to receive troops, supplies, and equipment arriving by sea and air and to move them as rapidly as possible to assembly areas.[54]

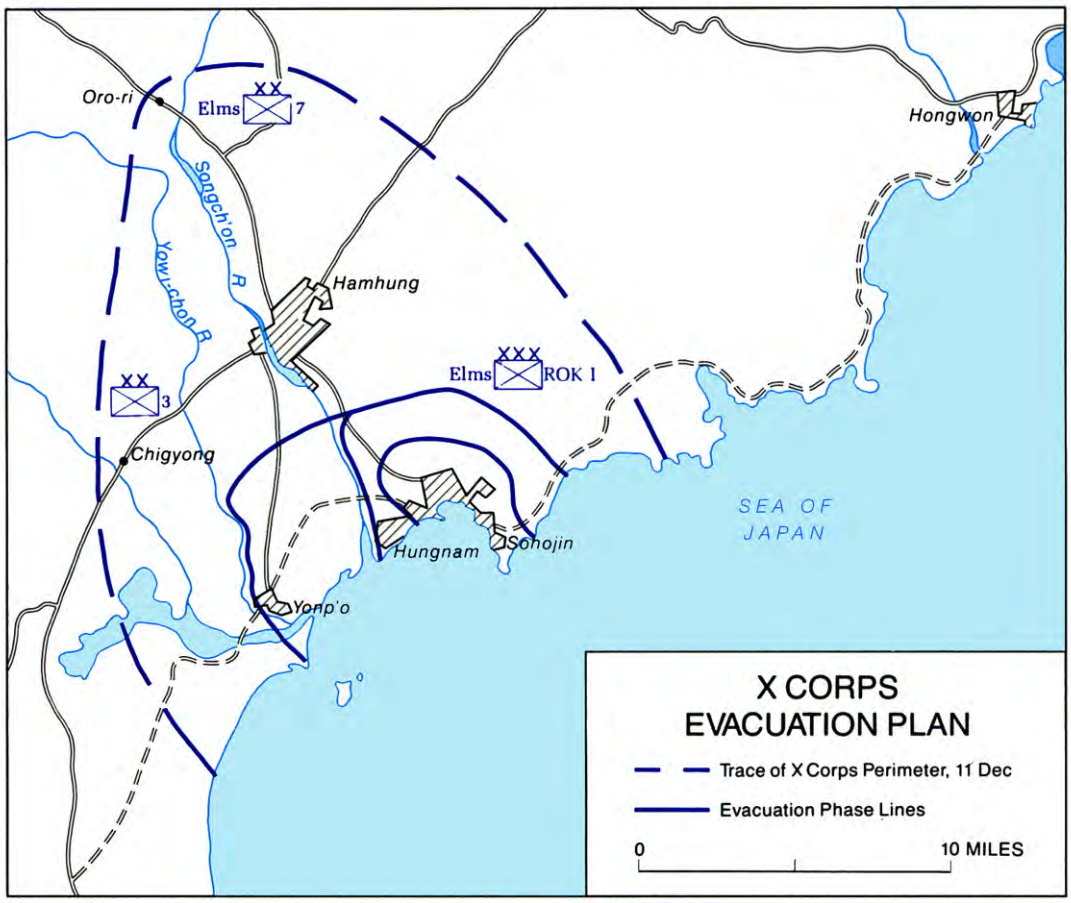
Including the troops and materiel outloaded at Wonsan and Songjin, Almond needed shipping space for 105,000 troops, 18,422 vehicles, and some 350,000 tons of bulk cargo. Although Admiral Doyle commanded a transport group of over 125 ships, some would have to make more than one trip to meet Almond's needs. The Far East Air Forces' Combat Cargo Command flying out of Yonp'o airfield was to fulfill airlift requirements.[55]

Tactical air support during the evacuation would be a Navy and Marine responsibility, the Fifth Air Force fighters previously located in northeastern Korea having flown out to Pusan on 3 December. The 1st Marine Air Wing, based at Yonp'o and aboard escort carriers, was to devote its full effort to supporting the corps operation. In addition, Admiral Doyle was to arrange both naval air and naval gunfire support. Reinforced by ships supplied by Admiral Struble, the Seventh Fleet commander, Doyle eventually was able

[53] Ibid.; X Corps Opn O 10, 11 Dec 50; X Corps POR 76, 11 Dec 50.

[54] X Corps Comd Rpt, Sum, Dec 50; Field, *United States Naval Operations, Korea*, pp. 289–90.

[55] X Corps Comd Rpt, Sum, Dec 50; Field, *United States Naval Operations, Korea*, p. 289; Cagle and Manson, *The Sea War in Korea*, pp. 512–14; Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, pp. 241–42.



MAP 14

to employ seven carriers in throwing a canopy of aircraft over the corps area and to deploy one battleship, two cruisers, seven destroyers, and three rocket ships in a maneuver area reaching ten miles north and ten miles south of Hungnam to answer Almond's requests for gunfire support.[56]

To begin an orderly contraction of defenses as the X Corps' strength ashore diminished, the units on the perimeter were to withdraw deliberately as the 1st Marine Division embarked toward the first of three phase lines that Almond drew around Hungnam. In the southwest this first line rested generally along the Yowi-ch'on River, just below Yonp'o airfield, and elsewhere traced an arc about three miles from the heart of Hungnam. *(Map 14)* The second line differed from the first only in the southwest in the 3d Division sector where it followed the upper bank of the Songch'on River close by Hungnam. The 3d Division's withdrawal to

[56] Cagle and Manson, *The Sea War in Korea*, pp. 181–82, 186–87; Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, pp. 248–49.



TROOPS OUTLOADING AT HUNGNAM

this second line, which would mean the abandonment of Yonp'o airfield, was scheduled to take place as the 7th Division began its embarkation. The third and final line was a tight arc about a mile outside the limits of Hungnam to be occupied by the 3d Division as that division itself prepared to outload. During this final phase of the evacuation General Soule's units were to use rearguard tactics to cover their own embarkation.[57]

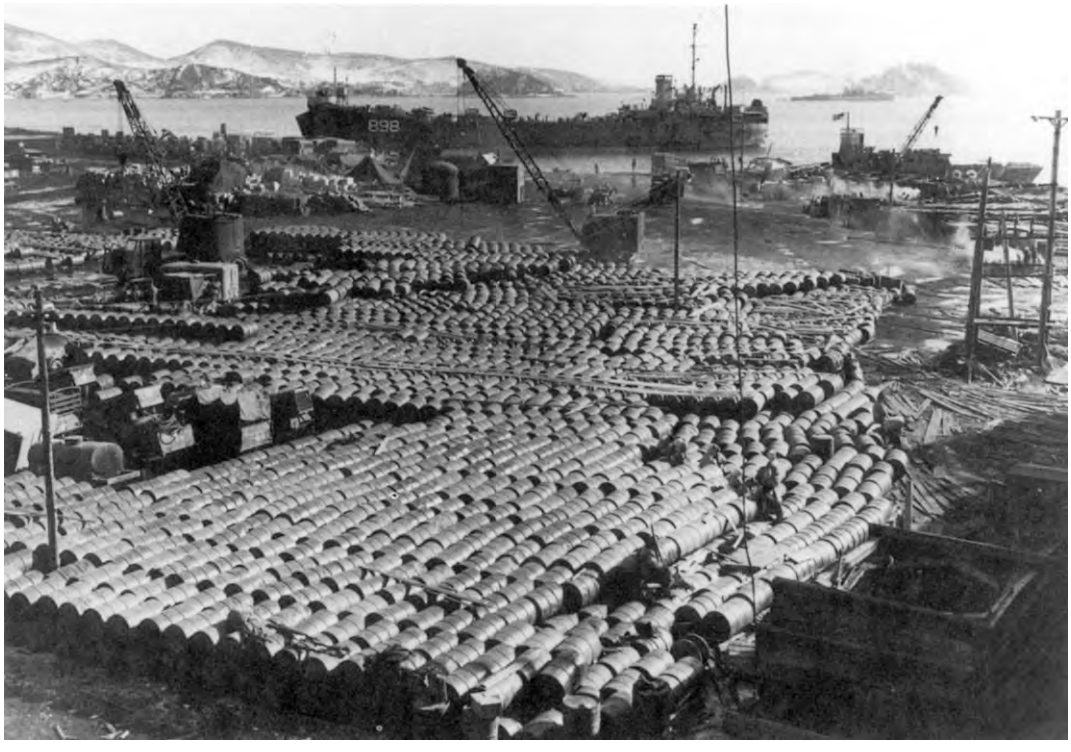
General Almond published his formal evacuation order on 11 December, the date on which General MacArthur visited Korea and flew into Yonp'o airfield for a conference with the X Corps commander. After briefing MacArthur on corps dispositions and the plan of evacuation, Almond predicted that the evacuation would be orderly, that no supplies or equipment would be destroyed or abandoned, and that enemy forces would not interfere seriously. The redeployment of the X Corps to southern Korea, he estimated, would be complete by 27 December.[58]

The Outloading

The 1st Marine Division, as it came into Hungnam from the Changjin Res-

[57] X Corps Comd Rpt, Sum, Dec 50; X Corps Opn O 10, 11 Dec 50.

[58] Ibid.; X Corps Comd Rpt, 11 Dec 50; Memo, Gen Almond, 11 Dec 50, sub: Movement of X Corps to the Pusan Area; Ltr, Gen Almond to CINCUNC, 11 Dec 50, sub: Redeployment of X Corps in Pusan – Pohangdong Area.



BARRELS OF AVIATION FUEL *to be loaded aboard ships at Hungnam.*

ervoir on 11 December, assembled between the port and Yonp'o airfield. The division outloaded over the following three days and sailed for Pusan at midmorning on the 15th. General Almond the day before had designated Masan, thirty miles west of Pusan, as the division's assembly area. Following the voyage to Pusan and a motor march to Masan, the marines passed to Eighth Army control on 18 December.[59]

Some bulk cargo was shipped out during the Marine outloading, but the heavier evacuation of materiel began after the marines sailed. From 15 December forward, service units gradually moved depots and supply points into the port area proper, and the bulk supplies and heavy equipment were either loaded aboard ships double-banked at the docks or lightered to ships in the harbor. To save time, ammunition was loaded at the docks instead of well out into open water according to usual precautionary practice. This constant outward flow of materiel paralleled unit embarkations through the final day of the evacuation.[60]

While the marines outloaded by sea, the bulk of the 1st Korean Marine Corps Regiment, which had been at-

[59] X Corps Comd Rpt, Sum, Dec 50; X Corps OI 30, 14 Dec 50; Montross and Canzona, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign*, pp. 338–41, 345; X Corps POR 83, 18 Dec 50.

[60] X Corps Comd Rpt, Sum, Dec 50.

tached to the 3d Division, moved to Yonp'o for evacuation by air. General Soule had planned to compensate for the loss of the South Korean marines by pulling his division to the shorter first phase line on 16 December. But several sharp attacks against his positions between Chigyong and Ororri during the morning of the 15th prompted him to make his withdrawal that afternoon.[61]

By the 16th the attacks against the 3d Division on the western and northwestern arcs of the perimeter, enemy patrol contact with the ROK I Corps in the northeast, and other ground and air reports indicated that enemy forces were closing in around the X Corps perimeter but not in great strength. Parts of the Chinese *81st Division, 27th Army,* appeared to have made the attacks on the 3d Division, and a North Korean brigade apparently was moving toward Hungnam over the coastal road from the northeast. A greater immediate problem than the approach of relatively few enemy forces was a mass movement of civilians toward the corps perimeter. Although General Almond had planned to evacuate government officials, their families, and as many others as shipping space allowed, he had not anticipated that thousands of civilians would try to reach Hungnam.[62]

Besides hampering evacuation operations by overcrowding the port area, the large refugee movement posed a danger of enemy infiltration. According to corps intelligence sources, the enemy was circulating a rumor in Hamhung that the X Corps would provide transporation for all civilians who wished to leave North Korea. The intention was to create a mass move to cover the infiltration of enemy agents and saboteurs. To prevent overcrowding and infiltration, military police, intelligence agents, and perimeter troops attempted to block civilian entry, particularly over the Hamhung-Hungnam road, which carried the larger number of refugees. They were only partially successful. Those civilians already in Hungnam and those who managed to reach the city were screened, then moved to the southeastern suburb of Sohojin, where corps civil affairs personnel distributed food and organized them for evacuation as shipping space became available.[63]

On the heels of the Marine division, the 7th Division began to outload on 14 December, embarking first the worn troops of the 31st Infantry, 1st Battalion of the 32d Infantry, and 57th Field Artillery Battalion, who had been with the marines in the reservoir area. Most of the division's service units went aboard ship on the 15th and 16th. The 17th Infantry and remainder of the 32d Infantry meanwhile relieved the ROK I Corps on the perimeter and withdrew to the first phase line. Hence, the corps perimeter on the 16th was divided into two nearly equal parts by the Songch'on River, the 7th Division in position above it, the 3d Division holding the sector below. Patrols and outposts deepened the defense as far out as the lower edge of Hamhung.[64]

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[61] X Corps PORs 79, 14 Dec 50, and 80, 15 Dec 50; Dolcater, *3d Infantry Division in Korea,* pp. 97–100.

[62] X Corps PIRs 77–80, 12–15 Dec 50; X Corps Comd Rpt, Sum, Dec 50.

[63] X Corps Comd Rpt, Sum, Dec 50; X Corps PIRs 77, 12 Dec 50, and 78, 13 Dec 50.

[64] X Corps PORs 79–81, 14–16 Dec 50; X Corps OI 31, 16 Dec 50.

After being relieved by the 7th Division, the ROK I Corps outloaded and sailed at noon on 17 December. Although original plans called for the South Koreans to go to Pusan, General MacArthur, apparently as a result of his 11 December visit to Korea, had directed that the corps units then on the Hungnam perimeter be sea lifted to Samch'ok. These units and those being carried to Pusan from Songjin were to pass to Eighth Army control upon debarkation. This transfer would permit General Walker to deploy the South Korean corps immediately, and the landing at Samch'ok would put much of it close at hand for deployment at the eastern end of line B. The landing, actually made at a small port just north of Samch'ok, was completed on 20 December.[65]

The ROK I Corps' departure on the 17th coincided with the evacuation of most X Corps headquarters sections and troops. Their final destination was Kyongju, fifty miles north of Pusan, where they were to establish an advance corps command post. On the same day, operations at Yonp'o airfield closed as the left flank units of the 3d Division prepared to withdraw to the lower bank of the Songch'on River behind the field the next day. The Marine squadrons that had used the field already had withdrawn to Pusan and Itami, Japan. Last to leave was a Fifth Air Force base unit that had serviced the Marine fighters and General Tunner's cargo aircraft. By the closing date Tunner's planes had lifted out 3,600 troops, 196 vehicles, 1,300 tons of cargo, and several hundred refugees.[66]

The 18 December withdrawal of General Soule's left flank units to the lower bank of the Songch'on River was a preliminary move in the 3d Division's relief of the two 7th Division regiments still on the perimeter. Soule's forces stepped behind the Songch'on to the second corps phase line on the 19th and on the 19th and 20th spread out to relieve the 17th and 32d Regiments. General Almond closed his command post in Hungnam on the 20th and reopened it aboard Admiral Doyle's *Mount McKinley* in the harbor, leaving General Soule in command of ground troops ashore.[67]

Enemy probing attacks, which had slackened noticeably after the 3d and 7th Divisions withdrew to the first corps phase line, picked up again on the 18th and became still more intense on the following day. Three Chinese divisions, the *79th*, *80th*, and *81st*, all from the *27th Army*, were believed to be in the nearby ground west of Hungnam, although only the *79th* was currently in contact. North and northeast of Hungnam, a North Korean brigade and the reconstituted North Korean *3d Division* had been contacted, as had another North Korean force, presumably a regiment.[68]

None of the enemy strikes on the perimeter did more than penetrate some

[65] X Corps Comd Rpt, Sum, Dec 50; Rad, CX 51019, CINCFE to CG Eighth Army et al., 11 Dec 50; Rad, CX 51102, CINCFE to DEPTAR, 12 Dec 50; X Corps PORs 80–83, 15–18 Dec 50; Field, *United States Naval Operations, Korea*, p. 295; Rad, AG IN BSF–1305, CTF 90 to CG Eighth Army et al., 20 Dec 50.

[66] X Corps POR 79, 14 Dec 50; X Corps Comd Rpt, 18 Dec 50; X Corps OI 36, 18 Dec 50; Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, pp. 241, 248–49; X Corps Comd Rpt, Sum, Dec 50; Cagle and Manson, *The Sea War in Korea*, p. 191.

[67] X Corps Comd Rpt, Sum, Dec 50; X Corps PORs 83–85, 18–20 Dec 50; Dolcater, *3d Infantry Division in Korea*, p. 102.

[68] X Corps PIRs 81–85, 16–20 Dec 50.

outposts, and counterattacks rapidly eliminated these gains. So far, all action appeared to be only an attempt to reconnoiter the perimeter. Several explanations for the enemy's failure to make a larger effort were plausible. The bulk of the Chinese in the Changjin Reservoir area apparently were taking time—probably forced to take time—to recuperate from losses suffered in the cold weather and recent battles. All enemy forces undoubtedly were aware that the X Corps was evacuating Hungnam and that they would be able to enter the city soon without having to fight their way in. The contraction of the corps perimeter probably forced the enemy to repeat his reconnaissance. Artillery fire, naval gunfire, and ample close air support may well have prevented the enemy from concentrating sufficient strength for strong attacks. Whatever the reasons, enemy forces had not yet launched a large-scale assault.[69]

Although an additional unit, a regiment of the North Korean *1st Division*, was identified near the northeastern anchor of the corps perimeter on 20 December, enemy attacks diminished on the 20th and 21st as the last troops of the 7th Division embarked and sailed for Pusan. General Barr's troops completed their redeployment on the 27th and moved into an assembly around Yongch'on, west of the new X Corps headquarters at Kyongju.[70]

New but still small attacks harassed the 3d Division on the 22d as General Soule's 7th, 65th, and 15th Regiments from west to east stood at the second corps phase line to cover the outloading of the last corps artillery units and the first of the division's service units. On the 23d, when Soule pulled his regiments to the last corps phase line in preparation for the final withdrawal from Hungnam, only a small amount of mortar and artillery fire struck the perimeter troops. Whatever conditions so far had kept the Chinese and North Koreans from opening a large assault obtained even after the X Corps' perimeter strength dwindled to a single division.[71]

The indirect fire received on the 23d proved to be the last opposition offered. By morning of the 24th the perimeter was silent and remained so as the last of the 3d Division's service units outloaded and as General Soule started his rearguard action to take out his regiments and artillery. A battalion from each regiment stayed on the perimeter while the remaining infantry and the artillery outloaded and while the division's 10th Engineer Combat Battalion and Navy underwater demolition teams prepared port facilities for destruction. At the same time, the last corps supplies, the port operating units, and as many of the remaining refugees as possible were put aboard ship. After General Almond made a final inspection ashore, seven platoons established strongpoints near the beaches to protect the embarkation of the remainder of the covering battalions and the bulk of the 10th Engineer Combat Battalion. In the final steps, Admiral Doyle's warships laid down a wide barrage about a mile and a half inland as the last pla-

[69] Ibid.

[70] X Corps Comd Rpt, Sum, Dec 50; X Corps PIRs 85, 20 Dec 50, and 86, 21 Dec 50; X Corps PORs 85, 20 Dec 50, and 86, 21 Dec 50.

[71] X Corps Comd Rpt, Sum, Dec 50; X Corps PORs 87, 22 Dec 50, and 88, 23 Dec 50; X Corps PIRs 87, 22 Dec 50, and 88, 23 Dec 50; Dolcater, *3d Infantry Division in Korea*, p. 102.



REARGUARD TROOPS OF THE 3D INFANTRY DIVISION *leave the Hungnam beach, 24 December 1950.*

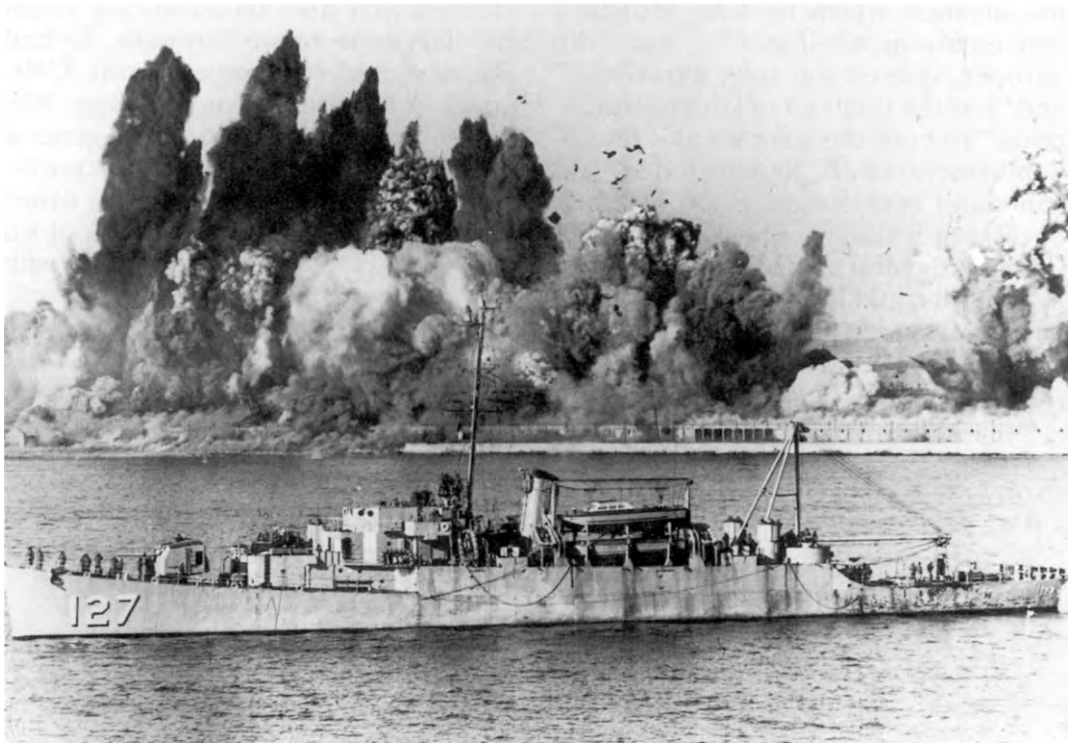
toons of the covering force outloaded and as the 10th Engineer Combat Battalion and Navy demolition teams blew up the port before leaving the beaches aboard LVTs and LCMs shortly after 1430.[72]

By Christmas Eve the ships carrying the last X Corps troops and supplies were well out of Hungnam harbor en route to Pusan and to Ulsan, a small port thirty miles north of Pusan. They left behind no serviceable equipment or usable supplies. About 200 tons of ammunition, a like amount of frozen dynamite, 500 thousand-pound aerial bombs, and about 200 drums of oil and gasoline had not been taken out, but "all of this [had] added to the loudness of the final blowup of the part of Hungnam."[73] A remarkable number of refugees, over 86,000, had been lifted out of Hungnam since the 11th. Including those evacuated from Wonsan and Songjin, the total number of civilians taken out of northeastern Korea reached 98,100. About the same number had been left behind for lack of shipping space.[74]

[72] X Corps Comd Rpt, Sum, Dec 50; X Corps PIR 89, 24 Dec 50; X Corps POR 89, 24 Dec 50; Dolcater, *3d Infantry Division in Korea*, p. 102.

[73] Col Edward H. Forney, Special After Action Report, Deputy Chief of Staff, X Corps, 19 Aug–Dec 50, p. 14.

[74] X Corps Comd Rpt, Sum, Dec 50; Field, *United States Naval Operations, Korea*, p. 304.



FINAL DEMOLITIONS AT HUNGNAM

In retrospect, the evacuation of the X Corps from Hungnam had proved most spectacular as a logistical exercise. While the move could be considered a withdrawal from a hostile shore, neither Chinese nor North Korean forces had made any serious attempts to disrupt the operation or even to test the shrinking perimeter that protected the outloading. Logistical rather than tactical matters therefore had governed the rate of the evacuation. Indeed, the X Corps' redeployment south had been a matter of how rapidly Admiral Doyle's ships could be loaded.[75]

In announcing the completion of the X Corps' withdrawal from Hungnam in a communique on 26 December, General MacArthur took occasion to appraise UNC operations from the time his command had resumed its advance on 24 November and, once again, to remark on the restrictions that had been placed on him. He blamed the incorrect assessment of Chinese strength, movements, and intentions before the resumption on the failure of "political intelligence . . . to penetrate the iron curtain" and on the limitations placed on field intelligence activities, in particular his not being allowed to conduct aerial reconnaissance beyond the boarders of Korea. So handicapped,

[75] X Corps, Special Report on Hungnam Evacuation, 9–24 Dec 50.

his advance, which he later termed a "reconnaissance-in-force," was the "proper, indeed the sole, expedient," and "was the final test of Chinese intentions." In both the advance and the redeployment south, he concluded, "no command ever fought more gallantly or efficiently under unparalleled conditions of restraint and handicap, and no command could have acquitted itself to better advantage under prescribed missions and delimitations involving unprecedented risk and jeopardy.[76]

But while MacArthur earlier had proclaimed that only by advancing could he determine enemy strength, he had not designed or designated the UNC attack as a reconnaissance in force. Nor was it such. It was, rather, a general offensive whose objective was the northern border of Korea. On the other hand, except that the operations of his command really had nothing to do with "conditions of restraint and handicap," MacArthur was correct in his assessment of the quality of UNC operations. Indeed, in both advance and withdrawl his forces had conducted operations in far largest part with efficiency and with many demonstrations of gallantry.

[76] Quoted in *MacArthur Hearings*, pp. 3536–539.

CHAPTER IX

The Chinese Third Phase Offensive The Opening

On the morning of 23 December General Walker left Seoul by jeep to visit units above Uijongbu. Ten miles north, his jeep started past two 2½-ton trucks halted on the opposite side of the road headed south. Almost at the same moment, a Korean civilian driving a ¾-ton truck pulled out from behind the halted vehicles to proceed south and partially entered the northbound lane to get past the parked trucks. Walker's driver swerved away from the oncoming truck but was unable to avoid a collision. The impact threw Walker's vehicle sideways and overturned it, and all occupants were thrown out and injured. General Walker was unconscious and had no discernible pulse when he was picked up by escorts in a following vehicle. At the 24th Division clearing station nearby, he was pronounced dead of multiple head injuries.[1]

Ridgway Takes Command

In routine anticipation of casualties before Walker's death, General MacArthur had obtained the agreement of the Army chief of staff that Walker's successor, if one was needed, should be Lt. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway, then serving on the Department of the Army staff as deputy chief of staff for operations and administration. General Ridgway's experience in World War II as commander of an airborne division and later an airborne corps and his strong leadership qualities had MacArthur's high respect, and his staff assignment in Washington, which had involved visits to the Far East, had kept him well informed of operations in Korea.[2]

On receiving word of General Walker's death, MacArthur telephoned General Collins in Washington to report the distressing loss and to ask for Ridgway. (The I Corps commander, General Milburn, temporarily assumed command of the Eighth Army.) Near midnight of 22 December Collins notified Ridgway that he was the new com-

[1] Report of Inquiry Into Accidental Death of Lt. Gen. Walton H. Walker, Eighth Army, 11 Jan 51. According to a ROK Ministry of National Defense publication, *Korean War History for One Year: 1 May 1950 to 30 June 1951*, the driver of the truck was sentenced to three years' imprisonment. See English translation of publication in CMH, p. B–347.

[2] Maj. Gen. Courtney Whitney, *MacArthur, His Rendezvous With History* (New York: Knopf, 1956), p. 432; MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, p. 348; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Dec 50; General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), p. 383; Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, pp. 305–06; Rad, Z 30753, CINCFE to DEPTAR, MacArthur Personal for Ridgway, 23 Dec 50.



GENERAL RIDGWAY

mander of the Eighth Army, and hurried preparations on the 23d put Ridgway in the air en route to Tokyo that night.[3]

Ridgway reached Tokyo's Haneda Airport shortly before midnight on Christmas and was met by General Hickey, MacArthur's acting chief of staff. En route by sedan to the American Embassy guesthouse, General Hickey brought him up to date on operations. The enemy offensive previously expected on Christmas Day had not materialized. Ridgway received fuller briefings the next morning, first in private from General MacArthur, later from General Stratemeyer and Admiral Joy. MacArthur's instructions to Ridgway resembled those given to General Walker: hold as far north as possible and hold Seoul as long as possible. The most to be expected of the Eighth Army, MacArthur told Ridgway, was an eventual tactical success that would clear and secure South Korea. A battlefield success of any substance in the meantime would help Washington answer what MacArthur called the "mission vacuum," meaning the question raised by the Chinese intervention of whether UNC forces could or should stay in Korea.[4]

MacArthur did reveal a new view of air power. A month earlier he had credited his air forces with a high degree of effectiveness; now he cautioned Ridgway that tactical air power was much exaggerated, that it could not stop the southward flow of enemy forces and supplies. When Ridgway asked near the close of the meeting whether MacArthur would object to a decision to attack, MacArthur replied, "The Eighth Army is yours, Matt. Do what you think best."[5] Here was another change. Earlier, MacArthur had played a key and direct role in planning and conducting tactical operations. He would do so no longer. General Ridgway would make all the decisions regarding the employment of the Eighth Army with no requirement to refer them to MacArthur for approval. Ridgway would always inform MacArthur in detail of those decisions, but MacArthur would never question him.

Before leaving for Korea at noon, Ridgway radioed his formal assumption

[3] Whitney, *MacArthur, His Rendezvous With History*, p. 432; Matthew B. Ridgway, *Soldier* (New York: Harper, 1956), pp. 195–98; MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, p. 348. Note that standard Washington time is fourteen hours earlier than Korea time.

[4] Ridgway, *Soldier*, pp. 201–02; MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, pp. 349–53.

[5] Ibid.



AMBASSADOR MUCCIO *(right)* WITH PRESIDENT RHEE

of command of the Eighth Army with instructions that his message, translated as necessary, be read by all officers and by as many enlisted men as possible. "You will have my utmost," he advised his new command. "I shall expect yours."[6]

Reaching the main Eighth Army headquarters at Taegu late on the 26th, Ridgway was displeased at finding the bulk of his staff so far to the rear, a matter he resolved to correct eventually. His immediate step was to get to the army forward command post. In battle dress for the first time since leaving Washington, at dawn the next day, he flew to Seoul, where the handful of staff officers he found deepened his resolve to remedy the headquarters arrangement.[7] He planned not only to redistribute his staff but also to move the forward command post to a more central location from where he could reach all corps and divisions in minimum time.[8]

Following a staff conference and meetings with American Ambassador John J. Muccio and President Rhee in

[6] Eighth Army GO 215, 26 Dec 50; Rad, H 50965 KCG, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 26 Dec 50; MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, pp. 353–54.

[7] Later Ridgway's daily garb would include a grenade hooked to the right suspender of his web equipment and a first aid packet to the left. These items became his trademark.

[8] Ridgway, *Soldier*, pp. 116, 203, 219; MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, pp. 353, 390.

Seoul, Ridgway began a four-day reconnaissance of the line B front that took him to all corps and divisions except the ROK Capital Division on the east coast, whose sector was quiet and unthreatened by impending enemy action.[9]

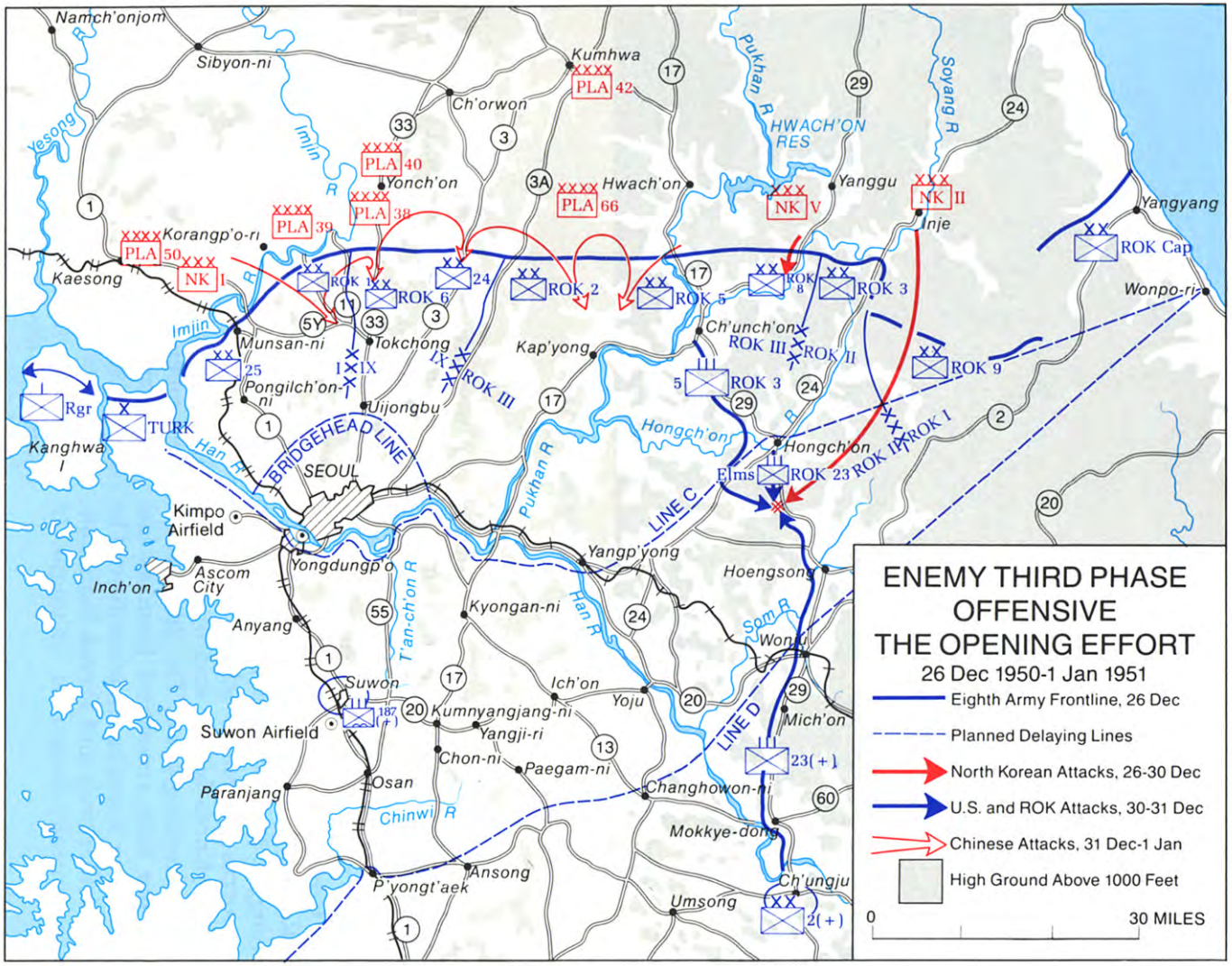
By evening of the 30th he was back at Eighth Army main in Taegu, much disturbed by what he had learned. The Eighth Army was clearly a dispirited command. "I could sense it the moment I came into a command post . . . I could read it in the faces of . . . leaders, from sergeants right on up to the top. They were unresponsive, reluctant to talk. I had to drag information out of them. There was a complete absence of that alertness, that aggressiveness, that you find in troops whose spirit is high."[10] The attack that Ridgway had hoped would be possible he now considered plainly out of the question. He also considered it imperative to strengthen the Eighth Army front if his forces were to hold line B. Whether he had time enough to do so was questionable. Additional evidence of an imminent enemy offensive had appeared as Ridgway reconnoitered the front, and the coming New Year holiday was now a logical date on which to expect the opening assault.[11]

Unit dispositions along the line had changed little since General Walker succeeded in manning it. *(Map 15)* The 8213th Army Unit (Eighth Army Ranger Company) patrolled Kanghwa Island at the extreme west in the I Corps sector. Next east, the Turkish brigade overlooked the Han River estuary from the upper end of the Kimpo peninsula. Above the Han, the 25th Division, to which the Turks and Rangers were attached, straddled Route 1 along the lower bank of the Imjin River, and the ROK 1st Division defended the corps right from positions along the Imjin reaching northeast almost to Route 33 in the Wonsan-Seoul corridor. The British 29th Brigade was assembled in I Corps reserve along Route 1 just outside Seoul.[12]

The IX Corps lay across the Wonsan-Seoul corridor along the 38th parallel, the ROK 6th Division astride Route 33 at the left, the 24th Division across Route 3 at the right. In corps reserve, the British 27th Brigade was assembled near the junction of Routes 33 and 3 at Uijongbu. The 1st Cavalry Division, also in reserve, retained the mission assigned to it while under army control of blocking the Ch'unch'on-Seoul road. Now attached to the cavalry division were the Filipino battalion and the Greek Expeditionary Force, an infantry battalion that had reached Korea on 8 December.[13]

Near the 38th parallel above Ch'unch'on, the ROK III Corps defended a wide sector with the ROK 2d, 5th, and 8th Divisions on line and the ROK 7th Division in reserve. In the narrow ROK II Corps sector next east, a single division, the ROK 3d, continued to block Route 24 running southwestward through the Hongch'on River valley. The ROK I Corps defended a gaping

[9] Ridgway, *Soldier*, p. 204; MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, pp. 355–57.
[10] Ridgway, *Soldier*, p. 205.
[11] Ibid., p. 209; Memo, Ridgway for Chief of Staff, GHQ, 7 Jan 51, copy in CMH.
[12] Situation Overlay, Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 27 Dec 50; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 28 Dec 50.
[13] Ibid.; Fox, "Inter-Allied Co-operation During Combat Operations."


ENEMY THIRD PHASE OFFENSIVE
THE OPENING EFFORT
26 Dec 1950-1 Jan 1951
Eighth Army Frontline, 26 Dec
Planned Delaying Lines
North Korean Attacks, 26-30 Dec
U.S. and ROK Attacks, 30-31 Dec
Chinese Attacks, 31 Dec-1 Jan
High Ground Above 1000 Feet
0
30 MILES
Namch'onjom
Sibyon-ni
Kumhwa
Ch'orwon
Yesong R
Imjin R
Pukhan R
HWACH'ON RES
Soyang R
Yonch'on
Hwach'on
Yanggu
Inje
Yangyang
Korangp'o-ri
Kaesong
ROK Cap
Wonpo-ri
Munsan-ni
Tokchong
Kap'yong
Ch'unch'on
Pongilch'on-ni
Uijongbu
Rgr
TURK
Kanghwa I
Han R
BRIDGEHEAD LINE
SEOUL
Hongch'on
Kimpo Airfield
Ascom City
Inch'on
Yongdungp'o
Yangp'yong
Hoengsong
LINE C
Anyang
Kyongan-ni
Tan-chon R
Soni R
Suwon
Ich'on
Yoju
Wonju
Suwon Airfield
Kumnyangjang-ni
Yangji-ri
Mich'on
LINE D
Chon-ni
Paegam-ni
Osan
Paranjang
Changhowon-ni
Chinwi R
Mokkye-dong
Ansong
P'yongt'aek
Ch'ungju
Umsong

MAP 15



THE UIJONGBU AREA

line at the Eighth Army right, with the ROK 9th Division in the high mountains at the corps left, and the ROK Capital Division across the slopes and coastal road at the eastern anchor of the front.[14]

Ridgway's main reserve for strengthening the front was the X Corps. Other resources present or scheduled to arrive in Korea by the end of the year were exceedingly few. The 2d Division, still not fully recovered from its late November losses but now reinforced by the Netherlands and French battalions, was centrally located at Ch'ungju. In the west, the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team, with the Thai battalion attached, was assembled at Suwon south of Seoul. Outside these forces, the only available unit was the ROK 11th Division currently operating against guerrillas in various locations to the south. The 2d Battalion of Canada's Princess Patricia's Light Infantry had reached Korea in mid-December but was at Miryang in the southeast for eight weeks of training before entering battle. Similarly, the 16th New Zealand Field Regiment, actually an artillery battalion, due to reach Korea on the 31st, would require training before it moved to the front. The only units en route to Korea that might be able to move forward upon arrival

[14] Situation Overlay, Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 27 Dec 50.

were two U.S. airborne Ranger companies, the 2d and 4th.[15]

Holding against the threatening enemy offensive, Ridgway judged, rested on committing most of his reserves early and on revitalizing the spirit of the Eighth Army. By the time he returned to Taegu on the 30th he had taken several steps toward achieving both.[16]

Restoring the Eighth Army's morale and confidence, Ridgway believed, depended mainly on improving leadership throughout his command, but it was not his intention to start "lopping off heads." Before he would relieve any commander, he wanted personally to see more of the man in action, to know that the relief would not damage the unit involved, and, indeed, to be sure that he had a better commander available. For the time being, he intended to correct deficiencies by working "on and through" his current corps and division commanders. One deficiency he had noted was that many commanders conducted operations from command posts far behind the front. To correct this practice, he ordered "division commanders to be up with their forward battalions, and . . . corps commanders up with the regiment that was in the hottest action."[17]

He saw further weaknesses in leadership and staff work in the intelligence briefings he received. Confronted during one of the first briefings with a map whose main feature was "a big red goose egg . . . with '174,000' scrawled in the middle of it," Ridgway was astounded. "Here the enemy was leaning right up against us, but we did not know his strength, and we did not have his location pinpointed."[18] He attributed such imprecision directly to the Eighth Army's tendency to "look over its shoulder." As a result of this tendency, the line troops had not maintained proper contact with enemy forces or learned enough about the terrain to their front. He promptly rebuked his subordinates for failing to meet these two basic combat requirements. They were to patrol until they had defined the enemy's positions and determined the strengths of units opposite them, and he warned that he "didn't want to ask any man where a trail went and have him tell me he didn't know."[19]

Ridgway did receive another intelligence report that, if unacceptably imprecise, was more than a "goose egg" estimate of the opposition. The "174,000," Colonel Tarkenton explained, was the estimated strength of the Chinese *XIII Army Group*. The group's six armies, each with a strength of 29,000, were either along the Eighth Army front or in the immediate enemy rear area. Tarkenton believed three North Korean corps totaling 65,800 men also were at the front and that a fourth was approaching it.[20]

The greatest enemy strength seemed to be massed opposite the Eighth

[15] Eighth Army G3 Jnls, 27–31 Dec 50; Fox, "Inter-Allied Co-operation During Combat Operations."

[16] MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, p. 358.

[17] Ltr, Gen Ridgway to Gen J. Lawton Collins, 8 Jan 51, copy in CMH; Interv, Mossman, Carroll, and Miller with Ridgway, 30 Nov 56; Ridgway, *Soldier*, pp. 206–07.

[18] Ridgway, *Soldier*, p. 205.

[19] Interv, Mossman, Carroll, and Miller with Ridgway, 30 Nov 56; Ridgway, *Soldier*, p. 206.

[20] Eighth Army G2 SS Rpt, Dec 50, Enemy Situation—Special Report for the Army Commander; Ridgway, *Soldier*, p. 209.

Army's west central sector, an indication that the main enemy attack would come through the Wonsan-Seoul corridor over Routes 33 and 3. A strong secondary attack farther east also seemed probable, either southwest over the Ch'unch'on-Seoul axis or south through Ch'unch'on and Wonju via Route 29, in an attempt to outflank the I and IX Corps above Seoul.[21]

Two recent attacks by units of the North Korean *II* and *V Corps* opened as Ridgway reached Korea, supported Tarkenton's prediction of a strong secondary effort in the east. Fourteen miles northeast of Ch'unch'on, two North Korean regiments coming from the Hwach'on Reservoir area hit the ROK 8th Division at the right of the ROK III Corps and gouged a mile-deep salient before the South Koreans contained the attack. Out of the Inje area, twenty-five miles northeast of Ch'unch'on, a larger force believed to include a division and a reinforced regiment struck southwestward through the ROK 9th Division's flimsy position at the left of the ROK I Corps. Entering the rear area of the narrow ROK II Corps sector, the attack force by 30 December established a strong roadblock on the central arterial, Route 29, almost twenty-five miles below Ch'unch'on. By extending these gains, especially the deeper southwestward thrust out of the Inje area, North Korean forces conceivably could sever the Eighth Army's main lines of communication.[22]

[21] Ibid.

[22] Eighth Army G3 Jnls, 27–31 Dec 50; Eighth Army G2 PIRs 167–172, 26–31 Dec 50.

Defensive Preparations

Committing the X Corps

Ridgway's first tactical move was to counter this threat from the northeast. on the 27th, right after hearing Ambassador Muccio give his evaluation of the tactical situation, Ridgway ordered part of the 2d Division north from Ch'ungju into the North Koreans' projected path. General McClure was to move a regimental combat team twenty-five miles north to Wonju, from where it could oppose any North Korean attempt to advance south over Route 29 or west along Route 20 and where it could protect a vulnerable link of the central Pusan-Seoul rail line, which served as an Eighth Army supply route.[23]

McClure was in the process of moving the 23d Infantry and the French battalion to Wonju on the 29th when the North Korean attack out of Inje carried behind the ROK II Corps farther north. Ridgway consequently ordered McClure to move the remainder of his division to Wonju and to send one regiment twenty-five miles north of that town to Hongch'on where Route 29 from Ch'unch'on and Route 24 from the northeast intersected. McClure complied on the 30th, sending the 23d Infantry toward Hongch'on to join its South Korean namesake, the 23d Regiment of the ROK 7th Division.[24]

Before the 23d Infantry could complete its move above Wonju, the North

[23] MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, p. 357; Rad, GX–20178 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG 2d Div, 27 Dec 50.

[24] Rads, GX 20218 KGOO and GX 20253 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG 2d Div, 28 and 29 Dec 50; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 29 and 30 Dec 50; Eighth Army G3 Briefing for CG, 30 Dec 50.

Koreans reported by the ROK III Corps to number between seven hundred and twelve hundred men, blocked Route 29 six miles below Hongch'on. The 23d's advance became a clearing operation, made in concert with a battalion of the ROK 23d Regiment, which moved south out of Hongch'on and with the reserve 5th Regiment of the ROK 3d Division, which dropped south from Ch'unch'on to a point west of the North Korean position and then struck eastward against it. The concerted effort cleaned out most of the roadblock on the 31st. The battalion of the ROK 23d Regiment returned to Hongch'on while the ROK 5th Regiment and the leading battalion of the 23d Infantry stayed to clear the remainder of the enemy position. The balance of the 23d Infantry was strung out on Route 29, a battalion at Hoengsong nine miles below the roadblock site, the remainder still in Wonju where the rest of the 2d Division was now assembling.[25]

While installing the 2d Division in the Hongch'on-Wonju area might hold off the North Koreans currently advancing from the northeast, the defensive weakness in the three South Korean corps sectors left open the likelihood of stronger, more effective enemy penetrations. Against this possibility, Ridgway planned to reinforce this portion of the front, much as General Walker had decided earlier, by setting the X Corps in the Ch'unch'on sector now held by the ROK III Corps and by placing the bulk of his South Korean forces along a narrower, more solid front in the higher mountains and coastal slopes to the east.[26]

Since time was critical, Ridgway on 28 December pressed General Almond and the commander of the 2d Logistical Command, General Garvin, to quicken the readiness preparations of the 1st Marine, 3d, and 7th Divisions. The marines, now reattached to the X Corps, and the 7th Division were fully assembled but were still refurbishing, and the 3d Division, last to leave Hungnam, was not yet three-quarters ashore. The ships carrying General Soule's remaining troops were in Pusan harbor, however, and following Ridgway's 29 December order that these ships be unloaded without delay, the balance of the 3d Division was ashore and en route to the division's assembly area south of Kyongju by nightfall on the 30th.[27]

Since it was nevertheless obvious that the X Corps as currently constituted could not move forward for some time, Ridgway on the 29th approved plans developed by his staff for adjusting Almond's order of battle to permit earlier commitment. Under these plans the X Corps headquarters and whichever of Almond's present divisions completed its preparations first would move to Wonju, where Almond would add the 2d Division and possibly one ROK division to his command as substitutes for the two divisions left behind. Even this arrangement would take time; the estimate for moving one of Almond's current divisions from its southern as-

[25] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 31 Dec 50; Situation Overlay with Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 31 Dec 50; Eighth Army POR 517, 31 Dec 50; Eighth Army G3 Briefing for CG, 31 Dec 50.

[26] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 28 Dec 50.

[27] Rad, GX 20219 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG X Corps and CG 2d Log Comd, 28 Dec 50; X Corps POR 93, 28 Dec 50; Rad, GX 20228, CG Eighth Army to CG X Corps and CG 2d Log Comd, 29 Dec 50; X Corps POR 95, 30 Dec 50.

sembly area to the battle zone was eight to ten days. Once forward, the X Corps was to operate with the initial mission of destroying any enemy penetration of the South Korean front above it and of protecting the IX Corps' east flank.[28]

Ridgway gave Almond detailed instructions on the 30th. Having learned that the 7th Division would be ready ahead of the other two divisions, he directed Almond to move one of its regiments the next day to Chech'on, twenty miles below Wonju, where Route 60 and a mountain road coming from the east and northeast joined Route 29. When Almond could get the remainder of General Barr's forces forward, he was to assemble the 7th near the 2d so that both divisions could be deployed quickly against any enemy penetration from the direction of Ch'unch'on and Inje or from the east toward Hoengsong and Wonju. Almond subsequently could expect to occupy a sector of the front. In the meantime, he was to develop Route 29 southeastward from Wonju through Chech'on, Tanyang, Yongju, and Andong as the main X Corps supply route.[29]

On the last day of the year Ridgway placed the 1st Marine and 3d Divisions in army reserve. When fully refurbished, the marines were to move from Masan to an east coast assembly in the Yongch'on–Kyongju–P'ohang-dong area and prepare to occupy blocking positions wherever needed to the north. The 3d Division was to reassemble in the west. As soon as General Soule finished reorganizing and re-equipping his forces he was to move them into the P'yongt'aek-Ansong area forty miles south of Seoul and prepare them for operations in either the I or IX Corps sector.[30]

Establishing the Seoul Bridgehead

While reinforcing the South Korean sector of the front, Ridgway also deepened the defense of Seoul. After conferences with General Milburn and General Coulter on the 27th, he instructed them to organize a bridgehead above Seoul along a line curving from the north bank of the Han west of Seoul through a point just below Uijongbu at the junction of Routes 33 and 3 to the north and back to the Han east of the city. The bridgehead would be deep enough to keep the Han bridges below Seoul free of enemy artillery fire. The position therefore would be suitable for covering a general withdrawal below Seoul that might accompany or follow the occupation of the bridgehead line.[31]

Milburn and Coulter each were to place a division on the bridgehead line if the expected enemy attack forced them to vacate their line B positions. Ridgway at first restricted any I and IX

[28] Rad, GX 20217 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to Eighth Army Fwd, for Gen Ridgway from Gen Allen, 28 Dec 50; Rad, G 10014 KCG, Dep CofS Eighth Army Adv to CofS Eighth Army Main, 29 Dec 50.

[29] X Corps CG Diary, 30 Dec 50; Rad, GX 20294 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG X Corps, 30 Dec 50; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 30 Dec 50; Rad, GX 20329 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG X Corps, 31 Dec 50.

[30] Rads, GX 20295 KGOO and GX 20332 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG X Corps, 30 and 31 Dec 50; Rad, GX 20335 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG 1st Marine Div, 31 Dec 50; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 31 Dec 50.

[31] MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, p. 356; Ridgway, *Soldier*, pp. 207–08; Rad, GX 10009 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CGs I and IX Corps, 28 Dec 50; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 28 Dec 50. Most of the fortification work at the bridgehead line was to be done by South Korean laborers. During the meeting with President Rhee on the 27th, Ridgway asked him for 30,000 civilian laborers to be employed in building fortifications above and below Seoul, and Rhee provided the first 10,000 by dawn on the 28th.

Corps withdrawal from the present front to his own personal order. But on reconsidering the high estimate of Chinese strength opposite the two corps, the tendency of some South Korean units to break under pressure, and the demonstrated Chinese preference for night attacks, he realized that this restriction could create a costly delay should Milburn and Coulter be unable to contact him promptly. He therefore authorized the two corps commanders to withdraw on their own at any time they agreed that it was necessary but could not reach him.[32]

No matter who gave the order, Ridgway insisted that a withdrawal to the bridgehead be more than a mere move from one line to another; both corps were to attack enemy forces who followed. The terrain could accommodate this tactic, especially in the Wonsan-Seoul corridor where the enemy would be obliged to use routes surrounded by higher ground. Ridgway expected Milburn and Coulter to leave strong forces of infantry and armor posted in this high ground as the two corps withdrew; these forces would strike advancing enemy units and disrupt the follow-up before they themselves moved back to the bridgehead.[33]

Ridgway Returns to Seoul

In smaller steps taken before the year was out, Ridgway attached the 2d Ranger Company to the 1st Cavalry Division in the west and the 4th Ranger Company to the 7th Division in the east. Since the 2d Division was operating in the Wonju area where the surrounding mountains prohibited armor, he ordered McClure's 72d Tank Battalion to the west for attachment to the IX Corps, which might use it to punish an enemy advance on Seoul.[34]

Anticipating an opening enemy attack toward the capital on New Year's Day, Ridgway returned there on the afternoon of the 31st.[35] According to Colonel Tarkenton's latest intelligence estimate, enemy forces were fully deployed. In the west, the North Korean *I Corps* straddled Route 1 at the Imjin with the Chinese *50th Army* concentrated just behind it; the *39th Army* had spread out near the Imjin between Routes 1 and 33; the *38th Army* sat astride Route 33 below Yonch'on with the *40th Army* assembled to its rear; and the *66th Army* lay across Routes 3 and 17, its forces pointed at both Uijongbu and Ch'unch'on, with the *42d Army* backing it up at Kumhwa.[36]

Farther east, the full North Korean *V Corps*, previously in the area now occupied by the *66th Army*, had joined the North Korean *II Corps* in the region between and below Hwach'on and Inje. This concentration, the expected arrival of the North Korean *III Corps* in the same area, and the probability that forces from the Chinese *IX Army Group* would move down into the same region from Hungnam represented, in Tarkenton's estimation, a sufficient force to exploit successfully the North Korean gains already registered in the east.[37]

[32] MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, p. 369.
[33] Ibid., p. 365; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 28 Dec 50.
[34] Eighth Army GO 219, 30 Dec 50; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 30 and 31 Dec 50.
[35] "It is not enough [for a commander] to move in response to critical situations, they must be anticipated." Interv, Mossman, Carroll, and Miller with Ridgway, 30 Nov 56.
[36] Ltr, Gen Ridgway to Gen Collins, 3 Jan 51, copy in CMH; Eighth Army PIR 172, 31 Dec 50.
[37] Eighth Army PIRs 171, 30 Dec 50, and 172, 31 Dec 50.

The preponderance of enemy forces above Seoul still pointed to a main effort against the South Korean capital over the Uijongbu-Seoul axis. In addition, enemy artillery positions sighted from the air disclosed a large number of guns generally astride an extension of the I and IX Corps boundary, all well disposed to support an attack through the Wonsan-Seoul corridor. Further, aerial observers had spotted an enemy buildup of bridging materials near the Imjin. Prisoners confirmed these indications. Several revealed that a main offensive toward Seoul would open on the night of 31 December, and an officer from the *38th Army* said that the offensive would begin with a coordinated attack by the *38th*, *39th*, *40th*, and *42d Armies*.[38]

The Opening Enemy Assaults

Ridgway had judged the signs correctly. As he flew into Seoul and visited the western front by jeep during the afternoon of the 31st, vanguards of the *116th Division, 39th Army*, moved down to the Imjin near Korangp'o-ri and forced outposts of the ROK 1st Division to withdraw below the river. Behind a thirty-minute artillery preparation, forces of the *116th* then crossed the Imjin just after full dark to attack the ROK division's main defenses.[39]

From this opening at the I Corps right, the *XIII Army Group* commander broadened his attack eastward. Around midnight units of the *116th Division* and of the *113th Division, 38th Army*, struck hard at the ROK 6th Division on the IX Corps left while the *114th Division, 38th Army*, opened smaller, intermittent assaults against the 24th Division at the IX Corps right. Two hours later the *66th Army* sent forces against the ROK 5th Division in the center of the ROK III Corps sector and near 0500 hit the ROK 2d Division at the ROK III Corps left.[40]

In grand tactics, the Chinese New Year's offensive, or Third Phase Offensive as the Chinese called it, resembled their previous effort, strong forces pushing a main attack in the west while other forces threatened envelopment in the east. The hard jolts of the *38th* and *39th Armies* against the I and IX Corps aimed the main Chinese effort generally south astride Route 33 toward Seoul. The *66th Army*'s attacks against the ROK III Corps farther east widened the Chinese advance to a front of forty-five miles but were pointed mainly at Kap'yong, thirty-five miles northeast of Seoul and twelve miles west of Ch'unch'on. Seizure of Kap'yong, situated as it was on the Ch'unch'on-Seoul road, could be the beginning of a flanking movement against Seoul or the start of a deeper sweep to envelop the city. It also posed the danger of envelopment to the South Korean forces defending Ch'unch'on, forces whose positions already were threatened by the deep North Korean salient in the Hongch'on area.[41]

The *38th* and *39th Armies* reinforced the main drive during the night but kept it massed near the I - IX Corps boundary. The 25th Division on the left flank of the I Corps was not touched, and attacks against the 24th Division

[38] Ibid.

[39] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 1 Jan 51; Eighth Army PIR 173, 1 Jan 51; FEC Intel Dig, no. 115, 1–15 Feb 53; 24th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Dec 50; Ltr, Ridgway to Collins, 3 Jan 51; Ridgway, *Soldier*, p. 209.

[40] Ibid.; IX Corps PIR 97, 1 Jan 51; IX Corps POR 293, 1 Jan 51.

[41] Ibid.

on the IX Corps right, though numerous, remained small and ineffective. Either by a decision to single out the interior ROK 1st and 6th Divisions or by the coincidence of their adjoining positions athwart Route 33, the Chinese concentrated on wedging through the South Koreans, particularly the 1st Division.[42]

The reinforced night attack of the *116th Division* against the ROK 1st Division shoved the 12th Regiment out of position on the division right and sent its troops streaming to the rear. General Paik tried to refill the vacated sector with his reserve 15th Regiment, but that regiment and the 11th on the division left were hit hard and forced back to the south and west, leaving much ground open to Chinese exploitation. The ROK 6th Division fared better, giving little ground to the *116th* and *113th Divisions*, but by daylight faced a threat of entrapment, posed to some extent by enemy groups who managed to work into its rear area but posed most seriously by those forces of the *116th* cutting deep through the ROK 1st Division to its left.[43]

The deepest point of Chinese penetration by daylight on 1 January had been marked by Battery C of the U.S. 9th Field Artillery Battalion, which had been supporting the ROK 1st Division from positions behind the 12th Regiment. When the battery withdrew after the 12th abandoned its position, the artillery column was caught in an ambush about eight miles south of the Imjin and lost four 155-mm. howitzers before it could escape the trap. From this point the edges of the V-shaped enemy salient driven into the right half of the ROK 1st Division sector traced secondary Route 5Y northwestward to the Imjin through the middle of General Paik's sector and traced secondary Route 11 northward, not far west of the I–IX Corps boundary.[44]

From reports reaching Eighth Army headquarters through the night, General Ridgway suspected that the Chinese advance toward Seoul was fast becoming more than the I and IX Corps could handle. No more than three Chinese divisions so far had been identified in the assault in the west, but the Chinese, in all logic, would exploit their gains in the ROK 1st Division sector and could commit additional divisions with no great delay. A paucity of reports left Ridgway somewhat in the dark about what was happening in the South Korean sectors farther east. Although American advisers, the main sources of information on ROK Army operations, were at the principal South Korean headquarters, breakdowns in communication between front line and headquarters seemed to be the rule rather than the exception in ROK units. Ridgway nevertheless was aware that Chinese forces had hit the ROK III Corps, a portent that made the I and IX Corps positions even less tenable.[45]

By the time Ridgway started north out of Seoul near dawn on New Year's Day toward the sectors of the ROK 1st and 6th Divisions, he had few doubts that he would have to withdraw from line B. His concern heightened to alarm a few miles north when he met trucks

[42] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 1 Jan 51; Eighth Army PIR 173, 1 Jan 51; I Corps G3 Jnl, 1 Jan 51; I Corps POR 332, 1 Jan 51; IX Corps POR 293, 1 Jan 51; IX Corps PIR 97, 1 Jan 51.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.; Ridgway, *Soldier*, p. 210.

packed with South Korean troops. No weapons other than a few rifles were in sight. He sensed immediately that the South Koreans were running and jumped from his jeep to wave the trucks to a halt. But he "might as well had tried to stop the flow of the Han." The most he could do was order straggler points established where retreating troops could be stopped and reassembled.[46]

The episode on the road, as Ridgway discovered when he visited the I and IX Corps headquarters before noon, had not signaled the collapse of the two ROK divisions. The bulk of both was still forward, and both were attempting to erect defenses along the shoulders of the Chinese penetration. General Paik was setting his 11th and 15th Regiments across hills overlooking Route 5Y along the southwestern shoulder, a small part of the 15th stood below the point of the wedge, and about half the 12th Regiment was now loosely assembled some two miles below the deepest penetration. On the other side of the salient, Brig. Gen. Chang Do Yong, commander of the ROK 6th Division, was moving his reserve 2d Regiment into position along Route 33 to refuse his left flank. Rearward along this long open flank, General Coulter had ordered the British 27th Brigade from Uijongbu into blocking positions near Tokchong, eight miles north, where a road coming southeastward out of the area invested by Chinese joined Route 33.[47]

General Milburn, Ridgway learned, had started the British 29th Brigade up Route 1 from Seoul toward a forward assembly behind the 25th Division. From there the British were to attack northeast into the flank of the enemy salient. Ridgway discouraged this move, believing a counterattack to have any chance at all would require at least a full American division. But such a commitment seemed neither wise nor feasible. The two nearest U.S. divisions were the 25th and 24th. The 25th, though still not directly involved except for having received mortar and artillery fire, was the only unit standing before the North Korean I Corps and the Chinese *50th Army*. The 24th on the opposite flank had been hit hard after daylight, apparently by all three regiments of the *114th Division*, and had backed away to positions two miles south. Even if one of these divisions were to be used, Ridgway saw no way, in view of their dispositions on the flanks, that a counterattack could be started in less than forty-eight hours. Such an effort, he judged, would be too late since the Chinese were not only maintaining strong pressure but, according to early morning air reports of heavy troop movements down Route 33 from the direction of Ch'orwon, also were showing clear signs of further reinforcing their advance.[48]

From additional reports reaching Ridgway by noon of the 1st, he now knew that the ROK III Corps had been under attack since early morning, that the ROK 2d and 5th Divisions at the corps left and center had received the attacks, and that the heaviest assaults

[46] Ridgway, *Soldier*, p. 210.

[47] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 1 Jan 51; I Corps POR 333, 1 Jan 51; IX Corps G3 Jnl, 1 Jan 51; IX Corps POR 294, 1 Jan 51.

[48] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 1 Jan 51; Msg, G3 I Corps to G3 IX Corps, in IX Corps G3 Jnl, 1 Jan 51; I Corps POR 333, 1 Jan 51; IX Corps POR 294, 1 Jan 51; Ridgway, Memo for CofS GHQ, 7 Jan 51, copy in CMH.

had hit the 5th. While these reports still gave Ridgway scant information, they made plain that the Chinese were moving on a broad front and pointed out more sharply the possibility of a flanking or enveloping move against Seoul. From this clearer picture of the Ch'unch'on sector and the circumstances facing the I and IX Corps in the west, Ridgway was fully convinced that the wisest moves were to withdraw the latter two corps to the Seoul bridgehead and to pull all South Korean forces in the east to line C. Although having to call a withdrawal only six days after he had taken command of the Eighth Army was disappointing and was certainly contrary to his original intention of attacking or at least standing fast, he gave General Milburn and General Coulter withdrawal orders at noon.[49]

[49] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 1 Jan 51; Rad, GX 10023 KCG, CG Eighth Army to CINCFE, 2 Jan 51; Ltr, Ridgway to Collins, 8 Jan 51.

CHAPTER X

Withdrawal From Seoul

Out of concern for the Eighth Army's lack of spirit and out of conviction that recovery depended largely on improved leadership, General Ridgway in his noontime withdrawal orders to Milburn and Coulter on 1 January emphasized their responsibility to conduct strong delaying actions. In particular, he wanted them to withdraw in daylight so that they could add air support to their attacks against enemy troops who followed the I and IX Corps to the Seoul bridgehead.[1]

He repeated these instructions during the afternoon and ordered the three South Korean corps to withdraw. The ROK III and I Corps were to occupy line C from the junction of the Pukhan and Han rivers eastward through Hongch'on to Wonp'o-ri on the coast. As a preliminary to consolidating South Korean forces in a narrower sector in the east and to committing the X Corps in the central region, ROK II Corps headquarters was to release its single division temporarily to ROK Army control and leave the front to help with rear area security. The X Corps, whose command group was moving northward from Kyongju more slowly than anticipated, was now expected to establish a command post at Ch'ungju and take control of the 2d Division by evening of the 2d.[2]

Since falling back to the bridgehead and line C would endanger the forwardmost army supply points, Ridgway ordered the evacuation of all installations located between lines C and D, including the Inch'on port complex. Though Inch'on was a major installation, the gradual reduction of its stocks, under way since the Eighth Army withdrew below P'yongyang, would simplify its closing.[3]

To the Seoul Bridgehead

General Milburn started his moves in midafternoon on the 1st, holding the ROK 1st Division forward as cover while setting the 25th Division and British 29th Brigade in the western and eastern halves of his bridgehead sector. He also withdrew the Rangers and Turks from Kanghwa Island and the blunt end of the Kimpo peninsula into positions just northwest of Kimpo airfield. This move extended the I Corps arc below the Han off the left flank of the 25th Division but did not uncover Inch'on.[4]

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[1] Ltr, Ridgway to Collins, 8 Jan 51.

[2] Rad, GX–1–48 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA *et al.*, 1 Jan 51; Eighth Army G3 Briefing for CG, 1 Jan 51; Rad, AG IN 11626–B, CG X Corps to CG Eighth Army, 2 Jan 51.

[3] Eighth Army Admin O 32, 1 Jan 51; 3d Log Comd Comd Rpt, Jan 51.

[4] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 1 Jan 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; I Corps G3 Jnl, Sum, 1 Jan 51; Courier Msg, CG I Corps to CG 25th Div et al., 011400 Jan 51; 25th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

The British brigade, having moved north under Milburn's previous order to counterattack, needed only to march east to reach its bridgehead position, which it occupied by 1800.[5] Taking longer to make a covered withdrawal from line B, although without enemy contact, the 25th Division was fully deployed at the bridgehead by midnight after establishing outposts astride Route 1 some three miles above its main position.[6]

Milburn inadvertently collided with Ridgway by ordering General Kean and the British brigade commander, Brigadier Thomas Brodie, to defend the bridgehead "at all costs." Ridgway claimed such an order as his prerogative. Milburn's directive also ran somewhat counter to what Ridgway considered an important step in restoring confidence among the rank and file, that of assuring them that their safety was an immediate concern of their commanders. He expected his command to fight hard, but he also was doing "everything I could think of to impress upon the Corps and Division Commanders that no unit was to be left to be overwhelmed and destroyed; that any units that are cut off will not be abandoned, but will be fought for unless it is clear that their relief will result by [*sic*] the loss of equal or greater numbers." Ridgway, in any case, had not designed the Seoul bridgehead as a last-stop position, and he countermanded Milburn's instructions.[7]

Milburn had ordered the ROK 1st Division to wait until daylight on the 2d to withdraw. On the way back General Paik was to drop off a regiment to reinforce the British brigade at the bridgehead, then take his remaining forces into defenses along the lower bank of the Han directly beneath Seoul. Through the afternoon of the 1st, Paik's forces received several heavy attacks and backed off about three miles to the southwest as the Chinese began to widen their wedge. After a lull lasting almost to midnight, the Chinese again tested Paik's position, pushing light forces south against a battalion of the 15th Regiment at the point of the salient. This push proved preliminary to a hard attack at 0300 that sliced through the battalion and carried the Chinese two miles south before its impetus faded.[8]

Though still engaged at daylight, the South Koreans had not given any more ground. Paik broke contact by regiment, sending each southwest to Pongilch'on-ni on Route 1 where Milburn had assembled trucks to carry Paik's forces the remaining distance south. By midnight the 11th Regiment joined the British, and the remainder

[5] Brigadier Thomas Brodie, the brigade commander, noted in his order of the day that this was the brigade's first appearance at the front since its arrival in Korea: "At last after weeks of frustration we have nothing between us and the Chinese. I have no intention that this Brigade Group will retire before the enemy unless ordered by higher authority in order to conform with general movement. If you meet him you are to knock hell out of him with everything you have got. You are only to give ground on my orders." Order of the Day, Brig Thomas Brodie, Commanding 29 Independent Infantry Brigade Group, I Jan 51, copy in I Corps G3 Jnl, 1 Jan 51.

[6] I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; I Corps G3 Jnl, 1 Jan 51; 25th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[7] Courier Msg, CG I Corps to CG 25th Div et al., 011400 Jan 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 1 Jan 51; MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, p. 368.

[8] Courier Msg, CG I Corps to CG 25th Div et al., 011400 Jan 51; Msg, CG I Corps to CG 29th Brit Brig and CG 1st ROK Inf Div, 011630 Jan 51; I Corps PORs 333 and 334, 1 Jan 51; I Corps G3 Jnl, 2 Jan 51.

of the division was spreading out to occupy its river position below Seoul.[9]

In the IX Corps sector, General Coulter planned to withdraw to the bridgehead in two steps: to line Wolf, a delaying position fifteen miles below line B, then to the bridgehead itself another eight miles south. He opened the first step at 1400 on the 1st, leaving the move below the Wolf line to be taken when mutually agreed by the 24th and ROK 6th Division commanders. He directed the 24th Division, reinforced by the 7th Regiment of the 1st Cavalry Division, to man the bridgehead line and the ROK 6th Division and remainder of the 1st Cavalry Division to occupy line C along the lower bank of the Han eastward from a point opposite the right flank of the bridgehead.[10]

Left to their own devices, General Church and General Chang planned no stay at the Wolf line except that Church would leave two battalions there to help cover both divisions. They also would have cover on the vulnerable west flank from the British 27th Brigade now in position just below Tokchong near the west end of line Wolf.[11]

Each division protected its own initial withdrawal. The 24th, in a column of regiments with the covering forces falling in at the tail end, moved without contact down Route 3 to Uijongbu at the left anchor of the corps bridgehead position. Behind the two battalions left at the Wolf line, Church's three regiments manned bridgehead sectors before midnight, tying in with the attached 7th Cavalry, which earlier had occupied the southeastern end of the bridgehead.[12]

In taking the ROK 6th Division off line B, General Chang originally planned to move cross-country to Tokchong, then use Route 33 to pass behind the British 27th Brigade and complete his move. But before the division got under way, Chinese forces pushed out of the salient in the adjacent ROK 1st Division area and occupied Tokchong. To avoid having to fight through the town, Chang elected to withdraw cross-country all the way.[13]

Unlike the 24th Division's easy departure from line B, the 2d Regiment covering the remainder of the ROK 6th from positions facing both north and west close by the division and corps left boundary suffered heavy casualties from hard attacks by Chinese coming out of the ROK 1st Division area and down Route 33. A prisoner taken from a group advancing along Route 33 identified his unit as the *118th Division, 40th Army*, apparently the force sighted earlier in the day moving south from Ch'orwon.[14]

After breaking contact, the 2d Regiment, like the remainder of the division that had started south through the hills before it, ran into small groups of Chinese who previously had infiltrated the division's lines. For reasons that never became entirely clear, but probably because of these encounters and the difficulties of moving cross-country, the

[9] I Corps PORs 335 and 336, 2 Jan 51; I Corps G3 Jnl, 2 Jan 51.

[10] IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; IX Corps Opn Plan 6, 29 Dec 50; Change 1 to IX Corps Opn Plan 6, 29 Dec 50; IX Corps Opn Dir 20, 1 Jan 51.

[11] IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 1 Jan 51; IX Corps POR 294, 1 Jan 51; 24th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[12] IX Corps G3 Msg File, Jan 51; 24th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[13] IX Corps G3 Jnl, 1 Jan 51.

[14] IX Corps G3 Msg File, Jan 51; Eighth Army PIR 174, 2 Jan 51.

division broke up into disorganized groups before it reached the Wolf line. By dark General Chang had lost all control of his forces.[15]

To assist the withdrawal, Coulter had established an entrucking point on Route 33 about three miles north of Seoul where Chang's forces were to be directed for motor lift to their line C position. By daylight on the 3d only the equivalent of four battalions had assembled at that point. General Chang used a IX Corps plane to search for his troops during the morning, and additional entrucking points were set up to accelerate the movement of troops as they filtered south. About ninety truckloads were carried south of the Han through the day, but the head count, even at 0900 on 3 January, stood at only six thousand, or about half the division's original strength; of these, only twenty-five hundred were infantry.[16]

As the disorganization of the ROK 6th Division became apparent, Coulter ordered the 1st Cavalry Division to spread out into the line C sector previously assigned to Chang. Since Coulter had given the 7th Cavalry to the 24th Division and also had taken the bulk of the 5th Cavalry to reconstitute a corps reserve after moving the British 27th Brigade to Tokchong, General Gay had to stretch his remaining forces thin to cover the two division sectors.[17]

Meanwhile, between 1700 and 2130 on the 1st, the British 27th Brigade had driven off three small Chinese groups at its Tokchong position. But without further encounter the brigade and General Church's two covering battalions withdrew from the Wolf line before midnight, the battalions rejoining their regiments while the British assembled near the northeastern limits of Seoul as a reserve for the fully committed 24th Division.[18]

The Outlook, 2 January

On the 2d, as the ROK 1st and 6th Divisions made their way back to Seoul and as the remainder of the I and IX Corps settled more solidly into their bridgehead and line C positions, the deepest known point of Chinese advance had been marked by the previous night's engagements with the British at Tokchong. Chinese forces were at least within nine miles of the bridgehead and probably nearer. In view of the rate of advance the Chinese had sustained so far, attacks could be expected at the bridgehead on the 3d.

The next attacks probably would be stronger than those at line B. Four divisions now had been identified in the I and IX Corps sectors, and a fifth had hit the ROK 5th Division in the ROK III Corps sector. These five, while not a great number, represented four armies, the *38th*, *39th*, *40th*, and *66th*. These armies could, and very likely would, commit additional divisions. Moreover, the *50th Army*, known to be in the Kaesong area, could easily join the offensive by moving on Seoul via Route 1, and the *42d Army*, concentrated near Kumhwa, could advance toward Seoul over Route 3 or south

[15] IX Corps G3 Msg File, Jan 51.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 2 Jan 51; 1st Cav Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.
[18] IX Corps G3 Msg File, Jan 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; IX Corps POR 295, I Jan 51; 24th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

toward Kap'yong and Ch'unch'on. The Seoul bridgehead was, at best, precarious.[19]

Further testimony on just how precarious the position was came from engineers on duty at the Han bridges who reported on the 2d that the river was frozen solid enough to support foot traffic, as evidenced by Korean civilians leaving the Seoul area. The forces above the city faced not only the likelihood of strong frontal attacks and the chance of being enveloped by enemy forces to the east but also the possibility of being trapped by enemy forces crossing the ice just outside the flanks of the bridgehead.[20]

Civilians moving in large numbers toward the bridgehead from the area just vacated as well as south out of the Seoul area posed additional dangers. Enemy forces could use the civilian movement toward the bridgehead as cover for their own advance, and, to the rear, any mass milling on the main lines of communication could seriously interfere with troop and supply movements. Ridgway consequently issued instructions on 2 January that refugees were not to be permitted to pass through a forward position and that those moving out of the Seoul-Inch'on area were to be levered away from Route 1 to lesser roads on either side.[21]

By nightfall on the 2d Ridgway completed or started several other moves to strengthen his position in the west. The Thailand battalion, previously with the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team at Suwon, joined the British 29th Brigade in the bridgehead. En route from Kyongju in the far southeast were the X Corps' 92d and 96th Field Artillery Battalions. Reasoning that General Almond's artillery could best be used against the main enemy effort, Ridgway had ordered the two battalions forward in the west; they were to be divided between the I and IX Corps. He also ordered the 3d Division to move two regiments and a command group to the Ansong-P'yongt'aek region on 4 January and to bring its remaining units forward as soon as it became possible to transport them. All but one company of the 72d Tank Battalion, previously taken from the 2d Division, now had joined the IX Corps and been attached to the 24th Division. The remaining company was en route to Suwon to join the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team, which Ridgway had alerted for counterattacks, particularly in the Yangp'yong and Yoju areas, two Han River crossing sites on the IX Corps right flank twenty-five and forty miles southeast of Seoul.[22]

Ridgway's instructions to Brig. Gen. Frank S. Bowen, Jr.'s combat team were a hedge against a surprise appearance of enemy forces pushing in from the northeast or east. Indeed, what had happened or was likely to happen in the South Korean corps sectors remained difficult for Ridgway to ascertain. From reports reaching him on the

[19] Eighth Army PIR 174, 2 Jan 51.
[20] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 2 Jan 51.
[21] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[22] Ibid.; Rad, GX–1–3 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CGs 1, IX, and X Corps, 31 Dec 50; Rad, GX–1–82 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG 1 Corps and CG 187th Abn RCT, 1 Jan 51; Rad, GX–1–101 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG IX Corps and CG 187th Abn RCT, 2 Jan 51; Eighth Army POR 520, 1 Jan 51; Rad, GX–1–138 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG 3d Inf Div, 2 Jan 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 2 Jan 51; Eighth Army G3 Briefing for CG, 3 Jan 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 3 Jan 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

2d he knew that the ROK Capital Division on the east coast had reached line C without contact, but about the most that could be positively said of the remaining ROK divisions was that no one knew for sure where they were or what condition they were in.[23]

The ROK 2d Division on the ROK III Corps' left apparently was in bad shape. One regiment was reported to be almost completely disorganized. The other two were believed to be cut off about five miles north of Kap'yong by *66th Army* forces who had moved in behind the 2d after penetrating the left flank of the ROK 5th Division. Ridgway knew nothing about the ROK 5th and 8th Divisions but had received an air observer's report that Ch'unch'on had fallen during the afternoon of the 2d. The one ROK III Corps unit he could definitely locate was the reserve 7th Division, which, except for a missing regiment, was assembling twenty miles northwest of Wonju.[24]

The most Ridgway knew about the ROK 3d Division was that it was slowly backing out of its ROK II Corps sector and moving southwestward over Route 24 toward Hongch'on. According to plans, the division would continue south until it could move laterally below the North Korean salient and assemble at Pyongch'ang, twenty-five miles east of Wonju.[25]

In an attempt to stabilize the line in the central region, Ridgway ordered the X Corps to assume responsibility on 3 January for a 35-mile sector of line C centered approximately on Route 29. The corps lineup was to include the U.S. 2d and 7th Divisions and the ROK 2d, 5th, and 8th Divisions. General Almond was to block enemy advances from the direction of Ch'unch'on as well as from the northeast and east out of the North Korean salient. This assignment gave Almond the immediate task of locating and gaining control of the three South Korean divisions, and he had yet to bring up the remainder of the 7th Division from the south. For the time being, his defense would depend mainly on the U.S. 2d Division.[26]

With the intention of establishing positions below the North Korean salient, Ridgway ordered the ROK III Corps to take control of the ROK 9th Division and use it along with the ROK 7th Division to organize a line through the steeper mountains between the X Corps and the ROK I Corps. But the ROK 9th Division was scattered, and two of its regiments were reported surrounded. This situation and the ROK 7th Division's current location far to the west in the new X Corps sector posed problems of movement and consolidation not easily solved.[27]

Similarly, Ridgway directed the ROK I Corps to take control of the ROK 3d Division and emplace it in the mountains west of the Capital Division. This, though, could be done only after the 3d Division completed its circuitous march from the west. In the meantime there would be no forces between the Capital Division on the east coast and the 2d Division in and above Wonju capable of withstanding a North Korean push south out of the Hongch'on salient.[28]

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[23] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 2 Jan 51; Eighth Army PORs 521, 522, and 523, 2 Jan 51.

[24] Ibid.; X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[25] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 2 Jan 51; Eighth Army PORs 521, 522, and 523, 2 Jan 51.

[26] Ibid.; Eighth Army Opn O 109, 2 Jan 51.

[27] Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, Jan 51.

[28] Ibid.

Faced with these near-chaotic conditions in the east and the imminent arrival of Chinese forces at the bridgehead, Ridgway reminded his forces that they would defend their positions only as long as they could do so without risk of being enveloped or trapped. The danger of entrapment applied especially to the I and IX Corps. Yet, while he attached this limit to the defense of the bridgehead, he did not intend that Milburn and Coulter adopt only an alert wait-and-see attitude. On the previous day, through either lack of effort or lack of opportunity, neither Milburn nor Coulter had executed the punishing attacks Ridgway had directed. Irritated by this failure, Ridgway personnally made it clear to both corps commanders on the 2d that these attacks would be made.[29]

The Evacuation of Seoul

The Chinese first hit the Seoul bridgehead from the northwest along Route 1. The *50th Army* sent forces against the I Corps left, those in the van reaching the outpost line of the 25th Division just before 0300 on the 3d. Forced back by the encounter, the outpost troops passed behind the main division position two hours later. Either pursuing troops of the *50th* or west flank forces of the *39th Army* next opened small arms fire on the 35th Infantry on the division right.[30]

Other forces of the *39th* marching south through the hills west of Route 33 meanwhile approached the British 29th Brigade, opening a strong attack on the Northumberland Fusiliers at the brigade right at 0730 and then striking still harder at the Royal Ulster Rifles on the left. The Fusiliers gave ground and two companies of the Rifles were overrun, but counterattacks by infantry and tanks recaptured the lost positions in midafternoon and forced the Chinese to disengage.[31]

In the IX Corps sector, leading units of the *40th* and *38th Armies* opened light jabs and small arms fire against the 24th Division about 0500. The small attacks—the largest by a company at the division left—hit but failed to penetrate the 21st Infantry and finally died out at midmorning. In the 19th Infantry sector to the east of the 21st, the 2d Battalion steadily lost ground to attacks that grew from company to regiment in size. Counterattacks well supported by air and artillery restored the battalion line early in the afternoon, but not without a continued contest for the ground regained.[32]

By noon on the 3d the attacks on the bridgehead convinced Ridgway that a withdrawal below Seoul had to start soon. While the assaults themselves were not overwhelming, they laid the proverbial final straw on a heavy burden of other problems and disadvantages. The administrative and logistical complexity of moving close to seventy-five thousand troops and their equipment across the Han was a prime concern. So was the problem of clearing the Seoul area of ROK national, provincial, and local government officials, foreigners who included an

[29] Eighth Army Opn O 109, 2 Jan 51; Ltr, Ridgway to Collins, 8 Jan 51.

[30] I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; I Corps POR 338, 3 Jan 51.

[31] I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; I Corps POR 339, 3 Jan 51.

[32] IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; IX Corps POR 300, 3 Jan 51; 24th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

American Embassy group, and possibly the city's entire populace.[33]

A limited number of bridges would complicate the river crossing. All permanent bridges had been destroyed in past days, and none had been repaired. Just two engineer structures, one 50-ton hybrid M4–M4A2 floating bridge and one 50-ton shoofly (decked railroad) bridge spanned the Han directly below Seoul behind the I Corps; just one 50-ton M2 floating bridge, four miles east of Seoul, crossed the river behind the IX Corps. Only five floating footbridges were available for the potentially large civilian exodus. The ice was solid enough to support pedestrians but not vehicles.[34]

The bridges, moreover, were vulnerable. The Chinese had not yet made any lasting penetration of the bridgehead, but if stronger attacks succeeded, they could deploy artillery far enough forward to destroy the crossings. Since the Han in the Seoul area was tidal and threw up chunks of ice as the water level shifted, the river itself was a threat. Although engineers were on round-the-clock duty to protect the spans from ice damage, the periodic upheavals nevertheless could tear loose the supporting pontons at any time. Another danger was the possibility that panic-stricken civilians might surge from Seoul and overwhelm the troops guarding the crossings. Either of two results would be calamitous: civilian traffic would preempt the bridges, or Ridgway would have to employ drastic measures against the civilians to regain the crossings for military use.

Enemy operations east of the bridgehead also had a strong influence on Ridgway's decision. In the deep North Korean salient extending south from Inje, the division and reinforced regiment earlier estimated to be in the Hongch'on area were now identified as the *2d Division* of the North Korean *II Corps* and the *12th Division* of the North Korean *V Corps*. According to current estimates, these two corps together controlled either ten or twelve divisions. Intelligence sources, moreover, continued to report the movement of the North Korean *III Corps*, which had three divisions, from the Wonsan-Hamhung region to the Inje area.[35]

Apparently shaping up were a North Korean attack to seize the Wonju rail and road center and a concurrent attempt, as evidenced by strong guerrilla operations along Route 29 as far south as Tanyang forty miles below Wonju, to cut off the forces defending the North Korean objective. Since the enemy's seizure of Wonju would prevent the Eighth Army from using the central rail line to support operations in the Seoul area, Ridgway now considered the North Korean effort in the east to be a well-planned maneuver timed and tied to the main Chinese attack in the west.[36]

That the X, ROK III, and ROK I Corps could establish an adequate defense in the east remained, at best, uncertain. General Almond, with characteristic alertness, viewed the presence

[33] MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, p. 373; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; I Corps G3 Jnl, 4 Jan 51. General Ridgway estimated Eighth Army troops north of the Han to have numbered a hundred thousand, but the records do not support this high figure.

[34] MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, p. 373; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; I Corps G3 Jnl, 4 Jan 51.

[35] Eighth Army G2 SS Rpt, Jan 51; X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[36] Ibid.; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

of North Korean forces between his three ROK divisions retiring from the north and his 2d Division in the Wonju area as an opportunity for a hammer-and-anvil maneuver with the South Koreans pounding the enemy against General McClure's positions. But Almond had yet to get a grip on the hammer. There was still no definite word on the whereabouts of the ROK 5th and 8th Divisions, and the latest information on the ROK 2d Division indicated that two of its regiments were still surrounded and that the third had been reduced to a battalion.[37]

Nor had the ROK III Corps commander, Brig. Gen. Lee Hyung Keun, yet occupied any part of his line C sector. The ROK 7th Division was fully assembled but was still northwest of Wonju, and the ROK 9th Division was still engaged and much disorganized north of line C. Brig. Gen. Kim Paik Il, the ROK I Corps commander, had had no more success in emplacing the ROK 3d Division in the mountains adjacent to the Capital Division's coastal position. The 3d Division had been located in perimeter around Hongch'on, a long way from the new sector assigned to it.[38]

In view of the obvious design of the North Korean move below Inje, the depth of gains already registered, the sizable North Korean forces that could be added to the operation, and the disarray of Eighth Army units in the east, Ridgway doubted that his eastern forces could organize and hold line C. His G–3, Colonel Dabney, believed they would have difficulty even in establishing line D defenses. The forces in the west therefore faced an increasing threat of deep envelopment, a threat that would become an immediate danger if Wonju fell since Route 20 led some fifty-five miles due west from Wonju to an intersection with Route 1 at Suwon.[39]

Closer to Seoul, the *66th Army*, possibly with help from the *42d Army*, now had occupied Kap'yong, and at 0800 on the 3d a long column of Chinese was sighted moving southwest of Kap'yong on the Ch'unch'on-Seoul road, its head within fifteen miles of the 1st Cavalry Division on the IX Corps' right flank. As General Ridgway reasoned the possibilities, the Chinese could veer to the east around the cavalrymen, then strike west to cut Route 1.[40]

All factors considered, Ridgway concluded that the risk to his command had reached the critical point. At midmorning on the 3d he alerted his forces that he probably would withdraw the bridgehead units later that day and that when the bulk of them were south of the Han he would pull the entire Eighth Army from line C to line D. For the move out of the bridgehead, he handed General Milburn responsibility for controlling traffic over the Han bridges and placed Brig. Gen. Charles D. Palmer, the artillery commander of the 1st Cavalry Division, under Milburn for that particular duty.[41]

[37] X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 3 Jan 51.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 3 Jan 51; MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, p. 373.

[40] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 3 Jan 51; MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, p. 373.

[41] MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, p. 373; Rad, GX 10026 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG X Corps, 3 Jan 51; Rad, GX 10027 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps, 3 Jan 51.

Ridgway gave the withdrawal order to Milburn and Coulter about an hour past noon, instructing them to pull out of the bridgehead as soon as they worked out a coordinated withdrawal. Below the Han, Milburn was to deploy to protect the final evacuation of the Seoul airport, Kimpo airfield, and Inch'on. Coulter was to man the lower bank of the river from the eastern edge of Yongdungp'o, the industrial suburb or Seoul, to the junction of the Han and Pukhan eighteen miles east. Both were to stand ready for Ridgway's signal to withdraw to line D.[42]

Again because of the prevalent lack of spirit within his command, Ridgway wrote out instructions on two matters usually handled as routine. He specifically directed that no usable equipment was to be abandoned and that all sick, wounded, and dead were to be evacuated. Still irritated by a general lack of tenacity among his principal subordinates, he also explained once more that withdrawals would be executed "with all necessary coordination, with maximum losses inflicted on the enemy and with maximum delay, consistent with the maintenance intact of all your major units."[43]

Disturbed also after observing that in large part demolitions executed in the past appeared to be destruction for destruction's sake, he had announced on 2 January a policy that was to govern during this and any future withdrawals. "The execution of demolitions and necessary military destruction in South Korea," he insisted, "shall be such as to combine maximum hurt to the enemy with minimum harm to the civilian population." Nothing approaching "scorched earth" tactics would be condoned.[44]

Milburn and Coulter already had prepared and regulated plans for pulling out of the bridgehead, and much earlier, while the Eighth Army was retiring to line B, Milburn had devised a system for controlling traffic over the Han bridges that with one change remained workable. The earlier plan called for the I and IX Corps to cross the river at widely separated points, Milburn using the two bridges directly below Seoul, Coulter the single bridge east of the city. The two commanders now agreed that more than half of the IX Corps, including the covering force, should cross on one of the I Corps spans. This would facilitate Milburn's task of controlling all traffic and would assist the eventual decision on removing the bridges.[45]

To centralize the direction of I Corps forces out of the bridgehead, Milburn placed the British 29th Brigade under General Kean's control. Once below Seoul, the 25th Division was to occupy line C above Kimpo airfield between the ROK 1st Division and the Turkish brigade while the British continued south and assembled at Suwon. Kean was to set a regiment near Seoul's northwestern edge to cover I Corps movements through the city itself, coordinating the operations of this covering regiment with its IX Corps counterpart, the British 27th Brigade,

[42] Rad, GX–1–236 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA et al., 3 Jan 51.

[43] Ibid.; Rad, GX–1–207 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA et al., 3 Jan 51.

[44] Ltr, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 2 Jan 51, sub: Demolition Policy in South Korea. Ridgway also sent a copy of this letter to the Fifth Air Force.

[45] I Corps Opn Dir 34, 1 Jan 51; IX Corps Opn Plan 7, 1 Jan 51; I Corps Memo, DCofS to CofS, 9 Jan 51, sub: Corps Control Activities, 2–4 January 1951, with Incls, in I Corps G3 Jnl, 4 Jan 51.

in position at Seoul's northeastern outskirts. Kean's covering force, the 27th Infantry, also was to protect the passage of the British 27th Brigade and the removal of the bridges and was to be the last unit out of Seoul.[46]

By the IX Corps' withdrawal plan, including the change for crossing the Han, the 24th Division was to peel off the bridgehead line by regiment, beginning at the left. The first two regiments off the line and division troops were to cross the Han bridge east of Seoul. The remaining two regiments and the British covering force were to use the I Corps shoofly bridge. After crossing the river, the 7th Cavalry was to return to its parent division while the 24th Division with the British brigade attached passed behind line C and assembled in corps reserve.[47]

The Civilian Exodus

After giving the word to withdraw, Ridgway set 1500 on the 3d as the last moment that civilian traffic could use the Han bridges. Other than specific exceptions he might authorize, the approach and exit roads would be closed after that time to all but Eighth Army movements. Unsure of the civilian reaction to being ordered off the main roads and bridges, he passed instructions through General Milburn to the traffic coordinator, General Palmer, that the latter's military police first were to fire over the heads of evacuees who refused to stay clear of Route 1 and as a very last resort fire at them. Similarly, Ridgway authorized corps commanders to stop all civilian traffic through their sectors, using their own judgment in the use of gunfire. When he asked ROK government officials to notify Seoul citizens of these instructions, he explained that the eventual stoppage of civilian movement would save Korean lives by preventing enemy forces from using refugees, as they had in the past, to cover their own advance.[48]

As a result of I Corps activity over the previous two weeks, the sticky problem of civilian evacuation was not as great as it might have been. Under the guidance and urging of Milburn's civil assistance officers, most nonessential government employees and the families of government officials already had left the city. Refugee camps holding Koreans who previously had come into the city from the north had been cleared. All inmates of Seoul's prisons and jails, the staffs and patients of all but one hospital, and the small residents of most orphanages also had been sent south. Likewise, all ROK currency and money plates and the holdings of archives, museums, and galleries had been shipped out.[49]

Still in Seoul were members of the ROK national, provincial, and city governments, United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea, and U.S. Embassy.[50] With I Corps assistance, they had prepared evacuation plans. Arrangements for removing other Americans and foreign

[46] I Corps Opn Dir 34, 1 Jan 51; I Corps POR 339, 3 Jan 51; 25th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[47] IX Corps Opn Plan 7, 1 Jan 51; 24th Div OI 84, 2 Jan 51; I Corps Memo, DCofS for CofS, 9 Jan 51, sub: Corps Control Activities, 2–4 Jan 51, Incl 5.

[48] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, pp. 374–75; General Charles D. Palmer, MS review comments, 1985.

[49] I Corps Memo, DCofS to CofS, 9 Jan 51, sub: Corps Control Activities, 2–4 Jan 51, Incl 3.

[50] The U.N. Commission (UNCURK) had come to Korea the past fall when a UNC victory had seemed near.

nationals still in the city, mostly missionaries and members of missions and consulates, were included in the U.S. Embassy plan. All these people were excepted from the ban on civilian use of Route 1 below Seoul and were given special vehicle markers to identify their status.[51]

General Milburn also had deployed his traffic control force. On the morning of the 2d, Col. C. H. Unger, I Corps deputy chief of staff and officer in charge of traffic control, opened the main control point on a large sand flat just below the two I Corps bridges. Unger's staff included the corps G–1, provost marshal, engineer, and a signal officer. To regulate and guide traffic to the proper river crossings, military police, ROK National Police, and Seoul metropolitan police took station at traffic control points within Seoul. To channel civilians away from Route 1 south of the Han, other police posted themselves in Yongdungp'o and along Route 1 and lesser roads below the Seoul suburb. The corps civil affairs officer along with military and national police stationed themselves at two areas in Seoul where those civilians privileged to use Route 1 were to be assembled, checked, and dispatched. Finally, corps staff officers went to the 25th and 24th Divisions to act as liaison between the covering forces, which would be last to come through Seoul, and the main corps control point.[52]

By virtue of these I Corps arrangements, the civilian evacuation was well under way by the time the overall supervisor, General Palmer, arrived at the corps control point on the morning of the 3d and was largely accomplished before the leading bridgehead forces reached the Han. Eighth Army civil affairs officers joined the I Corps control crew specifically to assist the movement of ROK national government officials to Pusan, the new seat of government. To get these and all of the other officials out, Ridgway's deadline on civilian use of bridges had to be extended to 1800, but the extension created no particular problem at the crossings.[53] The one major hitch in plans occurred at 2000 on the 3d when Korean utility employees, designated to stay on the job until relieved and then taken south



AN AGED REFUGEE *gets a lift across the Han River south of Seoul, January 1951.*

[51] I Corps Memo, DCofS to CofS, 9 Jan 51, sub: Corps Control Activities, 2–4 Jan 51; ibid., Incl 3.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ambassador Muccio's assistant and a few other American officials were still at the U.S. Consulate building at 0800 on 4 January. They were evacuated within the next hour.

on a train standing by for them, shut down operations and left on their own. They left Seoul without water and electric power.[54]

Seoul citizens afoot struggled with heavy burdens of personal belongings over the footbridges and across the ice until about daylight on the 4th. By 0600 engineers demolished all the footbridges, and at 0800 leaflets prepared by the I Corps were dropped from the air above the river to advise civilians that "further crossing of the Han River are prohibited. Anyone attempting to cross will be fired upon. By Command of the UN Commander." The civilian exodus soon dwindled and stopped; no firing was necessary. By that time, Seoul had few inhabitants. Some six hundred thousand, about half the population, had gone south, and most of the remainder had moved to nearby villages north of the Han.[55]

The IX Corps Withdrawal

After receiving Ridgway's warning order on the 3d, General Coulter notified General Church to begin withdrawing at noon. Other than this anticipation of Ridgway's actual starting signal, which itself caused no complication, the IX Corps' withdrawal from the bridgehead resembled a well-executed training exercise.[56]

The last truck carrying division troops and the 21st and 19th Regiments passed over the M2 bridge east of Seoul at 0200 on the 4th. As the last serials began to cross, Brig. Gen. Garrison H. Davidson, assistant division commander of the 24th and officer in charge at the M2 crossing, had the I Corps liaison officer, who had posted himself at the bridge, radio the main control point for permission to dismantle the bridge. Hampered by pins and other bridge parts frozen in place and by parts jammed through long and heavy use, troops of the 19th Engineer Group worked five hours to disassemble the structure but with only partial success. Around 0730 General Davidson ordered the remainder of the bridge destroyed.[57]

Between midnight and 0900 on the 4th, General Church's remaining units—the 5th Regimental Combat Team, 7th Cavalry, and British 27th Brigade—passed south of the Han over the I Corps shoofly bridge. Throughout the withdrawal neither the line regiments nor the British covering force were engaged. General Coulter later surmised that the Chinese had deployed in front of the bridgehead to such an extent that they were unable to pursue.[58]

The I Corps Withdrawal

None of the I Corps bridgehead units was engaged when General Milburn ordered them to withdraw at 1600 on the 3d, but the leading forces of the *50th* and *39th Armies* lay just outside the bridgehead line. Air observers reported large movements of enemy troops and equipment, including artillery, toward

[54] I Corps Memo, DCofS to CofS, 9 Jan 51, sub: Corps Control Activities, 2–4 Jan 51; ibid., Incl 3; Gen Palmer, MS review comments, 1985.

[55] Ibid.; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[56] IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; IX Corps POR 300, 3 Jan 51; 24th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[57] IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; IX Corps PORs 300 and 301, 3 Jan 51; 24th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; I Corps Memo, DCofS to CofS, 9 Jan 51, sub: Corps Control Activities, 2–4 Jan 51, Incl 5.

[58] IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; IX Corps POR 301, 3 Jan 51, and PORs 302 and 303, 4 Jan 51; 1st Cav Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 24th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.



A CARTLOAD OF VERY YOUNG REFUGEES

Seoul over both Routes 1 and 33. Though the *38th* and *40th Armies* seemed to have bogged down before the IX Corps, the Chinese in front of Milburn appeared to be in suitable position and formation to press and pursue his bridgehead forces.[59]

Before opening a left-to-right withdrawal, General Kean placed the 27th Infantry, reinforced by the division reconnaissance company and supported by a battery of the 8th Field Artillery Battalion, in a covering position three to five miles northwest of Seoul. One battalion sat astride the rail line and a secondary road near the Han three miles above the city to cover the withdrawal of the leftmost 24th Infantry. The other two battalions straddled Route 1 five miles above Seoul to protect the passage of the 35th Infantry and the British 29th Brigade. The reconnaissance company furnished contact between battalions and Colonel Michaelis' command post and with the IX Corps covering force.[60]

The 24th and 35th Regiments passed behind Michaelis' cover without enemy interference and by 0100 on the 4th were south of the Han en route to line C sectors. When the British 29th Brigade started back at 1845, the prospect

[59] Rad, CG I Corps to CG 25th Div et al., 031700 Jan 51 (confirms oral orders); I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[60] I Corps POR 340, 3 Jan 51; 25th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 27th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 27th Inf Opn O 3, 2 Jan 51, and Opn O 4, 3 Jan 51.



THE LAST BRIDGE OVER THE HAN RIVER *at Seoul is demolished, 4 January 1951.*

was that it, too, would escape engagement. But just before midnight a strong *39th Army* force surrounded and attacked the brigade rear guard, composed of Company B and part of the heavy weapons company of the Royal Ulster Rifles plus a dozen tanks, and blocked its withdrawal.[61]

Neither Brigadier Brodie nor General Kean made any immediate attempt to rescue the trapped British troops. When General Ridgway learned that nothing had been done, he sent orders that every effort would be made to extricate them. But when all bridgehead unit commanders, including those of the IX Corps, met at Colonel Michaelis' command post around 0900 and considered sending a rescue force from the 27th Infantry, Brodie would not permit Michaelis to risk losing troops in an attempt to free the rear guard. Nor would Brodie himself attempt a rescue. The trapped troops, he said, would have to "knock it out for themselves." Some of the rear guard did "knock it out," but most, between two hundred fifty and three hundred men and at least ten tanks, were lost.[62]

[61] I Corps POR 340, 3 Jan 51; 25th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; Brig. Gen. C. B. Barth, "Tropic Lightning and Taro Leaf in Korea," p. 52, copy in CMH, Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 4 Jan 51.

[62] Interv, Mossman, Carroll, and Miller with Ridgway, 30 Nov 56; 1 Corps Memo, DCofS to CofS, 9 Jan 51, sub: Corps Control Activities, 2–4 Jan 51, Incl 4; Barth, "Tropic Lightning and Taro Leaf," p. 52; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 4 Jan 51.

Brodie's remaining forces meanwhile crossed the Han by 0330, and Colonel Michaelis started his own withdrawal. Michaelis first pulled his 1st Battalion to the northwestern edge of Seoul and set the rifle companies in blocking positions at the rail line and road near the Han, on Route 1, and on a secondary road just above Route 1. This closed the three principal entrances to the city in the I Corps sector. He next ordered his remaining battalions out of their Route 1 positions five miles above Seoul, instructing them and their supporting artillery to assemble below the Han. Two companies of Chinese attacked the 2d Battalion while Michaelis was arranging his withdrawal, but the 2d held off the assault while the 3d Battalion got onto Route 1, then successfully disengaged and followed the 3d into Seoul.[63]

About the time the two battalions entered the city, Kean instructed Michaelis to cover the withdrawal of the remaining IX Corps units and then to protect the engineers when it was time to take out the last Han bridge. On the heels of this assignment, the 1st Battalion's leftmost company at the rail line received a hard assault from three hundred to four hundred Chinese. They were from the *39th Army*, which now alone was advancing on Seoul while the *50th Army* turned south off Route 1 toward the Han northwest of the city. By 0700 lighter attacks hit the other two blocking companies. Good air support helped the left company retain its position while Michaelis halted the withdrawal of the 3d Battalion and put it on line between the rail line and Route 1. By 0900 the 3d Battalion, too, was under attack, but holding.[64]

The 2d Battalion meantime completed its move below the Han while the reconnaissance company deployed as a screen along the northern and northeastern edges of Seoul to protect the last steps of the IX Corps withdrawal. Michaelis now planned to keep his forces on the edge of the city until the British 27th Brigade got south of the Han. He would then send his own forces out except for one rifle company, which would deploy above the last bridge while the engineers removed it.[65]

Perhaps because the officer responsible for liaison between the I Corps main control point and the IX Corps covering forces was at the IX Corps bridge east of Seoul rather than with the British 27th Brigade, none of the officers at the control point nor Colonel Michaelis knew that the British unit had completed its passage over the shoofly bridge at 0900. When he finally became aware of that fact around 1100, Michaelis immediately broke contact and withdrew. By 1315 all of his forces, including the company that was to have deployed on the north bank of the Han, were below the river.[66]

General Palmer meanwhile permited engineer troops to demolish the shoofly bridge and authorized the I Corps engineer to begin removing the balk from the M4–M4A2 bridge. At Palmer's request, Michaelis sent Company K back to the north end of the brigade while the dismantling of the last bridge continued, but the company's stay was brief. After about a quarter of the deck-

[63] 27th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 27th Inf Opn O 4, 3 Jan 51; I Corps Memo, DCofS to CofS, 9 Jan 51, sub: Corps Control Activities, 2–4 Jan 51, Incl 4.

[64] 27th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 27th Inf Opn O 5, 4 Jan 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid.

ing had been removed, Palmer ordered the rest of the structure demolished; around 1400, after two charges, the bridge began to sink unspectacularly as the water that had been kept open around it began to freeze. The men of Company K, last to come out of Seoul, walked south over the ice immediately afterward.[67]

Within an hour of Company K's withdrawal, air observers sighted Chinese patrols inside Seoul. A reconnaissance patrol sent into the city a little later by the ROK 1st Division observed Chinese troops raising a North Korean flag over city hall in the heart of town. That flourish marked Seoul's third change of hands.[68]

[67] Ibid.; Mono, "Dismantling and Destruction of Han River Bridges at Seoul, 1–4 January 1951," copy in CMH.

[68] I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; Eighth Army PIR 176, 4 Jan 51.

CHAPTER XI

Withdrawal to Line D

Even as his forces were giving up Seoul, General Ridgway wrote General Collins in Washington that although the Eighth Army was in for some difficult days, he was certain of its intrinsic ability to perform well against the Chinese. Also prompting his confidence was the manner in which the Chinese had conducted operations since New Year's Day. "The Chinese probe on a wide front," he told Collins. "When they strike resistance their overwhelming numbers immediately flow around both flanks and join in the rear."[1] As the North Koreans had learned when they met close-knit defenses for the first time at the Pusan Perimeter, this tactic could be countered.

The armament employed by the Chinese had been largely small arms, automatic weapons, and mortars. They had used some artillery in breaching line B, but problems in moving the pieces and in supplying ammunition combined with the Eighth Army's counterbattery fire and air support had frustrated further use of the heavier guns. Although pilots reported they had sighted and attacked tanks behind enemy lines, the Chinese had used no armor in their recent assaults. Nor had they employed air support.[2]

In Ridgway's appraisal, the Eighth Army was "opposed by an enemy whose only advantage is sheer numbers, whose armament is far inferior quantitatively and qualitatively, who has no air support whatever, meager telecommunications and negligible armor." But while Ridgway believed the Eighth Army to have the strength and means to handle the enemy, most of his commanders—and so most of his forces—did not share his confidence. He had "found only one or two cases where a Division has shown any appreciable resourcefulness in adapting its fighting tactics to the terrain, to the enemy, and to conditions in this theater." His dominant problem was "to achieve the spiritual awakening of the latent capabilities of this command." If he could manage this, he was certain that the Eighth Army would "achieve more, far more, than our people think possible—and perhaps inflict a bloody defeat on the Chinese which even China will long remember."[3]

For the time being there was no es-

[1] Ltr, Ridgway to Collins, 3 Jan 51, copy in CMH. Ridgway at this time urged Collins to press for the addition of helicopter companies to Army transportation facilities: "Such situations [as the Chinese method of attack] could be more effectively met and many thousands more of the enemy destroyed, if we had the capability of putting down small reconnaissance groups on ridges and hilltops, and could withdraw them at will. We could also supply temporarily isolated units in a more efficient and economical way than by parachute."

[2] Eighth Army PIRs 173–176, 1–4 Jan 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[3] Ltr, Ridgway to Collins, 8 Jan 51; Ltr, Ridgway to Haislip, 11 Jan 51, copy in CMH.

caping further withdrawal. While the last steps in evacuating Seoul were being taken on the 4th, Chinese patrols were observed investigating the Kimpo peninsula off the west flank of the I Corps and were reported to be crossing the Han to the right rear of the IX Corps. This reconnaissance and the concentration of Chinese forces above Seoul indicated that the enemy would advance below the city with hardly a pause.[4]

It was the shambles farther east, however, that made a withdrawal to line D mandatory. This segment of the Eighth Army line remained a large-hole sieve through which an estimated seventy thousand North Koreans grouped in the Ch'unch'on-Inje-Hongch'on area, and possibly Chinese forces as well, could push attacks south on the Route 29 axis through Wonju and through the undefended mountains east of Route 29. Or they could move southwestward to envelop the I and IX Corps, or both. By pulling back to the P'yongt'aek–Ansong–Changho-wonni sector of line D, the I and IX Corps would no longer be open to envelopment from the northeast, and the X Corps and the two South Korean corps might be able to organize a satisfactory line in the Wonju–Wonp'o-ri sector.[5]

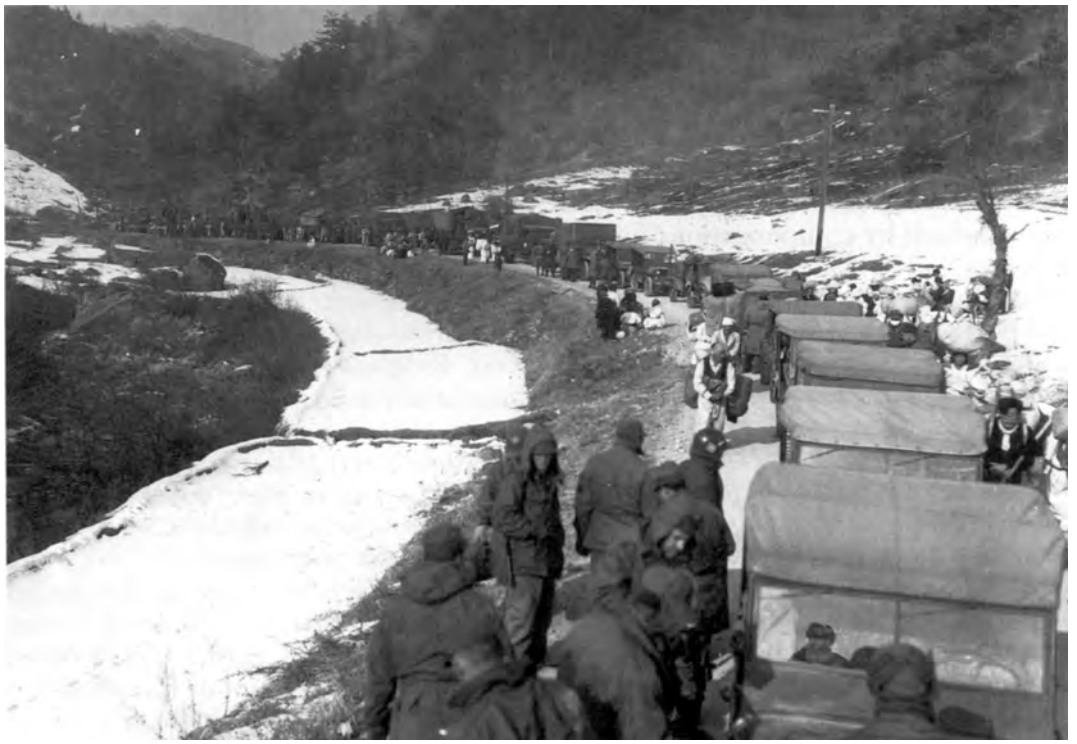
Withdrawal From the Han

Ridgway warned his forces around noon on the 4th to expect orders to withdraw to line D, all corps abreast. The I and IX Corps in the meantime were to pull back at 2000 to intermediate positions six to eight miles south of the Han and hold until Air Force and Army supplies stocked at Suwon, ten miles farther south and about midway between Seoul and line D, had been removed. Ridgway expected the supplies to be cleared within twenty-four to thirty-six hours.[6]

Ridgway intended that the starting hour of the intermediate move provide time for the 3d Logistical Command to finish evacuating Inch'on, ASCOM City, and Kimpo airfield.[7] (The Seoul airport already had been emptied.) On 3 January Ridgway had notified Col. John G. Hill, commander of the 3d Logistical Command, to cease port operations at Inch'on at noon the next day.[8] The deadline seemed reasonable since the gradual reductions of stocks at the port and airfield areas since early December already had brought items on hand to modest quantities. But unforeseen delays in getting some reserve stocks released from Eighth Army staff officers, too few tankers, too little suitable shipping for such items as long lengths of railroad track, and an overestimate of the ammunition that would be issued to line troops had prevented Colonel Hill from removing all stocks by the designated hour.[9]

[4] Eighth Army PIR 176, 4 Jan 51.
[5] Ibid.; Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, Jan 51.

[6] Msg, CG Eighth Army to CG I U.S. Corps et al., 041215 Jan 51, copy in IX Corps Comd Rpt, Jan 51; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.
[7] A former Japanese arsenal area four miles east of Inch'on had been christened ASCOM (Army Service Command) City by American occupation forces in 1945 and occupied during recent operations by engineer, quartermaster, ordnance, and signal supply depots and by Headquarters, 3d Logistical Command.
[8] In December Hill had replaced General Stewart, who became the assistant division commander of the 2d Division.
[9] 3d Log Comd Daily Opns Rpt 103, 4 Jan 51; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Dec 50; Hq, 3d Log Comd, Memo, Col Hill for CG Eighth Army, 9 Jan 51, sub: Major Items Destroyed at the Port of Inchon; 3d Log Comd G4 Hist Rpt, Jan 51.



CONGESTION ON ROUTE 29 SOUTH OF HONGCH'ON *during withdrawal in the central sector, 3 January 1951.*

Nor would Hill get everything out. After receiving Ridgway's noontime orders, General Milburn, in whose sector the port and airfield lay, instructed Hill to execute his demolition plans as soon as he had removed all troops other than demolition crews. While back shipment at Inch'on did continue through the favorable afternoon tide on the 4th, Hill's main attention was diverted to rendering the airfield and port facilities useless to enemy forces.[10]

All port units scheduled to travel south by road had gone by the time Hill received Milburn's instructions, and the last Fifth Air Force unit except for Army aviation engineers had flown from Kimpo to a new base in Japan. Through the afternoon these engineers burned the airfield buildings and the drums of aviation gasoline and napalm remaining at Kimpo while Eighth Army engineers from the 82d Engineer Petroleum Distribution Company destroyed the four- and six-inch pipelines between Inch'on and Kimpo and the booster pumps and storage tanks at the airfield.[11]

[10] Msg, CG I Corps to CG 25th Div et al., 041300 Jan 51; IX Corps Opn Dir 21, 041500 Jan 51 (confirms oral orders issued 041200 Jan 51).

[11] 3d Log Comd Engr Monthly Activ Rpt, Jan 51; Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, p. 259; 3d Log Comd Daily Opns Rpt 104, 5 Jan 51.

Members of the 50th Engineer Port Construction Company began demolishing the Inch'on port at 1800. All main facilities except one pier and a causeway to the small offshore island, Wolmi-do, were destroyed. Prime targets were the lock gates of the tidal basin, which by compensating the Yellow Sea's wide tidal range had largely given Inch'on the capacity of a principal port. The demolitions at Wolmi-do as well as the city itself were completed by 0300 on the 5th. Colonel Hill and his remaining troops left by water for Pusan within the hour.[12]

Supplies destroyed at Kimpo, ASCOM City, and Inch'on included some 1.6 million gallons of petroleum products, 9,300 tons of engineer materiel, and 12 rail cars loaded with ammunition. While time and tide may have made the destruction of this materiel unavoidable, the extensive damage to port facilities could not be fully justified. Denying the enemy the use of a port was theoretically sound; on the other hand, the United Nations Command's absolute control of Korean waters made Inch'on's destruction purposeless.[13]

The I and IX Corps left the lower bank of the Han while Hill's engineers were still blowing Inch'on, so Hill had been obliged to put out his own security above the port. These outposts were not engaged. Neither were Milburn's forces as they moved to positions centered on Route 1 at the town of Anyang, nor were Coulter's as they extended the intermediate line northeastward to the junction of the Han and Pukhan rivers.[14] *(See Map 16)*

Late on the 4th, while the I and IX Corps were withdrawing to positions above Suwon, Ridgway ordered the withdrawal to line D to begin at noon on the 5th, by which time he now expected the supplies at Suwon to have been removed. All five corps were to withdraw abreast, meeting in the process Ridgway's basic requirement of maximum delay and maximum punishment of the enemy. Ridgway specifically instructed Milburn and Coulter to include tanks in their covering forces and to counterattack the Chinese who followed the withdrawal.[15]

Ridgway learned during the morning of the 5th that the supplies at Suwon and at the airfield south of town could not be cleared by noon. Creating the delay was not only the sheer bulk of the materiel but also about a hundred thousand desperate refugees from the Seoul area who crowded the Suwon railroad yards and blocked the trains. At midmorning Ridgway radioed Milburn to stand fast until the remaining Suwon stocks had been shipped out, and he notified Coulter to leave forces to protect the east flank of the I Corps' forward position.[16]

Milburn received Ridgway's instructions in time to hold the bulk of the 25th Division and the ROK 1st Division at the Anyang position, and

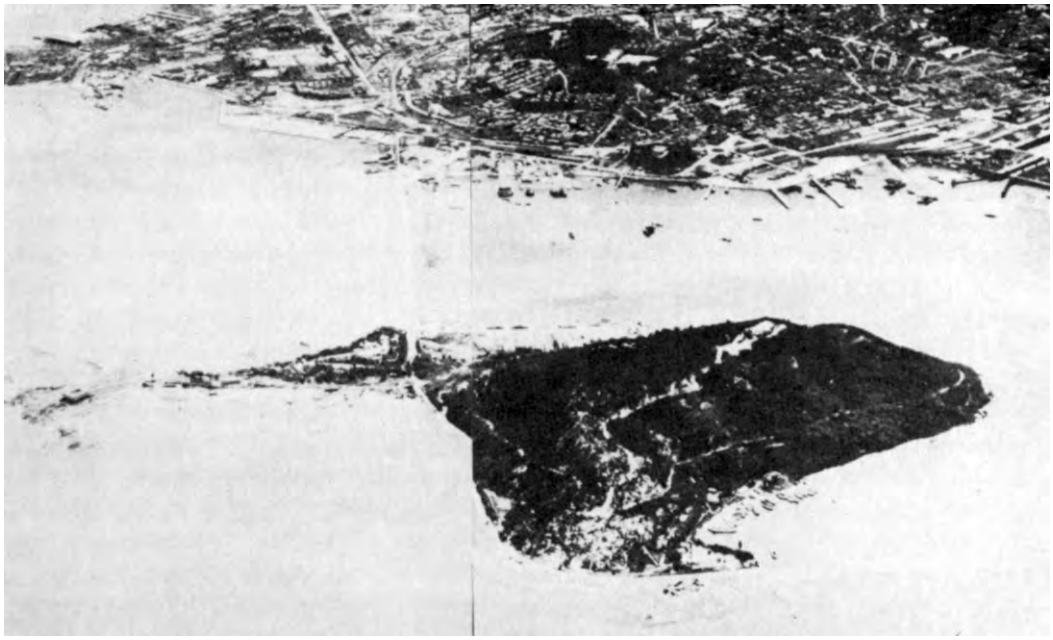
[12] 3d Log Comd Engr Monthly Activ Rpt, Jan 51; 3d Log Comd Daily Opns Rpt 105, 6 Jan 51.

[13] Hq, 2d Log Comd, Memo, Col Hill for CG Eighth Army, 9 Jan 51, sub: Major Items Destroyed at the Port of Inchon; 3d Log Comd G4 Hist Rpt, Jan 51; Field, *United States Naval Operations, Korea,* p. 312.

[14] I Corps G3 Jnl, Sum, 4 and 5 Jan 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 3d Log Comd Daily Opns Rpt 104, 5 Jan 51, and 105, 6 Jan 51.

[15] Rad, GX-1-313 KGOO, Eighth Army to C/S ROKA et al., 4 Jan 51; Rad, GX-1-316 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA et al., 4 Jan 51.

[16] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; Rad, GX-1-344 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps *et al.*, 5 Jan 51.



THE PORT OF INCH'ON. *The tidal basin is at upper right. In foreground is the island of Wolmi-do.*

Coulter ordered the ROK 6th Division to protect Milburn's east flank. But Coulter did not dispatch his instructions until an hour after the ROK 6th had started for line D, and General Chang did not receive them until midafternoon. It took Chang another half hour to get his division stopped. By that time his forces were almost due east of Suwon, where, with Coulter's agreement, Chang deployed them astride Route 17.[17]

During the night of the 5th an enemy regiment crossed the Han and assembled east of Yongdungp'o. Patrols from the regiment moved south through the hills east of Route 1 and reconnoitered the ROK 1st Division front before midnight but somehow missed finding the vulnerable east flank earlier left open by the IX Corps. By daylight on the 6th the patrol contact in the center of General Paik's front developed into a general engagement between an enemy battalion and the 3d Battalion, 11th ROK Regiment, but the enemy attempt to dislodge the South Koreans eased by noon and ended altogether at 1400. By then supplies had been cleared from Suwon and Milburn and Coulter could continue south toward line D.[18]

The two corps completed their withdrawals on the 7th. Since the 15th Infantry and 3d Battalion, 65th Infantry, of the 3d Division in the meantime

[17] I Corps G3 Jnl, Sum, 5 Jan 51; IX Corps POR 306, 5 Jan 51.

[18] I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; I Corps G3 Jnl, Sum, 6 Jan 51.

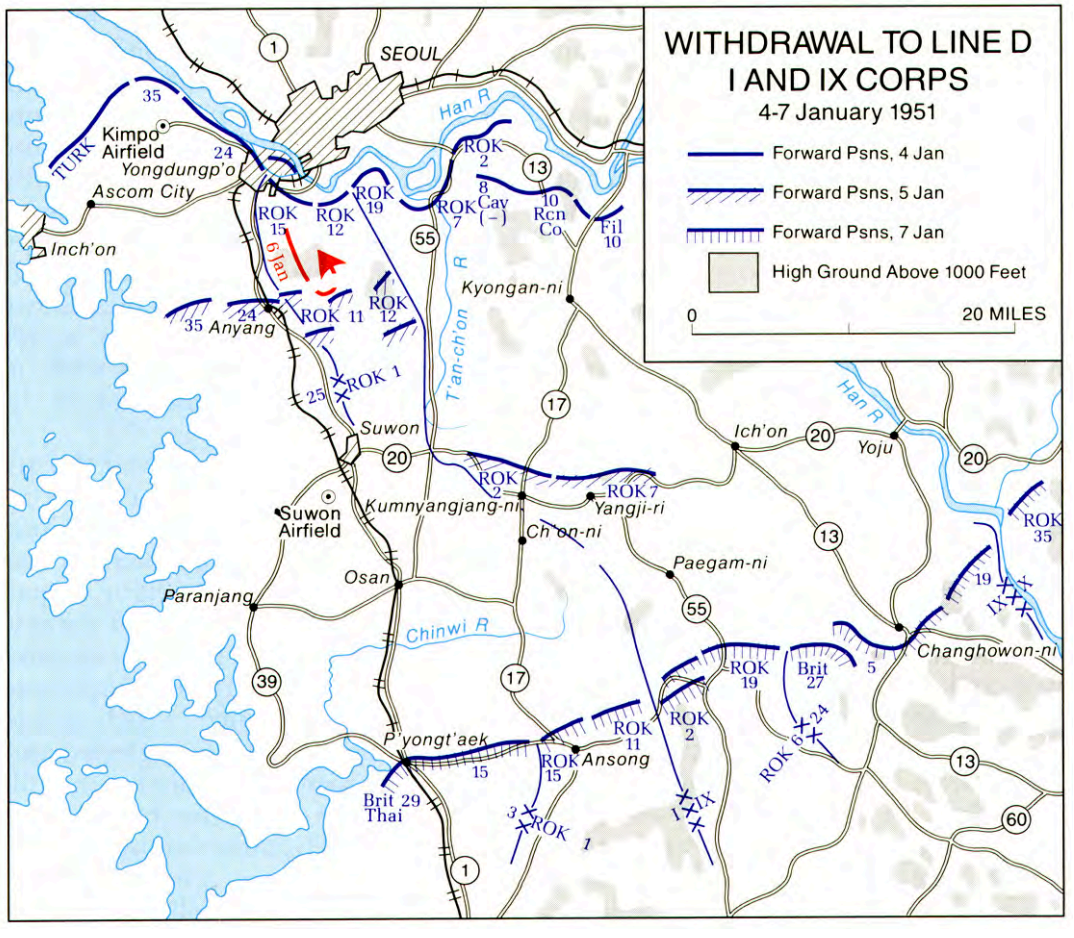


KIMPO AIRFIELD, 4 JANUARY 1951

had arrived from Kyongju and been attached to the I Corps, Milburn was able to keep a substantial reserve and still organize a fairly solid twenty-mile line D front from the west coast eastward through P'yongt'aek and Ansong. The British 29th Brigade and the Thai battalion stood at the far left astride Route 1 just below P'yongt'aek. The 3d Division held a sector across the hills between Routes 1 and 17, which General Soule manned with the 15th Infantry. Lending depth to this central position, the 3d Battalion, 65th Infantry, and the 35th Infantry of the 25th Division were assembled not far behind it. Above Ansong, the ROK 1st Division lay across Route 17. The remainder of the 25th Division and the Turkish brigade went into corps reserve at Ch'onan, thirteen miles south of P'yongt'aek.[19]

Along a slightly longer front tipping to the northeast and reaching beyond Changhowon-ni to the Han River Coulter deployed the ROK 6th Division, British 27th Brigade, and 24th Division, west to east. Hard against the right corps boundary twenty miles behind the front, the bulk of the 1st Cavalry Division was in corps reserve at Ch'ungju on Route 13, now the IX Corps' main supply route. To protect the route from attacks by guerrillas

[19] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 7 Jan 51; I Corps G3 Jnl, Sum, 5, 6, and 7 Jan 51.



MAP 16

known to be located in the Tanyang area twenty miles farther east, the 5th Cavalry had begun to patrol the road from Ch'ungju south through a mountain pass at Mun'gyong.[20]

The way Milburn and Coulter had moved to line D exasperated General Ridgway. "Reports so far reaching me," he told the two corps commanders on the 7th, "indicate your forces withdrew to 'D' line without evidence of having inflicted any substantial losses on enemy and without material delay. In fact, some major units are reported as having broken contact. I desire prompt confirming reports and if substantially correct, the reasons for non-compliance with my basic directives."[21] The reports

[20] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 7 Jan 51.

[21] Rad, GX–1–526 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps and CG IX Corps, 7 Jan 51.

reaching Ridgway were true. Except for the clashes between the Chinese and the ROK 1st Division east of Anyang on the 6th, the I Corps had withdrawn from the south bank of the Han without contact, and the IX Corps had not engaged enemy forces since leaving the Seoul bridgehead.[22]

Attempting once more to get the quality of leadership he considered essential, Ridgway pointed out to Milburn and Coulter that their opponents had but two alternatives: to make a time-consuming, coordinated follow-up, or to conduct a rapid, uncoordinated pursuit. If the Chinese chose the first, the Eighth Army could at least achieve maximum delay even though there might be few opportunities for strong counterattacks. If they elected the second, the Eighth Army would have unlimited opportunities not only to delay but to inflict severe losses on them. In either case, Ridgway again made clear, Milburn and Coulter were to exploit every opportunity to carry out the basic concept of operations that he had repeatedly explained to them.[23]

The immediate response was a flurry of patrolling to regain contact. According to the I Corps intelligence officer, the *39th* and *50th Armies* were now advancing south of Seoul, and their vanguards had reached the Suwon area. An ROK 1st Division patrol moving north over Route 17 during the afternoon of the 7th supported this assessment when it briefly engaged a small enemy group in Kumnyangjang-ni, eleven miles east of Suwon. Farther west, patrols from the 15th Infantry and the British 29th Brigade moved north as far as Osan, eight miles short of Suwon, without making contact. In the IX Corps sector, the 24th Division at the far right sent patrols into Ich'on and Yoju, both on an east-west line with Suwon. Both towns were empty. Shallower searches to the north by the British 27th Brigade in the center of the corps sector also failed to reestablish contact. (The ROK 6th Division, at the corps left, sent out no patrols while it absorbed twenty-three hundred sorely needed replacements.)[24]

General Ridgway considered the attempts by patrols to regain contact at least to be moves in the right direction. What he wanted and planned to see next in the west was more vigorous patrolling by gradually enlarged forces. This patrolling would be the main mission of the larger efforts to acquire better combat intelligence, which in his judgment had been sadly neglected and which was a prime requisite for the still larger offensive action that he intended would follow. His attention meanwhile was drawn to the east, where the withdrawal to line D was still in progress and where North Korean forces, as expected, had opened an attack to seize Wonju.[25]

Wonju and Hill 247

To promote continuous defenses through the mountains east of Wonju, Ridgway on the 5th had redrawn line D in the ROK III and I Corps sectors, replacing the original line stretching

[22] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[23] Rad, GX–1–526 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps and CG IX Corps, 7 Jan 51.

[24] I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; I Corps POR 351, 7 Jan 51; IX Corps PIR 103, 7 Jan 51; IX Corps POR 312, 7 Jan 51; IX Corps PIR 104, 8 Jan 51.

[25] MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, p. 380.

northeastward from Wonju to Wonp'o-ri on the coast with a new trace reaching almost due east of Wonju to the coastal town of Samch'ok. *(Map 17)* This 45-degree change in alignment dropped the east coast position some forty miles.[26]

Ridgway expected the shift south to give the two South Korean corps additional time and space in which to set a defense and to get behind some of the North Korean guerrillas and regulars who, if the original line D were occupied, would be in the ROK rear areas. But as of the 7th his expectation was nowhere near realization. In the ROK I Corps sector, the ROK Capital Division on the coast was just beginning to move from the old to the new line, and the ROK 3d Division, while on the move from Hongch'on in the X Corps area, was only approaching the town of Yongwol at the left of the ROK III Corps sector.[27]

The ROK III Corps had no line at all. As could best be determined, the ROK 9th Division was fighting its way south in the corps sector but was no farther than the trace of the old line D. The corps' other division, the ROK 7th, was on the way out of the X Corps area, but on entering a mountain road leading eastward toward Yongwol from Route 29 at a point eleven miles below Wonju, the division had run into a large force of North Koreans and was currently stalled about six miles east of its Route 29 departure point.[28]

The continuing lack of defense between Wonju and the east coast left the mountains east of Route 29 wide open to a southward enemy advance. In the X Corps area, as a result, all of the 7th Division and part of the 2d had occupied or were currently moving into positions along the fifty-five miles of Route 29 from Chech'on south to Andong to protect the X Corps' supply route and to refuse the east flank. General Barr's 17th Infantry and General McClure's 9th Infantry and one battalion of his 23d Infantry were deployed in and around Chech'on. Farther south, a battalion of the 32d Infantry of the 7th Division was assembled at Tanyang, and the remainder of the regiment was moving up from the south to join it. Barr's 31st Infantry was also moving north, two battalions headed for Yongju, below Tanyang, the other battalion for Andong.[29]

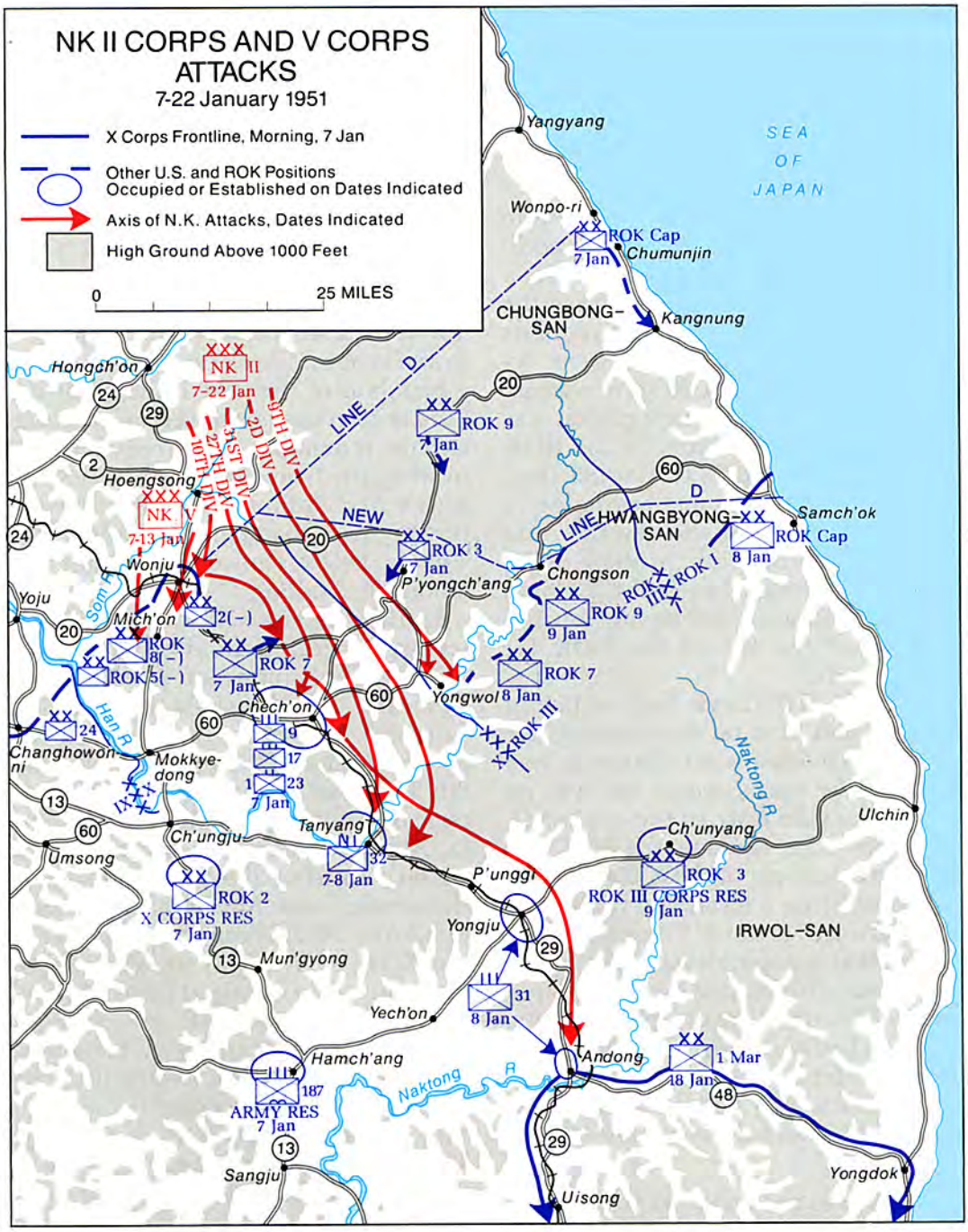
In the western half of the X Corps sector, General Almond had manned a twenty-mile front from Wonju southwestward to the east flank of the IX Corps at the Han. Having gradually gained control of the ROK 2d, 5th, and 8th Divisions as they struggled piecemeal out of the mountains north of line D, Almond placed the 5th along the western third of the front, the 8th in the center, and the bulk of General McClure's 2d Division at Wonju. Since the ROK 2d Division numbered less than thirty-two hundred men, Almond assembled it, nominally in corps reserve, on Route 13 just below Ch'ungju. As of the 7th, the 35th Regiment of the ROK 5th Division occupied the west anchor of the X Corps front. East of the 35th, beyond a three-mile gap scheduled to be filled by the 5th's 27th Regiment, the 16th and 10th Regiments of

[26] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; Rad, GX–1–403 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA, 5 Jan 51.

[27] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 6 and 7 Jan 51.

[28] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 7 Jan 51.

[29] Ibid., 6 and 7 Jan 51.


NK II CORPS AND V CORPS ATTACKS
7-22 January 1951
X Corps Frontline, Morning, 7 Jan
Other U.S. and ROK Positions Occupied or Established on Dates Indicated
Axis of N.K. Attacks, Dates Indicated
High Ground Above 1000 Feet
0
25 MILES
SEA OF JAPAN
Yangyang
Wonpo-ri
ROK Cap
7 Jan
Chumunjin
CHUNGBONG-SAN
Kangnung
Hongch'on
XXX NK II
7-22 Jan
5TH DIV
2D DIV
31ST DIV
27TH DIV
10TH DIV
LINE D
XX ROK 9
7 Jan
Hoengsong
XXX NK V
7-13 Jan
NEW LINE D
HWANGBYONG-SAN
Samch'ok
ROK Cap
8 Jan
XX ROK 3
7 Jan
P'yongch'ang
Chongson
ROK I
ROK III
XX ROK 9
9 Jan
Wonju
Yoju
Mich'on
Som R
XX 2(-)
XX ROK 8(-)
XX ROK 5(-)
XX ROK 7
7 Jan
XX ROK 7
Yongwol 8 Jan
ROK III
Chech'on
III 9
17
1 23
7 Jan
Han R
XX 24
Changhowon-ni
Mokkye-dong
Naktong R
Ulchin
Ch'ungju
Umsong
Tanyang
III 32
7-8 Jan
P'unggi
Ch'unyang
XX ROK 3
ROK III CORPS RES
9 Jan
XX ROK 2
X CORPS RES
7 Jan
Yongju
IRWOL-SAN
Mun'gyong
III 31
8 Jan
Yech'on
Andong
XX 1 Mar
18 Jan
Hamch'ang
III 187
ARMY RES
7 Jan
Naktong R
Sangju
Uisong
Yongdok

MAP 17

the ROK 8th Division, then the 23d and 38th Regiments of the 2d Division, carried the front a short distance beyond Wonju.[30]

Prisoners taken earlier by the 2d Division—while wedging aside the remainder of the North Korean force that had blocked Route 29 six miles below Hongch'on and during later skirmishes farther south at Hoengsong—had supplied a fairly clear picture of enemy intentions in the east. A boundary between the North Korean *V* and *II Corps* appeared to parallel Route 29 just to its east. On the east, the *II Corps*, commanded by Lt. Gen. Choe Hyon and operating with the *2d*, *9th*, *10th*, and *31st Divisions*, was to seep south through the mountains east of Route 29, avoiding engagements during this move, then was to attack Wonju, Chech'on, Tanyang, and Taegu. Along and west of Route 29, Maj. Gen. Pang Ho San, commander of the *V Corps*, was to employ his *6th*, *7th*, *12th*, *27th*, *28th*, and *43d Divisions* in frontal attacks to seize Wonju and force a general withdrawal of the X Corps. Enemy guerrillas, numbering between five thousand and seventy-five hundred and currently massed around Tanyang and along the twenty miles of Route 29 cutting through a high mountain spur between Tanyang and Yongju, were to displace south and southeast to disrupt the Eighth Army's Pusan-Andong line of communication. The whole operation, according to the captives, was to be conducted in conjunction with Chinese advances in the west.[31]

To seize Wonju itself, the North Korean plan called for a two-division frontal attack by the *V Corps*. The Wonju attack was to be assisted by the enveloping effect of other *V Corps* attacks farther west and by the *II Corps* advance on the east. Moving down from Hoengsong during the night of the 6th, General Pang's *6th* and *27th Divisions* before dawn were poised just above Wonju for the frontal attack. Ahead of these two forces, Pang's *12th Division*, previously in the Hongch'on-Hoengsong area, had crossed from the east to the west side of Route 29 and had come south to a position northwest of Wonju, just north of the 10th Regiment of the ROK 8th Division. On the opposite side of Route 29, General Choe's *2d* and *9th Divisions* had marched from Hongch'on to the area northeast of Wonju, and the *10th Division*, coming from Ch'unch'on, was approaching Wonju for the *II Corps*' thrust through the unoccupied mountains.[32]

Wonju sits in the bottom of a bowl in the valley of the Wonju River. Hills forming the rim of the bowl begin to rise about a mile from town. To defend the town and an airstrip at its southeastern edge, General McClure had established the 23d and 38th Regiments in an inverted U atop the bowl rim. The 23d was deployed across Route 29 and in an arc to the west and southwest, and the 38th was similarly aligned north, east, and southeast of town. Bulging out as this position did at the northeastern corner of the X Corps line, and, for the time being, the Eighth Army line, McClure's two regi-

[30] Ibid.

[31] Eighth Army PIR 176, Incl 2, 4 Jan 51, PIR 177, 5 Jan 51, PIR 178, Incl 2, 6 Jan 51, and PIR 179, 7 Jan 51; X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; Hq, FEC, History of the North Korean Army, 31 Jul 52.

[32] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; Eighth Army PIR 180, Incl 2, 8 Jan 51.

ments, in the words of the Eighth Army G–3, occupied an "unenviable salient."[33]

The leading forces of the North Korean *6th* and *27th Divisions* punctured the salient before McClure's men realized it. About 0530 on the 7th, some four hundred enemy troops disguised as and intermingled among civilians merely walked down Route 29, by outposts in other areas, and even through some main positions. Their identity was not discovered until they opened fire on two battalion command posts in the rear. McClure's forces, once alerted, rapidly screened out the infiltrators, captured 114, and broke up several assaults that followed against their main defenses. But almost simultaneously with these assaults, the North Korean *12th Division* to the west attacked and pushed the 10th Regiment of the ROK 8th Division out of position, leaving the 2d Division's Wonju salient even more unenviable.[34]

As the North Korean attack developed, General McClure sought General Almond's approval of a withdrawal below town. Almond, having himself foreseen a possible need to adjust the 2d Division's line, agreed to a withdrawal provided McClure placed his forces on the hills edging the town on the south so that they would still control the road hub. McClure, however, assumed a latitude of decision Almond had not really given him and allowed his two regiments to make a substantial withdrawal to the southwest down the Wonju–Mokkye-dong road. By evening of the 7th the 23d Infantry held a line four and a half miles below Wonju, and the 38th Infantry was aligned in depth near the village of Mich'on, another three miles to the south. From these positions, McClure's only chance of controlling Wonju was by artillery fire.[35]

Almond had no intention of depending on artillery alone. Wonju, in his judgment, was so important and indeed so rare a road junction that any force controlling it had gone far toward controlling central Korea. After learning of the 2d Division's deep withdrawal he ordered McClure to send at least one infantry battalion at first light on the 8th to clear the town and airstrip, to occupy the high ground directly south of Wonju with no fewer than four battalions, and not to withdraw from that position unless Almond himself gave the order.[36]

McClure gave the Wonju assignment to the 23d Infantry, instructing Colonel Freeman to use one battalion in the attack. Lt. Col. James W. Edwards' 2d Battalion started for Wonju at 0930 on the 8th, moving over the road in a column of companies with Company E leading and with four aircraft overhead in close support. Around noon, as Company E passed Hill 247 overlooking the road from the east two and a half miles below Wonju, the leading riflemen spotted and fired on several North Koreans, who quickly scattered. A half

[33] 2d Div G3 Jnl, 7 Jan 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 7 Jan 51.

[34] 2d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 2d Div PIR 77, 7 Jan 51; 23d Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 23d Inf POR 118, 13 Jan 51 (covers period 4–11 Jan 51); 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 38th Inf PIR 5, 9 Jan 51 (covers period 5–9 Jan 51).

[35] X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; X Corps OI 61, 7 Jan 51; 2d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 7 Jan 51; 23d Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 23d Inf S3 Jnl, 7 Jan 51; 23d Inf POR 118, 13 Jan 51.

[36] X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; Rad, X 17082, CG X Corps to CG 2d Div, 8 Jan 51; 2d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

mile farther, they discovered North Koreans asleep in buildings. Finding them was like bumping a beehive. Some of the first to awaken gave an alarm that stirred a swarm of soldiers out of other buildings and carried to troops located in nearby heights. The 2d Battalion killed two hundred during the melee. But Colonel Edwards at the same time discovered that he was being flanked on both the east and west by what he estimated to be a regiment and pulled his battalion out of range to a position south of Hill 247. To the west, in the meantime, the North Korean *12th Division* again hit the 10th ROK Regiment and forced it back almost on line with the 38th Infantry at Mich'on. Since this left the west flank of the 23d Infantry, above Mich'on, wide open, General McClure instructed Colonel Freeman to pull the 2d Battalion all the way back to the regimental line and emplace it on the exposed flank.[37]

Convinced by reports of heavy enemy losses and moderate enemy resistance that a successful attack on Wonju could be made, General Almond ordered McClure to resume his effort to clear the town and airstrip by noon on the 9th. Almond directed that two battalions with air and artillery support make the renewed advance and repeated his previous instruction that four battalions occupy positions just south of Wonju.[38]

McClure attached two battalions of the 38th Infantry to the 23d to provide Colonel Freeman sufficient forces to hold a defensive position as well as make a two-battalion advance. For the Wonju mission Freeman organized a task force with the 2d Battalion of the 23d Infantry and 2d Battalion of the 38th Infantry, placing Lt. Col. James H. Skeldon, commander of the latter battalion, in charge. In snow that canceled close air support, Task Force Skeldon started over the road toward Wonju at 1000 on the 9th.[39]

As Skeldon's column approached Hill 247 at noon, fire struck the task force from that peak and heights to the west. Skeldon deployed a battalion on each side of the road and attacked, but by late afternoon his forces bogged down part way up the near slopes of the enemy position. Colonel Freeman considered Skeldon's position unsound, especially after learning that North Korean *12th Division* forces to his west again had hit the ROK 8th Division and advanced deep to his left rear before the South Koreans contained them. But, under pressure to clear Wonju and occupy positions just below the town, he held Skeldon where he was for the night, reinforced him with the bulk of the French battalion, and planned to resume the attack on the 10th.[40]

Frequent snowstorms on the 10th again eliminated close air support, and the ground troops suffered also from far lower temperatures caused by a northerly wind shift. Freeman, personally taking charge of the attack, pushed his forces another half mile into the 247 mass but met increasing opposition and faced a repeated need to spread forces farther west and east to meet North Korean counterattacks.

[37] 2d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 23d Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 23d Inf Opn O 19, 8 Jan 51; 23d Inf S3 Jnl, 8 Jan 51; Rad, X 17092, X Corps to Eighth Army, 8 Jan 51; Rad, X 17095, X Corps to Eighth Army, 8 Jan 51; Eighth Army PIR 180, 8 Jan 51.

[38] 2d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[39] Ibid.; 2d Div LOI, 9 Jan 51; 2d Div G3 Jnl, Entry J–43, 9 Jan 51; 23d Inf Opn O 20, 9 Jan 51; 23d Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[40] 23d Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

Around noon he notified General McClure of the growing resistance and of the constant danger of being outflanked, and he advised against continuing the attack. McClure agreed but instructed Freeman to hold his position. Freeman could adjust the disposition of his troops, but he was to do nothing that would appear to be a withdrawal.[41]

Freeman's change to a defensive stance was followed by hard North Korean attacks that did not subside until well after dark and after Freeman's forces had inflicted, in their estimate, two thousand enemy casualties. Although control of Hill 247 vacillated through the afternoon, Freeman still commanded a good defensive position at the close of the engagement.[42]

Continuing North Korean attempts to shove Freeman's forces out of the 247 mass on the 11th and 12th had similar results. Reinforced by more of the French battalion and part of the Netherlands battalion and helped by strong air support (including a B–29 attack on Wonju) after the sky cleared around noon on the 11th, Freeman's forces broke up the assaults and killed more than eleven hundred North Koreans. Two weak and failing attempts against Freeman's position early on the 13th ended the *V Corps'* effort to drive south of Wonju.[43]

Regardless of this stand at Hill 247, General Almond was dissatisfied with the 2d Division's performance. Largely as a result of the initial withdrawal so far south of Wonju and what Almond considered to be inefficient staff work, poor employment of weapons (especially artillery), improper organization of defenses, and an exhorbitant rate of non-battle casualties (mostly from trench foot, frostbite, and respiratory diseases), Almond on the 13th asked General Ridgway for authority to relieve General McClure. Ridgway was not fully convinced that a relief was warranted. His own impression of McClure, formed in part after a visit to Wonju on 2 January, was of a hard-hitting, aggressive commander. He also considered McClure's assignment at Wonju to be a "hot potato" that could burn a person no matter how he handled it. But he felt more strongly that he had to back his corps commander in this instance and gave Almond the authority he asked for. He pointed out to Almond, however, that one of his own guidelines in a decision to relieve an officer was that he had to have a better man available.[44]

Almond believed he had a better man in the X Corps chief of staff, Maj. Gen. Clark L. Ruffner, and on 14 January sent him to take command of the 2d Division. Ridgway returned General McClure to the United States a few days later with the official status of relieved without prejudice but was well aware that "the prejudice would be there anyway."[45]

[41] 2d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 23d Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 23d Inf S3 Jnl, 10 Jan 51; Eighth Army PIR 182, 10 Jan 51; Technical Report, *Weather Effect on Army Operations: Weather in the Korean Conflict*, vol. I (Department of Physics, Oregon State College, 1956), pp. VII-12–VII-13, copy in CMH.

[42] 2d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 23d Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 10 Jan 51.

[43] Ibid.; 23d Inf S3 Jnl, 11 and 12 Jan 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 21 Jan 51.

[44] X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; Interv, Appleman with Ridgway, 2 Nov 51; Interv, Mossman, Carroll, and Miller with Ridgway, 30 Nov 56.

[45] X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; Interv, Mossman, Carroll, and Miller with Ridgway, 30 Nov 56.

East of Route 29

General Pang, the North Korean *V Corps* commander, dropped his push against the ROK 8th Division at the same time he canceled his attack south of Wonju. He had employed at least parts of all his divisions against the Americans and South Koreans but had not won the advantage before casualties and the near exhaustion of his ammunition and other supplies eliminated his chances of gaining an edge. His divisions, to begin with, had been understrength, and his troops were by no means of the same high caliber as those that had driven to the Pusan Perimeter at the beginning of the war. His weapons, too, were limited—mostly rifles, with some automatic weapons and mortars. Judging it useless to continue until he had reorganized and replenished, Pang on the 17th ordered his forces, except for the *27th Division*, to withdraw into defensive positions around Hoengsong.[46]

Although the North Korean *II Corps* began operations in no better shape than the *V Corps*, General Choe had more success infiltrating through the mountains east of Route 29. Opening his advance concurrently with Pang's attack on Wonju, Choe sent the *2d* and *9th Divisions* wide to the east out of the Wonju area, then south through the higher Taebaek peaks toward Yongwol. Farther west, his first move was to send the *10th Division* south through the heights bordering Route 29.[47]

In passing Wonju on the east, part of the *10th Division* accidently bumped into the 2d Division. Under Choe's order to avoid engagement, the division commander, Maj. Gen. Lee Ban Nam, shifted his forces farther east to prevent more such encounters but did not sidestep far enough to avoid running almost head on into the ROK 7th Division then moving eastward toward Yongwol eleven miles below Wonju. General Lee disentangled the last of his forces from this engagement on the 8th. On the following day Lee's leading *27th Regiment* got past Chech'on but then ran into strong patrols from the 7th Division operating east of Route 29 below the town. General Barr's forces killed almost five hundred of Lee's men and took fourteen captives, who identified their division and revealed its attack objectives to be Tanyang first and then Taegu.[48]

Behind the *10th Division*, the opening through which General Choe could infiltrate forces meanwhile had begun to narrow. On the 8th, the *10th*'s disengagement with the ROK 7th Division allowed the latter to complete its move to Yongwol, and on the following day the ROK 9th Division, finally free of its isolation to the north, came in at the right of the ROK III Corps sector at the upper Han River town of Chongson. With General Ridgway's approval, the ROK III Corps' new commander, Maj. Gen. Yu Jai Heung, faced these two divisions to the northwest along the Han above Yongwol rather than attempt to push them forward onto line D.[49] General Yu set the ROK 7th Divi-

[46] X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 2d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51. North Koreans captured in January reported that many of their weapons were those discarded by Americans and that they preferred these because it was simpler to replenish ammunition from stores abandoned by Americans.

[47] X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[48] Eighth Army PIR 180, Incl 2, 8 Jan 51, and PIR 181, Incl 2, 9 Jan 51; X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 7th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[49] General Yu replaced General Lee on 9 January.



2D INFANTRY DIVISION TROOPS *south of Wonju, 10 January 1951.*

sion in the heights immediately northeast of Yongwol and deployed the ROK 9th Division in the vicinity of its Chongson assembly. To strengthen the ROK III Corps, Ridgway gave Yu the ROK 3d Division, which also had assembled near Yongwol while moving toward the ROK I Corps sector. Yu placed the additional division in reserve at Ch'unyang, thirty miles southeast of Yongwol.[50]

Although there were openings in the line, the ROK III Corps by the 10th finally had a position from which to oppose North Korean *II Corps* movements through the steeper heights east of Route 29. A fifteen-mile gap in the X Corps sector between Chech'on and Yongwol was now the area through which General Choe could most easily pass his units. Judging the movement of North Korean forces through this gap to be the major threat to the X Corps, not the *V Corps* effort then in progress at Wonju, Ridgway ordered Almond to close the gap and to eliminate all enemy forces who had gotten behind Route 60 between Chech'on and Yongwol.[51]

To assist Almond, Ridgway moved the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team to Andong and attached it to the X Corps. To hedge any deep enemy penetration below the lateral Andong-Yongdok road, Route 48,

[50] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 8 and 9 Jan 51.

[51] Ibid., 9 and 10 Jan 51; Rad, GX–1–751 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG X Corps, 10 Jan 51.

Ridgway also ordered the 1st Marine Division to make the move for which he earlier had alerted it, from Masan to the P'ohang-dong–Kyongju–Yongch'on area.[52]

Almond initially ordered the ROK 5th Division, so far not involved in the Wonju fight, to move east and fill the Chech'on-Yongwol gap, leaving the ROK 8th Division to occupy the 5th's old sector. Since the shift of the 5th from corps left to corps right would take time, Almond instructed General Barr in the meantime to send a battalion of the 17th Infantry eastward from Chech'on to make physical contact with the ROK III Corps at Yongwol and to clear all enemy forces between the towns while en route.[53]

Almond already had ordered all corps units up and down Route 29 to institute day and night patrolling to clear enemy troops from the bordering mountains. Judging that an expansion of this patrolling in the rear would prove more profitable than a linear defense between Chech'on and Yongwol, he reassigned the bulk of the ROK 5th Division to clear the region above Yongju at the corps right rear. Similar rear area assignments to other units by 14 January spread a network of patrols and blocking positions over an area forty miles square. The 7th Division continued to patrol from Chech'on toward Yongwol and, with the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team, along both sides of Route 29 from Chech'on south to Yongju. The remainder of the ROK 5th Division and a regiment of the ROK 2d Division covered the lateral road leading west from Tanyang to Ch'ungju, joining hands with the 5th Cavalry patrolling Route 13 south from Ch'ungju through the Mun'gyong pass. Almond concentrated the bulk of the ROK 2d Division at the lower end of the Mun'gyong pass, where it could help bottle guerrillas massed in the mountains to the northeast around Tanyang. Already operating against these guerrillas was part of the X Corps special activities group, a small provisional force recently formed by X Corps headquarters around its special operations company for raids and other missions behind enemy lines. The group so far had been fully committed to security missions in the X Corps' rear area.[54]

Deciding on the 14th that getting additional troops into the Tanyang area was more immediately important than clearing Wonju, Almond pulled the 2d and ROK 8th Divisions out of their positions above Chech'on and instructed General Ruffner to occupy the entire west corps sector, a front of some twenty-two miles, on a line extending almost due west of Chech'on to the Han River. This move freed the ROK 8th Division, which Almond dispatched to Tanyang.[55]

General Choe, aided by the wild terrain and night movements, seemed to stay a half step ahead of Almond's attempt to blanket the corps area. At the *II Corps* left, the *9th Division* ran into the ROK 7th Division near Yongwol and into infantry-tank patrols from the

[52] Rad, GX–1–637 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG 187th Abn RCT, 8 Jan 51; Rad, GX–1–661 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG 1st Marine Div, 9 Jan 51; Rad, GX–1–860 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG X Corps et al., 11 Jan 51.

[53] X Corps OI 67, 10 Jan 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 11 Jan 51; 7th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[54] X Corps OI 64, 8 Jan 51, and 69, 12 Jan 51; X Corps POR 110, Annex 1, 14 Jan 51; X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[55] X Corps OI 70, 14 Jan 51, 71, 14 Jan 51, and 73, 15 Jan 51; Ltr, Almond to Ridgway, 15 Jan 51, copy in CMH; X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

17th Infantry along the Chech'on-Yongwol road and got no farther south, but the *2d Division*, staying to the west of Yongwol, managed to seep below the road and by 16 January placed its leading troops within sight of Tanyang. Similarly, the *31st Division* threaded troops through the heights bordering Route 29 as far as Tanyang, and the *27th Division* of the North Korean *V Corps*, coming south behind the *31st*, pushed forces as far as the Chech'on area. Still in the lead, the *10th Division* meanwhile changed course after running into 7th Division patrols below Chech'on on 9 January and by the 18th reached within a few miles of its new objective, Andong.[56]

By appearances, the daily deepening of the North Korean *II Corps* penetration steadily enlarged the danger of envelopment of the X Corps' east flank. But the heavy patrolling by Almond's forces kept the North Koreans moderately engaged, draining the groups encountered of men and ammunition, and the corps' artillery fire and air support also took a toll. The winter weather compounded these losses. To turn the snow and temperatures that registered as low as twenty-one degrees below zero to an advantage, Almond ordered the destruction of all buildings that might shelter the North Koreans. As many structures as could be reached by patrols, artillery, and air strikes were demolished. According to captives, diseases besides those related to cold weather also struck hard among North Korean ranks.[57]

The progressive weakening of the *II Corps* became particularly noticeable around 22 January when X Corps patrols began to encounter only stray soldiers and irregular bands instead of organized formations. Almond dismissed the enemy corps as an effective force on the 25th. "By utilizing armor and armored vehicles in our 'power' patrols where possible, and through systematic search of the mountainous recesses by dismounted forces," he reported to General Ridgway, "we have completely disrupted the cohesion and organization of four North Korean divisions."[58]

These four, the *2d*, *9th*, *27th*, and *31st*, were indeed in bad shape. General Choe recalled them on the 24th, instructing them to assemble above P'yongch'ang, some fifteen miles north of Yongwol. Those surviving the withdrawal, which amounted to an infiltration in reverse, reached their assembly area by the end of January. By Eighth Army and X Corps estimates, the survivors of an original four-division strength near sixteen thousand numbered, at most eighty-six hundred.[59]

The North Korean *10th Division*, too, had suffered heavy losses en route to Andong. General Choe directed General Lee to withdraw to P'yongch'ang on the 23d and informed him that if he could notify Choe of his escape route, other *II Corps* forces would attempt to clear the way. Aware that Lee's division was all but encircled by X Corps forces above and by the 1st Marine Division below, Choe advised Lee that if he could not get his division out, he was to

[56] X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[57] Ibid.; X Corps OI 68, 12 Jan 51, and 72, 14 Jan 51; 2d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[58] Ltr, Gen Almond to Gen Ridgway, 25 Jan 51, copy in CMH.

[59] X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; Eighth Army PIR 176, Incl 2, 4 Jan 51, and PIR 188, Incl 2, 16 Jan 51.

stay in the X Corps rear and employ his troops as guerrillas.[60]

Lee elected to stay where he was but made a less than halfhearted attempt to conduct guerrilla operations. When General Smith's marines opened a systematic screening operation in the P'ohang-dong–Andong–Yongdok area on the 18th, they found it harder to locate Lee's forces than to fight them. A *10th Division* officer captured some days later explained that General Lee had fallen victim of acute melancholia, brooding constantly over his predicament and directing his forces in no course of action other than one of alternate hiding and flight. After nearly three weeks of combing, General Smith notified General Ridgway that his forces had scattered the remnants of the *10th Division.* In Smith's judgment, Lee's forces were not then capable of any kind of major effort, and the situation was sufficiently in hand to permit the assignment of a new mission to the 1st Marine Division.[61]

As contact with enemy forces diminished, General Almond meanwhile had begun to organize a solid forward line from the right bank of the Han opposite Yoju eastward across Route 29 five miles below Wonju to a point five miles above Yongwol. As of 30 January the 2d Division was moving onto the line between the Han and Route 29 on the west, the ROK 8th Division above Chech'on in the middle, and the 7th Division above Yongwol on the east.[62]

The 2d Division in fact had instituted a program of patrolling and in the process had reoccupied Wonju. Following the North Korean *V Corps'* withdrawal above Hoengsong, a battalion of the 9th Infantry on the 23d reentered and set up a patrol base in Wonju and on the next day began sending infantry and armored patrols to the west, north, and northeast. At the right, the 17th Infantry of the 7th Division (the division was now commanded by Maj. Gen. Claude B. Ferenbaugh) had pursued the North Korean *II Corps'* withdrawal above P'yongch'ang, sending a battalion of infantry and artillery far enough forward to destroy the town with a heavy shelling on the 27th.[63]

The patrolling north of the corps front during the last week of January was largely a result of orders from General Ridgway on the 20th and 23d calling for infantry-armor patrolling and for a diversion to prevent enemy movement south of the Yoju-Wonju line. These instructions were part of an expanding reconnaissance in force that Ridgway had instituted in the west on the 15th.[64]

[60] Lynn Montross, Maj. Hubbard D. Kuokka, and Maj. Norman W. Hicks, *U.S. Marine Operations in Korea, 1950–1953* (Washington, D.C., 1962), vol. IV, *The East-Central Front,* p. 51.

[61] Ibid., pp. 42–44, 48, 53, 56.

[62] Rad, X 17435, CG X Corps to CG Eighth Army, 25 Jan 15; X Corps OI 84, 85, and 86, 28 Jan 51, and 87 and 88, 29 Jan 51; 7th Div Opn O 41, 28 Jan 51; 2d Div Opn O 21, 29 Jan 51.

[63] 2d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 7th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[64] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; Rad, GX–1–1645 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CGs I, IX, and X Corps, 20 Jan 51; Rad, GX–1–2270 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG X Corps, 28 Jan 51 (confirms Ridgway's instructions delivered orally by the Eighth Army chief of staff on 23 Jan 51); X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; Rad, X 17405, CG X Corps to CG 2d Div, 23 Jan 51; X Corps OI 79, 25 Jan 51; 2d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 7th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

CHAPTER XII

Reconnaissance in Force

Between 7 and 15 January, I and IX Corps reconnaissance patrols ranging north of line D made little contact with enemy forces. IX Corps patrols investigated Ich'on and Yoju several times but found the towns empty. In the main I Corps attempt, the 27th Infantry came out of its reserve assembly at Ch'onan to occupy outposts athwart Route 1 generally along the Chinwi River eight miles north of P'yongt'aek and five miles south of Osan. In extensive searches west and east of Route 1 and north of the Chinwi within three miles of Osan, Colonel Michaelis' forces encountered few Chinese.[1]

The patrols were numerous and far-ranging enough to certify the absence of any strong enemy force immediately in front of the two corps; yet civilians, agents, and air observers in the same week reported a steady movement of Chinese south from Seoul. The heaviest enemy concentrations appeared to be forming along Route 1 between Suwon and Osan and around the junction of Routes 13 and 17 at Kyongan-ni, sixteen miles northeast of Suwon. General Ridgway considered the nearer Suwon-Osan concentration to be a suitable target for an infantry-armor strike that also could serve as an example of the kind of reconnaissance in force he wanted both General Milburn and General Coulter afterwards to initiate on their own. He ordered the I Corps to investigate the Suwon-Osan area on the 15th with a force that included at least one battalion of tanks. General Milburn was to punish any enemy groupment located there with infantry, tank, and air assaults, then was to withdraw, leaving part of his force in the objective area to maintain contact.[2]

The Problem of Motivation

Although the I Corps reconnaissance was a step in Ridgway's program of building up offensive operations, the continuing lack of spirit within the Eighth Army worked against the prospects of launching larger attacks. Some indications of recovery and Ridgway's confidence in the Eighth Army's inherent ability notwithstanding, his forces and staff, in the main, were still not "offensive-minded."[3]

[1] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 24th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 25th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 27th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[2] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 13 and 14 Jan 51; Rad, GX–1–1066 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps and CG IX Corps, 14 Jan 51; Rad, G–1–1081 KAR, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps, 14 Jan 51; I Corps G3 Jnl, Sum, 14 Jan 51.

[3] MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, p. 382; Interv, Appleman with Ridgway, 2 Nov 51; Ltr, Ridgway to Collins, 8 Jan 51.

In his constant attempt to reshape the mood of the Eighth Army, Ridgway during the first days of January instituted a morale survey in which his troops repeatedly raised two questions: "Why are we here?" and "What are we fighting for?" These questions clearly reflected the lack of motivation, and both, in Ridgway's judgment, required and deserved well-reasoned replies.[4]

His answer to the first question was brief and point-blank: "We are here because of the decisions of the properly constituted authorities of our respective governments. . . .The answer is simple because further comment is unnecessary. It is conclusive because the loyalty we give, and expect, precludes the slightest questioning of these orders."

He considered the second question to have greater significance, and he answered at length:

> To me the issues are clear. It is not a question of this or that Korean town or village. Real estate is here incidental. It is not restricted to the issue of freedom for our South Korean allies . . . though that freedom is a symbol of the wider issues, and included among them.
>
> The real issues are whether the power of Western civilization . . . shall defy and defeat Communism; whether the rule of men who shoot their prisoners, enslave their citizens, and deride the dignity of man, shall displace the rule of those to whom the individual and his individual rights are sacred; whether we are to survive with God's hand to guide and lead us, or to perish in the dead existence of a Godless world.
>
> If these be true, and to me they are, beyond any possibility of challenge, then this has long since ceased to be a fight for freedom for our Korean allies alone and for their national survival. It has become, and it continues to be, a fight for our own freedom, for our own survival, in an honorable, independent national existence.
>
> The sacrifices we have made, and those we shall yet support, are not offered vicariously for others, but in our own direct defense.
>
> In the final analysis, the issue now joined right here in Korea is whether communism or individual freedom shall prevail.[5]

Ridgway published these replies and distributed them throughout the command in January. Whether they would help to improve the attitude of the Eighth Army depended, he believed, on whether their sincerity was recognized. In any case, the disciplinary tone of the first reply was unmistakable, and the second was an eloquent statement of the war's principal issue as Ridgway believed his command should understand it.

Allies From North Korea

A striking local example of the issue as Ridgway summarized it was at the time being set on a string of islands hugging enemy-held Hwanghae Province on the west coast. Giving up everything but individual freedom, literally thousands of anti-Communist North Koreans were taking refuge on the islands, mainly Ch'o-do and Paengnyong-do, the two largest. Most came from western Hwanghae, the region between and west of Chinnamp'o in the north and Haeju in the south, where an anti-Communist underground existed even before the war. Some underground members had attacked retreating North Korean troops in October 1950 when the Eighth Army moved

[4] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, p. 369.

[5] MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, pp. 370–71.

above the 38th parallel, and after UNC forces occupied the region a number of anti-Communists had joined UNC security units formed to maintain civil order. Others had openly professed their convictions and thus exposed themselves to retaliation when enemy forces reentered the province on the heels of the Eighth Army's withdrawal.[6]

The former UNC security groups reinforced by volunteers engaged North Korean troops sent to reoccupy western Hwanghae in December. ROK Navy ships of Task Force 95 in the Yellow Sea, with which the anti-Communists established sporadic radio contact, provided gunfire and arranged some air support. But this help could not compensate shortages in weapons and ammunition among the anti-Communist groups which from the start gave the enemy regulars the deciding edge. Some Hwanghae defenders hid out, hoping that UNC forces would soon return to the province. Most decided to escape to the coastal islands protected by Task Force 95. The exodus, aided by the ROK Navy, which sea lifted many escapees, continued until late January when North Korean troops closed the beach exits.

After reaching the islands the organized groups of refugees, asking only for arms and supplies, offered to return to their home area and resume the fight they had been forced to give up. At Eighth Army headquarters the offer stimulated plans for developing these allies from North Korea as the United Nations Partisan Force. The islands were to become base camps, and the partisans were to be organized, equipped, and trained for guerrilla warfare and intelligence missions behind enemy lines on the mainland.

Regardless of what the partisans might accomplish on the mainland, their occupation of the offshore islands would make the Eighth Army's west flank more secure. Their alliance with the Eighth Army also would be an ideological and psychological thorn in the enemy's side. The partisans themselves, now without status as citizens of either North or South Korea, faced an uncertain postwar future. But they meanwhile had gained personal security for themselves and the many families who had come with them to the islands, and they would receive logistical support for the fight they seemed eager to rejoin.[7]

The Evacuation Issue Resolved

To the detriment of Ridgway's efforts to restore confidence within the Eighth Army and to increase offensive action, the question raised by the Chinese intervention of whether the United Nations Command could or should stay in Korea had not been resolved by mid-January. Ridgway personally believed the forces arrayed against him did not have the strength to drive the Eighth Army out of Korea. But as long as the

[6] This section is based on Mono, "AFFE Military History Detachment, U.N. Partisan Forces in the Korean Conflict," copy in CMH.

[7] By war's end the United Nations Partisan Force reached a strength of twenty thousand divided among six regiments, one of which had received airborne training. Its members at that time included South Korean volunteers who were allowed to join the partisans in lieu of conscription into the ROK Army. Partisan units eventually occupied island strongholds off both coasts of North Korea, although the major strength remained off Hwanghae Province. Beyond harassing the enemy rear along the west coast, the value of partisan operations is a matter of speculation.

evacuation issue remained undecided at the higher military and political levels, he was obliged to plan for the contingency of further withdrawals, including a final one from the peninsula. The resulting rumors of evacuation scarcely helped to rebuild the spirit of his command, and the possibility of an eventual decision to leave Korea made general offensive operations less practical.

At the higher levels, consideration of the question had taken several new turns since 4 December, when the Joint Chiefs of Staff advised General MacArthur that a major reinforcement was physically impossible and that they concurred in the consolidation of UNC ground forces into beachheads. The great concern in Washington was the possibility that China's entry into Korea was only one step in a Soviet move toward global war. Out of this concern, all major American commands received notices on 6 December to increase their readiness, and on 16 December President Truman formally declared a state of national emergency. No full mobilization was called, but action was taken to increase U.S. military strength and to broaden mobilization and production bases.[8]

Korea, the Joint Chiefs of Staff informed MacArthur on 30 December, was not considered the place to fight a major war. Consequently, although they had concluded from MacArthur's gloomy reports that the Chinese had committed sufficient strength in Korea to drive the U.N. Command off the peninsula, both the current shortage of combat units in the United States and the increased threat of general war now put a major buildup of MacArthur's forces out of the question. But the Joint Chiefs wanted MacArthur to stay in Korea if he could. They directed him to defend successive positions to the south, damaging enemy forces as much as possible without jeopardizing his own. If his forces were driven back to a line along and eastward from the Kum River, roughly halfway between Seoul and Pusan, and the Chinese massed a clearly superior force before this line, the Joint Chiefs would then order MacArthur to begin a withdrawal to Japan.

MacArthur already had directed his staff to develop plans for an evacuation. But when the Joint Chiefs asked for his ideas on timing a withdrawal, he responded on 3 January that no such decision would be necessary until his forces were actually pushed back to a beachhead line. He meanwhile started a new round of discussion on how the war should be prosecuted by proposing four retaliatory measures against the Chinese: blockade the China coast, destroy China's war industries through naval gunfire and air bombardment, reinforce the troops in Korea with part of the Chinese Nationalist Army on Formosa, and allow diversionary operations by Chinese Nationalist troops against the China mainland.

These proposals contradicted the established policy of confining the fighting to Korea, a principle that largely unified the nations allied with the United States in the war. After the measures were considered in Washington, the benefit of each weighed against the certain escalation of the war and the likelihood of alienating allied powers, the Joint Chiefs of Staff notified MacArthur on 9 January that there was little chance of a change in policy. They re-

[8] For a detailed discussion of the evacuation issue, see Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, chs. XVI and XVII.

peated their 30 December instructions that MacArthur was to defend successive positions and inflict the greatest possible damage to enemy forces. As before, he was to guard against high losses lest he become unable to carry out his mission of protecting Japan. He could withdraw to Japan whenever in his judgment an evacuation was necessary to avoid severe losses in men and materiel.[9]

These instructions elicited questions from MacArthur on two points. Although a cautious delaying action in Korea could be an initial mission, with a withdrawal to and defense of Japan its logical sequel, MacArthur interpreted the directive to mean that he had to be prepared to carry out both missions simultaneously. Since his command was not strong enough to do this, he responded on 10 January with a question that, in effect, asked which mission he was to consider more important.

His other question stemmed from the authority given him to evacuate Korea whenever he judged it necessary to prevent severe losses and hinged, in a sense, on the meaning of *severe*. The acceptable extent of losses, thus the evacuation of Korea, should not be his decision, MacArthur contended, until there had been a decision in Washington to maintain a position in Korea indefinitely, to stay for a limited time, or to minimize losses by leaving the peninsula as soon as possible. He was asking Washington to pick one of these three courses.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff attempted to explain their directive on 12 January. While they were not sure how long the U.N. Command could stay in Korea, they emphasized that it was highly important to U.S. prestige, to the future of the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and to efforts to organize anti-Communist resistance in Asia that UNC forces not withdraw unless militarily forced to do so. Again the Joint Chiefs asked for MacArthur's estimate of the timing and conditions of a withdrawal.

As of 15 January the evacuation issue remained unresolved. General MacArthur wanted the question answered on the Washington level, but officials there first wanted him to give them the military guidelines. Aware of the repetitive interchange between Washington and Tokyo, General Ridgway worried that deferring a decision would correspondingly reduce chances that an evacuation could succeed. Some withdrawal actions, logistical arrangements especially, would require sixty to ninety days' advance notice if the Eighth Army was to remove the maximum of troops and equipment in minimum time and with minimum loss.[10]

Having no clear answer also made it difficult to dispel rumors of evacuation spreading through the ranks. South Korean forces were especially fearful of being abandoned. Ridgway wrote and radioed General MacArthur on 6 and 7 January to deplore any withdrawal that would leave ROK forces to face the retaliation of the Chinese and North

[9] On 18 December MacArthur had requested that four National Guard divisions called into federal service the previous September be moved to Japan to complete their training so as to be at hand to protect Japan against any Soviet attack. Because no final government decision had yet been made as to the future U.S. course of action in Korea, the Joint Chiefs on 23 December notified MacArthur that no divisions would be deployed to the Far East for the time being. Japan was left virtually without combat troops.

[10] MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, pp. 383–84.

Koreans. He urged MacArthur to issue a public statement assuring the South Koreans that they would not be deserted. MacArthur passed Ridgway's request to the Joint Chiefs of Staff with the comment that he could not make such a statement until and unless a policy basis for one was established at governmental level. Ridgway himself needed no such backing. On 11 January he informed General Chung, the ROK Army chief of staff, that there was only one military force fighting the enemy, "our combined Allied Army," and that it would "fight together and stay together whatever the future holds."[11]

Eighth Army plans and instructions issued between 8 and 13 January however prudent, tended to support the current rumors. On the 8th Ridgway traced two new defense lines, E and F, located some twenty-five and sixty-five miles, respectively, behind line D. (The 2d Division's engagement then in progress at Wonju, the fact that the X Corps sector east of Wonju was then unmanned, and the improbability that the ROK III Corps could occupy its sector of line D prompted Colonel Dabney, Ridgway's G–3, to predict on the 8th that a withdrawal to line E would be called in the near future.) Five days later Ridgway established priorities for completing the four defense lines General Walker had ordered fortified in the southeastern corner of the peninsula on 11 December. The Raider line arching around Pusan twenty miles outside the city received first priority. The Peter line (formerly called the Pusan line) just beyond the city limits and then the Davidson and Naktong River lines farther out were next to be completed.[12]

Between these actions Ridgway received MacArthur's evacuation plan and instructions to prepare, as a matter of urgency, his supporting plan. Ridgway's staff completed a broad outline on the 10th. In concept, the Eighth Army would fight delaying actions to Pusan from the lettered and named lines already delineated. No supplies or equipment would be abandoned, all units would embark at Pusan with basic loads, and the entire ROK Army plus prisoners of war would be evacuated.[13] There would be no mass evacuation of South Korean civilians. Since features of the concept, such as the evacuation of the ROK Army, were subject to revision, Ridgway insisted that knowledge of the outline and of the operational and logistical details yet to be developed be limited to those American commanders and staff members required to participate in the planning.[14] But from any planning map showing the lettered and named lines previously established it was simple to project an Eighth Army withdrawal through shorter and shorter lines and off the peninsula through the Pusan port. This picture, available at several headquarters, partially nullified the

[11] Ibid.; Rad, G–1–1594 KCG, CG Eighth Army to CINCFE, 7 Jan 51; Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, p. 312; Ltr, Gen Ridgway to Maj Gen Chung Il Kwon, 11 Jan 51.

[12] Eighth Army Opns Plan 21, 8 Jan 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 8 Jan 51; Ltr, CG Eighth Army to CG 2d Log Comd, 13 Jan 51, sub: Defense Line Construction.

[13] Prisoners of war then numbered 137,791, of whom 616 were Chinese and 137,175 were North Koreans.

[14] DF, Eighth Army G3 to CofS, 10 Jan 51, sub: Evacuation Plan; Eighth Army Opn Plan 2–25, Draft no. 1, 10 Jan 51; Ltr, CG Eighth Army to CG 2d Log Comd, 10 Jan 51, sub: Operation Plan 2–25; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

special precaution Ridgway had applied.

Some light was shed on the evacuation issue in Tokyo on 15 January when General Collins, accompanied by Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Hoyt S. Vandenberg, arrived from Washington to confer with General MacArthur. Collins informed MacArthur that just before he and General Vandenberg left the United States it was agreed during a conference with President Truman that an evacuation of Korea would be delayed as long as possible without endangering the Eighth Army or the security of Japan. In this decision, Collins added, the objective was to permit the longest time possible for political action by the United Nations and the fullest opportunity to punish the Chinese. Collins also settled the matter raised by Ridgway of the disposition of the ROK Army. If an evacuation became necessary, President Truman wanted not only the ROK Army but also the members of the ROK government and the ROK police force, altogether more than a million people, taken out of Korea.[15]

Further clarification of the issue came later on the 15th after Collins and Vandenberg flew to Korea for a meeting with General Ridgway at Taegu. The main discussion centered on Ridgway's current operations and plans and on their relationship to the Washington concept of evacuation. Ridgway urged, lest his forces face a difficult withdrawal, that any high level decision to leave Korea be kept a closely guarded secret until he could get his forces below South Korea's main mountain ridges. Ridgway estimated, and by so doing answered the Joint Chiefs' question on timing previously posed to MacArthur, that he could stay in Korea at least two or three months. Collins also heard firsthand that the Chinese so far had made no move to push south of the Han, that when counterattacked they usually withdrew, that they seemed to be having supply and morale difficulties, and that the North Korean infiltration in the east was being checked. This information was encouraging, and quite in contrast to the dismal tone of MacArthur's reports to Washington.[16]

On the negative side, Ridgway brought up the need to improve the leadership of some corps and divisions. Except for allowing General Almond to dismiss General McClure, Ridgway had relieved no one. He had attempted instead to better the performance of his principal subordinates by exhortation and example. But after observing more poor performances during the withdrawals from line B to line D he was no longer hopeful that encouragement and admonishment would produce the quality he considered essential. Writing to General Collins on 8 January, Ridgway had urged the chief of staff and, through him, commander of Army Field Forces General Mark W. Clark, to insist that all general officers of combat commands "attain the highest standards for our military traditions. Let's pour on the heat in our training, and above all, let's be ruthless with our general officers if they fail to measure up."[17]

[15] Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, p. 313.

[16] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; Ridgway, Aide-Memoire for General J. Lawton Collins, CS, USA, 15 Jan 51, sub: Conference at EUSAK Main, 15 Jan 51; Rad, C–53613, Bradley from Collins for JCS, 17 Jan 51.

[17] Ltr, Ridgway to Collins, 8 Jan 51.



GENERAL COLLINS ARRIVES IN JAPAN *on 15 January 1951 for a conference with General MacArthur.*

At Taegu on the 15th Ridgway told Collins that he could not execute his future plans with his present leaders. But this statement was hyperbole, not a move to sweep the command posts clean. Nor was Ridgway recommending disciplinary action. Well aware that "not all battle casualties are caused by bullets," he largely attributed the lack of aggressiveness of some corps and division commanders to the wearing effect of four to six months of hard fighting and discouraging experience. His most pressing need, he told Collins, was for a corps commander. Ridgway recommended Maj. Gen. Bryant E. Moore, who had served under him in Europe and whom he knew to be a man who would "keep his feet on the ground and turn in a splendid performance at the same time." He planned to give General Moore the IX Corps and to move General Coulter to Eighth Army headquarters as deputy army commander responsible for maintaining liaison and representing Ridgway in dealing with the ROK government. In evidence that this change was no derogation of Coulter's professional competence, Ridgway recommended that he receive his third star. Collins approved both recommendations.[18]

[18] Ridgway, Aide-Memoire for Collins, 15 Jan 51, sub: Conference at EUSAK Main, 15 Jan 51; Ltr, Ridgway to Gen Mark W. Clark, 5 Mar 51; Rad, G–1–1299 KCG, CG EUSAK to CS USA, Personal for Haislip from Collins, 16 Jan 51; Interv, Mossman, Carroll, and Miller with Ridgway, 30 Nov 56.

Ridgway would soon lose two division commanders under a recent Department of the Army decision to rotate senior commanders from Korea to training posts in the United States, where their recent combat experience could be put to good use. Later in January General Barr, commander of the 7th Division, would leave Korea to become commandant of The Armor School at Fort Knox, Kentucky, and General Church would relinquish command of the 24th Division to become commandant of The Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia. During his conference with General Collins Ridgway requested that, in the future, any senior commander returned to the United States simply because he was worn out be protected under this rotation policy. Collins agreed.[19]

For all practical purposes, General Collins settled the evacuation issue in an announcement to the press following his meeting with Ridgway. Imbued with the Eighth Army commander's personal confidence and encouraged by the report on the Chinese, Collins told correspondents that "as of now, we are going to stay and fight."[20] When he returned to Tokyo on the 17th after a tour of the front that revealed considerable evidence of Ridgway's strong leadership, he sent his views to Washington. The Eighth Army was improving daily under Ridgway's command, he reported, and on the whole was in position and prepared to punish severely any mass enemy attack.[21] Before returning to the United States, Collins, with Vandenberg, met again with MacArthur and read this report. MacArthur, who as recently as 10 January had described his military position in Korea as "untenable," now agreed that the situation had improved enough to permit his forces to hold a beachhead in Korea indefinitely. But he reiterated his strong belief that the issue of whether to evacuate Korea was a purely political matter and should not be decided on military grounds.[22] The issue, of course, really had been resolved, and on a military basis.

Three days later MacArthur visited Eighty Army headquarters for the first time since Ridgway had assumed command. At a press conference there he confirmed the decision to stay. "There has been a lot of loose talk about the Chinese driving us into the sea," he told reporters. "No one is going to drive us into the sea."[23] The report Collins filed from Tokyo and briefings he and Vandenberg gave upon their return meanwhile reassured officials in Washington, including President Truman. They "were no longer pessimistic about our being driven out of Korea," Collins wrote later, "and, though it was realized that rough times were still ahead

[19] Ridgway, Aide-Memoire for Collins, 15 Jan 51, sub: Conference at EUSAK Main, 15 Jan 51; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; Collins, *War in Peacetime*, p. 257.

[20] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[21] Later, after Ridgway saw press reports of Collins' views, he radioed MacArthur: "May I suggest for such use as you think it might merit, my firm conviction that recently reported press statements that members of the JCS had announced 'the Eighth Army has plenty of fight left and if attacked will severely punish the enemy' are great understatements. This command, I am convinced, will do far more." See Rad, G–1–2148 KCG, CG EUSAK to CINCFE, Personal for General MacArthur, 26 Jan 51.

[22] Rad, C–53613, Bradley from Collins for JCS, 17 Jan 51; Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, p. 327.

[23] Statement to the Press, General MacArthur, 20 Jan 51, copy in CMH.

of us, no longer was there much talk of evacuation." In placing credit for resolving the evacuation issue, Collins emphasized that "General Ridgway alone was responsible for this dramatic change."[24]

Operation Wolfhound

For Ridgway, the decision to stay in Korea underlined the challenge of the complete tactical control of ground forces given him by MacArthur on 26 December. During World War II he had had the normal experience of operating under higher commanders with greater troop resources to whom he could turn for assistance. But in the present circumstances Ridgway had to make tactical decisions in full realization that with the exception of ten artillery battalions earmarked some time back for shipment to Korea after training, "what I already had [in combat units] was all there was." Ridgway's six Army divisions were still understrength in infantry and artillery troops; indeed, the Department of the Army had not yet been able to send replacements to the Far East at a rate that would raise the divisions to full strength by March, as predicted earlier.[25] (See Chapter II.) These limitations by no means ruled out offensive operations, but they dictated deliberate, cautious advances.

Accordingly, Ridgway warned General Milburn against permitting any situation to develop during the I Corps' reconnaissance in force on 15 January that would require additional forces to extricate those initially committed. Neither was Milburn to attempt a large scale exploitation, if that opportunity occurred, except on Ridgway's order. If all went according to instructions, Ridgway estimated, the operation would be concluded by dark on the 15th or, at the latest, on the 16th.[26]

Milburn assigned the main task to the 25th Division, instructing General Kean to attack the Suwon-Osan area with an infantry regiment and a battalion of tanks supported by artillery and engineers. Kean selected as the central force the 27th Infantry, from whose nickname the reconnaissance was tagged Operation WOLFHOUND. To protect the main force on the east, Milburn ordered the 3d Division to send a smaller force of infantry and tanks to cut the Suwon–Kumnyangjang-ni stretch of the lateral Route 20 and instructed the ROK 1st Division to send a battalion as far as Ch'on-ni, on Route 17 three miles south of Kumnyangjang-ni. Ridgway notified the IX Corps also to provide protection on the east, for which General Coulter directed the ROK 6th Division to station a battalion in blocking positions just east of Kumnyangjang-ni.[27]

On the 15th the South Korean battalions reached Ch'on-ni and Kumnyangjang-ni over Route 17 without contact. But the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, and two companies of tanks from the 3d Division which followed the same axis to Kumnyangjang-ni received small arms and heavy mortar fire after turning west for a mile on Route

[24] Collins, *War in Peacetime*, p. 255.

[25] MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, pp. 388–89. See also Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, pp. 342–44.

[26] Msg, Ridgway Personal for Milburn, 150900 Jan 51, copy in I Corps G3 Jnl file, 15 Jan 51.

[27] I Corps Opns Dir 38, 14 Jan 51; I Corps G3 Jnl, Sum, 14 Jan 51; Rad, CG–1–1066 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps and CG IX Corps, 14 Jan 51; Rad, IXACT–697, CG IX Corps to CG 6th ROK Div, 14 Jan 51; 25th Div OI 46, 14 Jan 51.

20 toward Suwon. An exchange of fire with some six hundred to eight hundred Chinese held the 3d Division force in place for the remainder of the day.[28]

WOLFHOUND forces elsewhere met no opposition but were delayed by damaged roads and bridges. The bulk of the reinforced 27th Infantry moving over Route 1 in the main effort halted for the night at the northern edge of Osan.[29] The 1st Battalion of the regiment and tanks following Route 39 near the coast stopped at Paranjang, ten miles to the west.[30]

As Colonel Michaelis' two columns converged on Suwon over Routes 1 and 39 on the morning of the 16th, General Milburn ordered the WOLFHOUND forces to withdraw to the Chinwi River at 1400. Having so far met only a few Chinese, who appeared to be stragglers, Michaelis ordered a motorized company of infantry and a company of tanks from each column to sprint ahead and inflict as much damage as possible on enemy forces discovered in Suwon before withdrawing. On the left, after the tank-infantry team moving on Route 39 to Route 20 and then turning east came to a destroyed bridge two miles southwest of Suwon, dismounted infantry continued the advance and investigated the southwestern edge of town without finding enemy forces. On Route 1 the tanks and infantry received fire from a strong Chinese force deployed five hundred yards south of Suwon and from machine gunners atop buildings inside town. Michaelis' team deployed and returned the fire for a half hour, then under the cover of air strikes withdrew out of range.[31]

The WOLFHOUND forces developed a corps outpost line along the Chinwi with a westward extension to the coast and pushed patrols back into enemy territory. Ridgway commended them, more for the offensive spirit displayed than for results achieved. But General Milburn estimated that the two-day operation had inflicted 1,380 enemy casualties, 1,180 by air strikes, 5 captured and 195 killed by ground troops. His own losses were three killed and seven wounded. The Chinese captives identified three armies, but since the 27th Infantry had taken these prisoners before running into the Chinese position at Suwon, the identity of the unit defending the town was obscure. Most pertinent, the reconnaissance revealed that no large force was located south of the Suwon–Kumnyangjang-ni line but that organized groups did hold positions along it.[32]

Having served up WOLFHOUND as an example, Ridgway on 20 January instructed his American corps commanders to devise similar operations. General Milburn responded on the 22d with an infantry-armor strike built around the 35th Infantry that in concept nearly duplicated Operation WOLFHOUND. Two small encounters

[28] I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; I Corps POR 375, 15 Jan 51, and 377, 16 Jan 51.

[29] The 89th Tank Battalion; 8th Field Artillery Battalion; Battery B, 90th Field Artillery Battalion; Company A, 65th Engineer Battalion; 25th Reconnaissance Company; a detachment of the 25th Signal Company; and two tactical air control parties were attached.

[30] 25th Div OI 46, 14 Jan 51; I Corps POR 375, 15 Jan 51; 27th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[31] I Corps G3 Jnl, Sum, 16 Jan 51; I Corps POR 378, 16 Jan 51; 27th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 27th Inf Unit Rpt no. 16, 16 Jan 51.

[32] I Corps G3 Jnl, Sum, 16 and 17 Jan 51; Ltr, CG 25th Div for general distribution, 19 Jan 51, sub: Commendation. See also various reports on Operation WOLFHOUND in the 27th Inf Comd Rpt, Jan 51.

during the one-day operation resulted in three enemy killed and one captured with no losses to the regiment. The strike confirmed the absence of strong enemy forces within ten miles of the I Corps front. It also raised the possibility that North Korean forces were now operating south of Seoul when the captive identified his unit as the *8th Division*, part of the *I Corps*.[33]

Task Force Johnson

During the week before Ridgway issued his 20 January directive he had prodded General Coulter to increase the strength, continuity, and depth of the IX Corps' reconnaissance. He also had directed Coulter to move the 1st Cavalry Division's 70th Tank Battalion from its deep reserve location near Sangju in the Naktong River valley to Chinch'on, fifteen miles behind the corps front. From Chinch'on the tankers were to back up the ROK 6th Division and also were to be employed in a reconnaissance in force wherever Coulter saw an opportunity.[34]

Regardless of Ridgway's dissatisfaction, Coulter was certain that his patrols had shown the IX Corps sector below the Kumnyangjang-ni–Ich'on–Yoju road to be free of any large enemy force. Since 12 January the 24th Division had kept a battalion in Yoju, and on the 21st General Church dispatched another battalion accompanied by tanks and a battery of artillery to Ich'on with instructions to stay until pushed out. At the corps left, the ROK 6th Division had not established outposts that far forward but had placed a battalion at Paengam-ni on secondary Route 55, six miles short of the Kumnyangjang-ni–Ich'on stretch of Route 20.[35]

After receiving Ridgway's instructions on the 20th, Coulter scheduled for the 22d a one-day operation built around the 70th Tank Battalion in which his force was to push north of Route 20 between Kumnyangjang-ni and Ich'on. The 1st Cavalry Division was to mount the operation, developing and punishing the enemy in the objective area without becoming heavily engaged.[36]

General Gay organized a task force under the 8th Cavalry's Col. Harold K. Johnson that added infantry, artillery, and engineers to the tank battalion.[37] Colonel Johnson was to move up Route 55 through the South Korean outpost at Paengam-ni to Yangji-ri on Route 20, then investigate east and west along the road and the high ground immediately above it.[38]

Johnson's principal engagement was an exchange of fire with an enemy company discovered on the reverse slopes of the first heights above Yangji-ri. The task force suffered two killed and five wounded, while enemy casualties were

[33] Rad, GX–1–1645 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CGs I, IX, and X Corps, 20 Jan 51; I Corps Opn Dir 39, 21 Jan 51; I Corps G3 Jnl, Sum, 20 and 22 Jan 51; Ltr, CG 25th Div to CG I Corps, 26 Jan 51, sub: Evaluation of the Limited Objective Attack, 22 Jan 51.

[34] Rads, G–1–980 and CG–1–1535 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG IX Corps, 13 and 19 Jan 51.

[35] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 21 Jan 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 24th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[36] IX Corps Opn Dir 23, 20 Jan 51.

[37] Task Force Johnson included the 70th Tank Battalion, the 3d Battalion and a platoon of the heavy mortar company of the 8th Cavalry, a battery of the 99th Field Artillery Battalion, and a platoon of the 8th Engineer Combat Battalion.

[38] 1st Cav Div Opn Dir 1–51, 21 Jan 51; 1st Cav Div, Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; TF Johnson Opn O no. 1, 21 Jan 51.

estimated at fifteen killed by ground troops and fifty by air strikes. The lack of contact before reaching Yangji-ri supported General Coulter's conviction that the area below Route 20 was unoccupied, while the Yangji-ri exchange supplied further evidence that organized enemy groups were located along the road.[39]

Operation Thunderbolt

Ridgway, however, wanted a clearer picture of enemy dispositions below the Han before committing forces to general offensive operations. On 23 January his G–2 reported the bulk of the *XIII Army Group* to be below Seoul in the area bounded by Route 20 on the south and the Han River on the east and north. Air reconnaissance had been reporting steady troop movements below the Han but did not confirm the presence of such a large force in that region. Nor had recent ground contacts developed any solid enemy defense at the area's lower edge. Resolving the ambiguities, Ridgway judged, required a deeper and stronger reconnaissance in force, which he scheduled for the morning of the 25th under the name Operation THUNDERBOLT.[40]

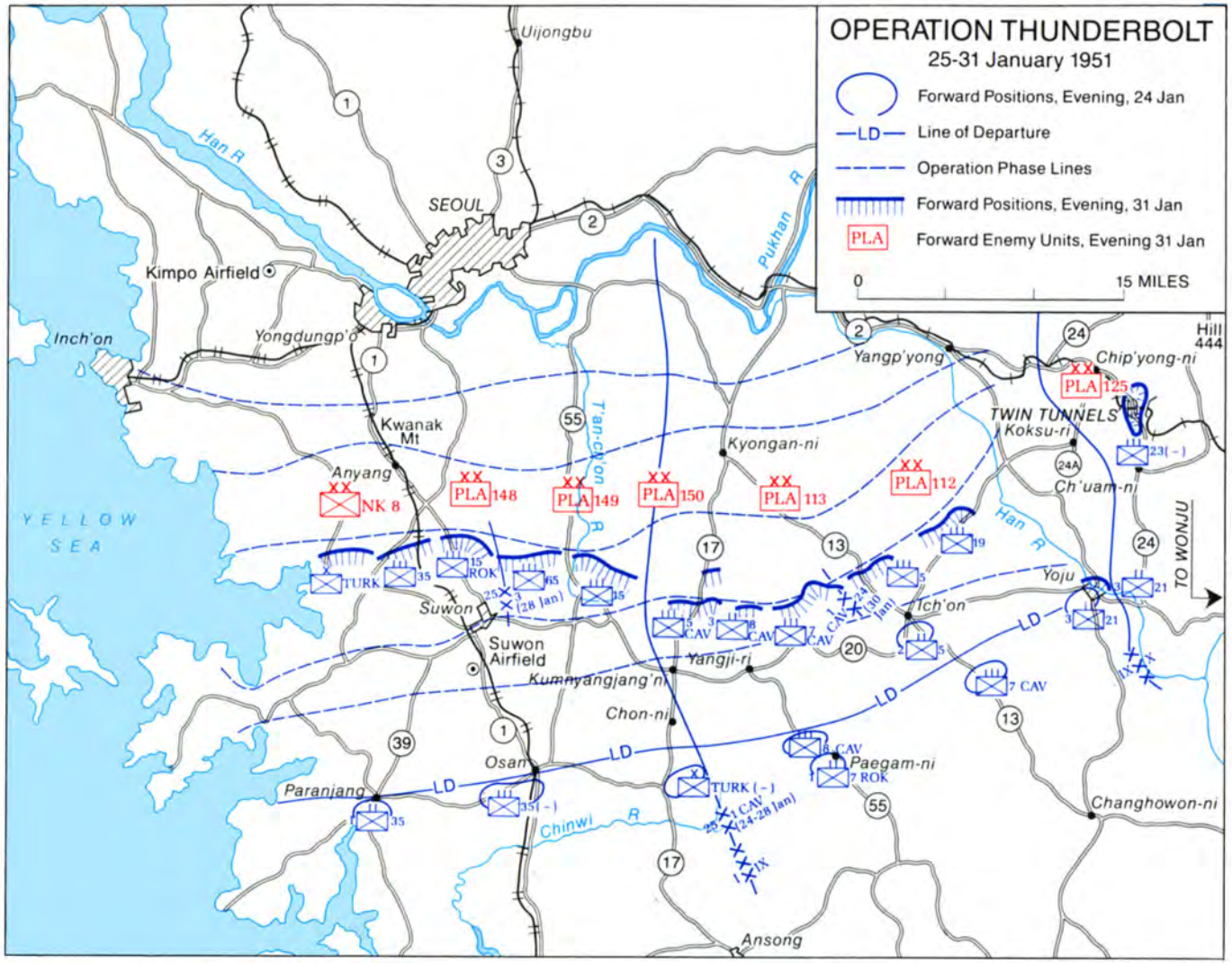
In the THUNDERBOLT operation General Milburn and General Coulter were to reconnoiter as far as the Han, each using not more than one American division reinforced by armor and, at the discretion of each corps commander, one South Korean regiment. Each corps force was to establish a base of operations on the night of the 24th along a line of departure ten miles ahead of line D, from the coast through Osan to Yoju, then advance to the Han in multiple columns through five phase lines about five miles apart. *(Map 18)* To insure a fully coordinated reconnaissance, Ridgway made Milburn responsible for ordering the advance from each phase line in both corps zones; to guarantee the security of the advance, he instructed Milburn to order each successive move only after he had clearly determined that no enemy group strong enough to endanger any column had been bypassed. Ridgway intended that his ground troops would have ample air support. He planned to postpone the operation if for any reason on the 25th General Partridge could not assure two successive days of maximum close support. Ridgway also arranged for the I Corps to be able to call down gunfire from a heavy cruiser and two destroyers of Task Force 95 stationed off Inch'on.[41]

The X Corps was to protect the right flank of the THUNDERBOLT advance. On 23 January Ridgway had his deputy chief of staff, Brig. Gen. Henry I. Hodes, deliver instructions to General Almond requiring the X Corps to maintain contact with the IX Corps at Yoju and to prevent enemy movements south of the Yoju-Wonju road. Almond, as he had been instructed three days earlier, also was to send

[39] TF Johnson Periodic Operations Report, 22 Jan 51; TF Johnson Periodic Intelligence Report, 22 Jan 51.

[40] MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, p. 381; Eighth Army PIR 195, 23 Jan 51.

[41] Rads, CG–1–1895 KGOO, CG–1–1888 KGOO, and CG–1–1889 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps and CG IX Corps, all 23 Jan 51; Rad, GX–1–1929 KAR, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps, 24 Jan 51; Rad, CTF 95 to COMCRU DIV 1, 23 Jan 51; Rad, CTG 95.1 to CTE 95.12, 24 Jan 51.


OPERATION THUNDERBOLT
25-31 January 1951
Forward Positions, Evening, 24 Jan
LD Line of Departure
Operation Phase Lines
Forward Positions, Evening, 31 Jan
PLA Forward Enemy Units, Evening 31 Jan
0
15 MILES
Uijongbu
Han R
SEOUL
Pukhan R
Kimpo Airfield
Inch'on
Yongdungp'o
Yangp'yong
Chip'yong-ni
Hill 444
PLA 125
TWIN TUNNELS
Koksu-ri
Kwanak Mt
T'an-ch'on R
Kyongan-ni
Anyang
NK 8
PLA 148
PLA 149
PLA 150
PLA 113
PLA 112
Ch'uam-ni
YELLOW SEA
TURK
15 ROK
65
Han R
TO WONJU
Yoju
Suwon
Suwon Airfield
Tch'on
Yangji-ri
Kumnyangjang'ni
Chon-ni
Osan
Paegam-ni
7 ROK
Paranjang
TURK (-)
Changhowon-ni
Chinwi R
Ansong

MAP 18



CLOSE AIR SUPPORT *given the 7th Cavalry near Inch'on, 26 January 1951.*

forces in diversionary forays north of this road.[42]

In a personal effort to develop the disposition of enemy forces before Operation THUNDERBOLT began, Ridgway on the 24th reconnoitered the objective area from the air with General Partridge as his pilot. The two generals flew low over the territory twenty miles ahead of the I and IX Corps fronts for two hours but saw no indications of large enemy formations. Although this flight did not conclusively disprove the current G–2 estimate, Ridgway was more confident that his reconnaissance in force would reach the Han, and he also saw possibility of holding the ground covered. That night, from a forward command post established at I Corps headquarters in Ch'onan, he ordered Milburn and Coulter to prepare plans for holding their gains once their forces achieved the fifth phase line stretching eastward from Inch'on. The two corps commanders completed these plans on the 25th. Thus the THUNDERBOLT reconnaissance tentatively assumed the nature of a general attack within a few hours after it started.[43]

In the I Corps zone, the first

[42] Rad, GX–1–1645 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CGs I, IX, and X Corps, 20 Jan 51; Rad, GX–1–2270 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG X Corps, 28 Jan 51 (confirms oral instructions delivered by Gen Hodes on 23 Jan 51).

[43] MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, p. 381; Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, p. 263; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; I Corps Opn Plan "Exploitation," 25 Jan 51; IX Corps Opn Plan 11, 25 Jan 51.

THUNDERBOLT phase line lay four miles short of Suwon in territory already well examined. Milburn picked the 25th Division reinforced by the Turkish brigade to make the advance. According to the scheme of moving in multiple columns, General Kean sent the 35th Infantry up Routes 39 and 1 in the west, the Turks over a secondary road between Routes 1 and 17 and up 17 itself on the east. Out along the coast, a fifth column made up of the reconnaissance companies of the 25th Division and the 3d Division screened the west flank of the advance.[44]

The initial phase line in the IX Corps zone traced the high ground just above Route 20 which included the area previously reconnoitered by Task Force Johnson. Coulter again ordered the 1st Cavalry Division to advance. Choosing to start in two columns, General Gay sent the 8th Cavalry north on Route 55 toward Yangji-ri, where Colonel Johnson had met resistance on the earlier mission, and the 7th Cavalry up Route 13 into the territory above Ich'on.[45]

Screening wide to the flanks of each axis lest they bypass an enemy force, the THUNDERBOLT columns on the 25th developed islands of opposition, mostly light, along or just below the first phase line. Sharp counterattacks hit the Turks on the secondary road east of Route 1 and the 8th Cavalry in the Yangji-ri area, but in both instances the Chinese eventually broke contact. Captives identified only two divisions of the *50th Army* across the thirty-mile front of the advance. This disclosure and the general pattern of light resistance indicated that the *XIII Army Group* had set out a counter-reconnaissance screen to shield defenses or assembly areas farther north. According to the prisoners, some positions would be found between two and five miles farther north. This location would place them generally along the second THUNDERBOLT phase line, which coincided with Suwon and a stretch of Route 20 in the west, then tipped northeast to touch the Han ten miles above Yoju.[46]

On the 26th General Milburn allowed the I Corps columns to move toward the second phase line while the IX Corps forces continued to clear the area along the first. Again against light, scattered opposition, the two columns of the 35th Infantry converged on Suwon and occupied the town and airfield by 1300. Elsewhere in both corps zones the advance became a plodding affair as the troop columns searched east and west of their axes while driving north for short gains through tough spots of resistance. The Chinese fought back hardest at Kumnyangjang-ni, which the Turks finally cleared at 1930, and in the heights above Yangji-ri, where the 8th Cavalry lost 28 killed and 141 wounded while managing little more than to hold its position. The inability of the 8th Cavalry to move forced the 7th Cavalry to the east to stand fast along the first phase line just above Ich'on.[47]

Gains on the 27th were short everywhere, more because of the requirements for close coordination and a thorough ground search than enemy

[44] I Corps Opn Dir 40, 23 Jan 51; 25th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[45] IX Corps Opn O 11, 23 Jan 51; 1st Cav Div Opn O 1–51, 24 Jan 51.

[46] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; Eighth Army PIR 197, 25 Jan 51; 25th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 1st Cav Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[47] 25th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 1st Cav Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; Eighth Army PIR 198, 26 Jan 51.

resistance. The deepest I Corps advance was on the left, where the 35th Infantry moved about two miles above Suwon, while the leading Turk troops on the right got about a mile above Route 20 into the T'an-ch'on River valley between Suwon and Kumnyangjang-ni. The heaviest fighting again occurred near Yangji-ri when the 5th Cavalry passed through the 8th and attacked west. Killing at least three hundred Chinese before reaching Kumnyangjang-ni, the 5th Cavalry then turned up Route 17 to reach the first phase line a mile and half to the north. The 7th Cavalry, in the meantime, continued to hold near Ich'on.[48]

Captives taken during the day identified the third, and last, division of the *50th Army*. The full deployment of the *50th* and the absence of contact with any other army on the THUNDERBOLT front supported the previous conclusion that the *50th* had a screening mission. The intelligence rationale now taking shape assumed the Chinese units originally moving south of the Han to have started a gradual reduction of forward forces after determining generally the extent of the Eighth Army withdrawal. Behind the *50th Army* screen, the remaining five armies of the *XIII Army Group* and the North Korean *I Corps* apparently were now grouped just above and below the Han to rest and refurbish those Chinese who had been in combat longest.[49]

To meet the probability of stronger resistance nearer the Han and to prepare for holding all ground gained, Ridgway on the 27th authorized Milburn to add the 3d Division to the I Corps advance. Milburn gave General Soule the Turkish brigade zone east of Suwon and sent the Turks west to advance along the coast toward Inch'on. On the 28th Soule's 65th and 15th Regiments moved north astride Route 55 in the T'an-ch'on valley while the Turks shifted westward and joined the advance of the 35th Infantry. Against moderate, uneven resistance, the enlarged I Corps force reached within two miles of the third phase line, which lay roughly halfway between the line of departure and the Han.[50]

To the east, where resistance in the Yangji-ri–Kumnyangjang-ni area had kept the IX Corps THUNDERBOLT forces slightly behind the others, the 1st Cavalry Division received clearance on the 28th to advance to the second phase line. In the slow going imposed by careful screening and moderate opposition, the 5th Cavalry, moving along Route 17, reached the new objective while the 7th Cavalry, advancing above Ich'on in a wide zone astride Route 13, stopped for the night about a mile short. The cavalrymen had encountered two new regiments, one athwart each axis of advance. These, as identified by Chinese captured later during sharp night assaults against the 7th Cavalry, belonged to the *112th Division, 38th Army*. Previously assembled in a rest area about seven miles above the front, the *112th* had received sudden orders to move south and oppose the IX Corps advance.[51]

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[48] 25th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 1st Cav Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[49] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 26 Jan 51; Eighth Army PIR 199, 27 Jan 51, and 200, 28 Jan 51.

[50] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 27 Jan 51; I Corps G3 Jnl, Sum, 27 Jan 51; I Corps Opn Dir 41, 27 Jan 51; 25th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; I Corps G3 Jnl, Sum, 28 Jan 51.

[51] 1st Cav Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; IX Corps PIR 125, 29 Jan 51.

In anticipation of heavier opposition to the IX Corps advance and to help hold the ground taken, Ridgway on the 28th instructed General Coulter to commit the 24th Division. Coulter gave Maj. Gen. Blackshear M. Bryan, who had replaced General Church on 26 January, until the morning of the 30th to assemble the 24th behind the Ich'on-Yoju stretch of Route 20, whence the division was to advance on the corps right.[52]

Also on the 28th Ridgway again instructed General Almond to maintain contact with the IX Corps at Yoju, to block enemy moves below the Yoju-Wonju road, and to create diversions north of the road.[53] X Corps forces, having only recently check the North Korean advance east of Route 29 and reoccupied Wonju, were then just beginning to carry out similar instructions received on the 20th and 23d.

Enemy small arms, machine gun, mortar, and artillery fire, as well as minefields (though neither extensively nor well laid) kept gains short in both corps zones on the 29th. Information supplied by prisoners taken during the day indicated that six divisions now opposed the THUNDERBOLT advance. In the area between the west coast and Route 1, the North Korean *8th Division* stood before the Turks and the left flank units of the 35th Infantry. West to east between Routes 1 and 17, the Chinese *148th, 149th,* and *150th Divisions* of the *50th Army* opposed the 25th and 3d Divisions and the left flank forces of the 1st Cavalry Division. From Route 17 eastward to the Han, the Chinese *113th* and *112th Divisions* of the *38th Army* occupied positions in front of the remainder of the cavalry division.[54]

Even though the opposition had tripled, the dotted pattern of enemy positions, mostly company-size, made clear that the THUNDERBOLT forces were still battling a counter-reconnaissance screen. There was now some doubt that a main enemy line would be developed below the Han. Prisoners made no mention of one but spoke mainly of regroupment. Neither did air observers, although they warned of prepared positions along Route 1 north to Yongdungp'o. Thus the refurbishing needs of the *XIII Army Group* might be great enough to keep it from establishing solid defenses south of the Han, or the group commander might have chosen not to stand with the river at his back.[55]

Exercising a prerogative given in Ridgway's initial order, Milburn and Coulter on the 30th each added a South Korean regiment to their THUNDERBOLT forces to help push through the enemy's tighter screen. With the opening of the 24th Division's advance on the IX Corps right on that date, the additions doubled the forces who had begun the reconnaissance five days earlier. Ground gains against the six enemy divisions nevertheless were hard won and measured in yards during the last two days of January. Milburn's forces barely gained the third phase

[52] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; IX Corps Opn Dir 25, 29 Jan 51; 24th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[53] Rad, GX–1–2270 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG X Corps, 28 Jan 51.

[54] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; Eighth Army PIR 201, 29 Jan 51.

[55] Ibid.; Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, Jan 51.

line on the 31st, and IX Corps forces reached little farther than the second.[56]

Ridgway in the meantime converted his reconnaissance in force to a full-fledged attack. On the 30th, although his assault forces were some distance short of the fifth phase line, where he originally had planned to establish the remainder of the I and IX Corps, he authorized Milburn and Coulter to bring their remaining units forward from line D to hold the ground that had been gained. He did not release these forces for commitment in the advance, but he did take steps to ease the progress of the attack by instructing Milburn to plan a strong armored thrust through the coastal lowland on the west flank. Beyond this, he directed his G–3 to arrange a maximum air effort to isolate the battlefield south of the Han.[57]

He also began to widen the offensive. On the 30th he asked General Almond and the ROK Army chief of staff, General Chung, for recommendations on sending the X Corps and the ROK III Corps forward in the fashion of Operation THUNDERBOLT. The purpose of the advance, he explained, would be to disrupt the North Korean *II* and *V Corps*, which were still regrouping east of Route 29. On 2 February he ordered the ROK I Corps to join the advance. The South Koreans were to move as far north as the east coast town of Kangnung.[58]

When executed, the instructions Ridgway issued at the turn of the month would set the entire Eighth Army front in forward motion. In terms of ground to be gained and held, however, Ridgway intended that this motion carry his forces no farther than the lower bank of the Han in the west and a general line extending eastward from the Han River town of Yangp'yong through Hoengsong in the center of the peninsula to Kangnung on the coast. Only if enemy forces elected to withdraw above the 38th parallel would he consider occupying a defense line farther north, and in this context he asked his staff near the end of January for recommendations on the most advantageous terrain lines for the Eighth Army to occupy during the spring and summer months. Otherwise, his current judgment was that the ground farther north, to and including the 38th parallel, offered no defensible line worthy of the losses risked in attempting to take it.[59]

In limiting the Eighth Army's defense line in the west to the lower bank of the Han, Ridgway excluded Seoul as an objective. Occupying the capital city, in his estimation, would provide no military advantage but would, rather, produce the disadvantage of placing a river immediately in rear of the occupying forces. He had in fact directed his staff to prepare plans for crossing the Han and capturing the city. But, in line with his views, these plans were not to be carried out unless there arose an op-

[56] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 25th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 1st Cav Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 24th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; I Corps G3 Sit Overlay, 31 Jan 51; IX Corps G3 Sit Overlay, 31 Jan 51.

[57] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51.

[58] Rad, GX–1–2257 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA and CG X Corps, 30 Jan 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 31 Jan 51; Rad, GX–2–118 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG X Corps and C/S ROKA, 2 Feb 51.

[59] Ltr, Ridgway to MacArthur, 3 Feb 51; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, p. 386.

portunity to destroy a major enemy force in which the retaking of Seoul was an incidental possibility.[60]

In any event, Ridgway entertained no thought of a prolonged effort to hold any line. Knowing that there would be no major reinforcement of the Eighth Army and assuming that enemy forces would keep trying to drive the Eighth Army out of Korea or destroy it in place, he saw no wisdom in accepting the heavy attrition that a static defense seemed certain to entail. In sum, he considered the permanent acquisition of real estate an impractical, if not unachievable, objective. In his mind, inflicting maximum losses on the Chinese and North Koreans, delaying them as long as possible if and when they attempted to advance, preserving the strength of his own forces, and maintaining his major units intact remained the only sound bases of planning, both for current operations and at longer range.[61]

Ridgway informed General MacArthur of these tactical concepts by letter on 3 February. MacArthur agreed that occupying Seoul would yield little military gain, although he believed that seizing the city would produce decided diplomatic and psychological advantages. On the other hand, he stressed to Ridgway the military worth of nearby Kimpo airfield and the port of Inch'on, both below the Han, and urged their capture.[62] These facilities already had become objectives of Operation THUNDERBOLT.

To Ridgway's larger concept of holding along the Han River–Yangp'yong–Hoengsong–Kangnung line unless enemy forces voluntarily withdrew above the 38th parallel, MacArthur responded in terms of developing the enemy's main line of resistance. If Ridgway developed the line below the Han, he should not attempt to break through it, but if he reached the Han without serious resistance, he should continue north until he had defined the enemy line or discovered that no line existed.[63]

As a general concept, MacArthur had in mind "to push on until we reached the line where a balance of strength was achieved which was governed by the relativity of supply."[64] Ridgway, on the other hand, was primarily interested in holding whatever line best suited his basic plan of punishing the enemy as severely as possible at the least cost to his own forces. The difference in concept was perhaps subtle but was substantial enough to prompt Ridgway to bring up the matter again when MacArthur next visited Korea.

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[60] Ltr, Ridgway, to MacArthur, 3 Feb 51; Rad, CICOS–14–376, CG Eighth Army to C/S Eighth Army, 26 Jan 51.

[61] Ltr, Ridgway to MacArthur, 3 Feb 51.

[62] Ibid.; Rad, C–54811, CINCUNC to CG Eighth Army, Personal for Ridgway, 4 Feb 51.

[63] Rad, C–54811, CINCUNC to CG Eighth Army, Personal for Ridgway, 4 Feb 51.

[64] MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, p. 384.

CHAPTER XIII

Advance to the Han

Roundup Preparations

When General Almond received General Ridgway's 30 January question on a X Corps–ROK III Corps operation similar to THUNDERBOLT, he was in the process of extending the X Corps' diversionary effort ordered earlier by Ridgway. Having achieved the Yoju-Wonju-Yongwol line against little opposition, Almond was planning a strong combat reconnaissance fifteen miles above this line. Searching that deep at corps center and right could apply pressure on the North Korean *V* and *II Corps* concentrated above Hoengsong and P'yongch'ang. At the same time, the 2d Division, due to move north along the corps left boundary as far as Chip'yong-ni, eight miles east of Yangp'yong, could protect the right flank of the IX Corps as the THUNDERBOLT operation continued.[1]

In the recent course of protecting the IX Corps right, a joint motorized patrol from the 2d and 24th Divisions on 29 January had moved north out of the Yoju area on the east side of the Han to a pair of railroad tunnels and a connecting bridge standing east and west athwart a narrow valley four miles south of Chip'yong-ni. Chinese in the high ground overlooking the tunnels quickly cut the patrol's route of withdrawal, forced the group into hasty defenses on the nearest rises of ground, and opened a series of assaults. The Chinese finally backed away after air strikes were called in by the pilot of an observation plane who spotted the ambush and after a motorized company of infantry reinforced the group about 0330 on the 30th. The waylaid patrol had suffered five dead, twenty-nine wounded, and five missing out of a total strength of forty-five.[2]

At the discovery of Chinese at the twin tunnels General Almond ordered the 2d Division to identify and destroy all enemy units in that area. The 23d Infantry received the assignment. On 31 January Colonel Freeman sent his 3d Battalion and the attached French battalion to the tunnels after placing the 37th Field Artillery Battalion within a thousand yards of the tunnel area in direct support.[3]

The infantry battalions reached and established a perimeter around the tunnel-bridge complex without sighting enemy forces. But from farther north Colonel Freeman's forces themselves were observed by the *125th Divi-*

[1] X Corps OI 84 and 86, 28 Jan 51, and OI 87 and 88, 29 Jan 51; X Corps Opn Plan 20, 31 Jan 51; 2d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Jan 51; 2d Div OI 17, 31 Jan 51.

[2] X Corps Comd Rpt, Incls for Jan 51, Incl 4; Ltr, Hq, 23d Inf, 13 Mar 51, sub: After Action Report Covering Operations of the 23d Regimental Combat Team During the Period 290630 Jan to 152400 Feb 51.

[3] Ibid.

sion, 42d Army. Near dawn on 1 February the *375th and 374th Regiments* attacked from the north and northeast, respectively, and after daylight the *373d Regiment* assaulted the perimeter from the northwest and southwest. In hard, close-in fighting lasting all day, the defending battalions, relying heavily on artillery fire and on more than eighty air strikes, drew far more blood and finally forced the Chinese to withdraw. Freeman's forces counted 1,300 enemy bodies outside their perimeter and estimated total enemy casualties at 3,600. Their own losses were 45 killed, 207 wounded, and 4 missing.[4]

Judging from the two sharp actions at the twin tunnels, the Chinese were determined to retain control of Chip'yong-ni. They had good reason. The town was so situated that the force occupying it could control movements over Route 2 to the west, over Route 24 to the northeast, over Routes 24 and 24A below town, and thus through the Yangp'yong-Ch'ungju segment of the Han valley stetching to the southeast behind it. Eighth Army possession of Chip'yong-ni, furthermore, would pose a threat of envelopment to enemy forces opposing the I and IX Corps below the Han. For these same reasons General Almond planned to seize Chip'yong-ni and incorporated this plan in his overall recommendations for an operation styled after THUNDERBOLT.[5]

Also behind Almond's proposals were late January intelligence reports of a strong enemy force assembling around Hongch'on, at the intersection of Routes 24 and 29 twenty miles northeast of Chip'yong-ni and fifteen miles north of Hoengsong. This force, apparently part of the North Korean *V Corps*, could be preparing to advance southwest on Route 24 through Chip'yong-ni, then down the Han valley toward Yoju and Ch'ungju. Or the *V Corps* might again push forces south on Route 29 through Hoengsong toward Wonju. To spoil either move, Almond considered Hongch'on the proper main objective of a X Corps attack.[6]

To disrupt both the *V Corps* and *II Corps*, he outlined a coordinated X Corps–ROK III Corps advance, Operation ROUNDUP. *(Map 19)* The current corps combat reconnaissance limit, generally the Chip'yong-ni–Hoengsong–P'yongch'ang line, was to be the line of departure for ROUNDUP and was to be occupied in a preliminary advance by the 2d Division on the left, the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team in the center, and the 7th Division on the right. This advance would base American units far enough forward to support a thrust at Hongch'on, which Almond planned South Korean forces would make.[7]

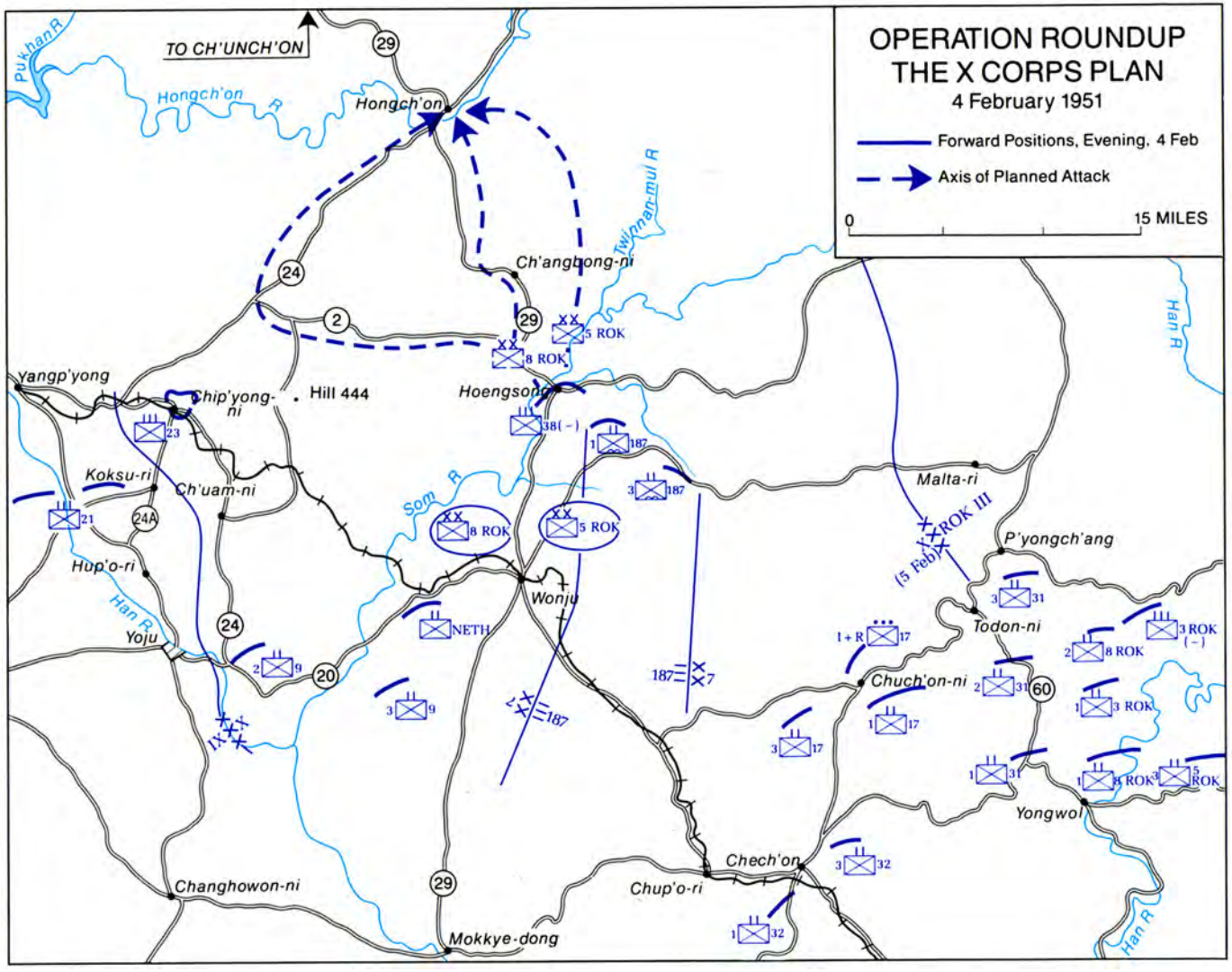
He proposed a flanking operation against Hongch'on by the ROK 5th and 8th Divisions accompanied by artillery and armor drawn from the American units on the line of departure. From behind the 2d Division on the left, part of the ROK 8th Division was to advance north over Route 29 while the main body moved northwest to cut Route 24 roughly halfway between Chip'yong-ni

[4] Ibid.; Ltr, G3 Eighth Army to CG Eighth Army, 3 Feb 51, sub: Results of 23d Infantry and French Battalion Action at 010450 February 1951; Study, Col. Paul Freeman, "Wonju Thru Chip'yong: An Epic of Regimental Combat Team Action in Korea," Apr 51, copy in CMH.

[5] X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.; X Corps Opn Plan Roundup, 1 Feb 51; X Corps OI 92 and 93, 1 Feb 51.


OPERATION ROUNDUP
THE X CORPS PLAN
4 February 1951
Forward Positions, Evening, 4 Feb
Axis of Planned Attack
0
15 MILES
TO CH'UNCH'ON
Pukhan R
Hongch'on R
Hongch'on
Ch'anghong-ni
Twinnan-mul R
Han R
Yangp'yong
Chip'yong-ni
Hill 444
Hoengsong
Koksu-ri
Ch'uam-ni
Som R
Malta-ri
P'yongch'ang
Hup'o-ri
Wonju
Yoju
Todon-ni
Chuch'on-ni
Yongwol
Changhowon-ni
Chup'o-ri
Chech'on
Mokkye-dong
5 ROK
8 ROK
38(-)
187
NETH
ROK III
(5 Feb)
3 ROK (-)

MAP 19

and Hongch'on, then turned northeast to hit Hongch'on itself. On the right, the ROK 5th Division was to advance north through the mountains east of Route 29 through part of the area occupied by the North Korean *II Corps*, then swing west against Hongch'on.[8]

The 2d Division was to appoint one light artillery battalion, a medium battery, an automatic weapons battery, and a motorized infantry battalion to move with and directly support the ROK 8th Division. These units eventually constituted Support Force 21. The 7th Division was to furnish a similar Support Force 7 for the ROK 5th Division. In each instance the artillery commander of the American division was to coordinate all artillery fire within his own zone and within the zone of the South Korean division he was supporting.[9] Later, because control of the South Korean advance was centralized at corps headquarters and did not involve either American division headquarters per se, a question—warranted or not—would arise over who should order the displacement of these support forces.

Five armored teams, each comprising a company of infantry and a platoon of tanks, also were designated, two by the 2d Division, two by the 7th Division, and one by the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team.[10] Only three were used. Teams A and B from the 2d Division were attached to the ROK 8th Division at the outset of the advance; Team E from the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team later opened operations under the control of the corps armored officer.

By 5 February, the date set for opening the Hongch'on strike, General Almond expected the ROK III Corps to have come up even with the X Corps' line of departure. On the 5th the ROK III Corps should start forward through successive phase lines, coordinating each phase of movement with the X Corps' progress, to destroy North Korean *II Corps* forces in zone and to protect the X Corps' right flank.[11]

General Ridgway approved Almond's plan on 1 February and made Almond responsible for coordinating the X Corps and ROK III Corps attacks. Ridgway cautioned him, however, that for the remainder of Operation THUNDERBOLT his continuing mission of protecting the IX Corps' right flank would be the X Corps' overriding tactical consideration. The next day Ridgway ordered the ROK I Corps to capture the east coast town of Kangnung in an advance coordinated with the progress of the ROK III Corps.[12]

The X Corps' preliminary advance to the line of departure was largely but not fully effected by the target date. At the corps west flank, the 23d Infantry moved north of the twin tunnels and occupied Chip'yong-ni, surprisingly against no more than token opposition. At corps center, the 38th Infantry, now commanded by Col. John G. Coughlin, occupied Hoengsong, and the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team

[8] X Corps Opn Plan Roundup, 1 Feb 51.

[9] Ibid., Annex C, X Corps Plan, and Appendix C (Arty) to Annex C; X Corps, Memo for Lt Col Chiles, signed S. H. M., 4 Feb 51, giving the composition of artillery and armored support. Two other support forces, one from each division, were designated but never formed.

[10] X Corps, Memo for Lt Col Chiles, signed S. H. M., 4 Feb 51.

[11] X Corps Opn Plan Roundup, 1 Feb 51.

[12] Rad, GX–2–118 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG X Corps and C/S ROKA, 2 Feb 51; X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51.

the ground immediately southeast.[13] The 7th Division at the corps right was not yet on the line. Its 17th and 31st Regiments were still approaching over the Chech'on-P'yongch'ang and Yongwol-P'yongch'ang roads. Behind the line traced by these clumps of Americans, the ROK 5th and 8th Divisions were in final assemblies for the Hongch'on attack, one on either side of Route 29.[14]

The assault divisions of the ROK III Corps, the ROK 7th and 9th, also were somewhat short of the line of departure on the 5th, yet near enough to satisfy General Almond. The day before, at a corps commanders' conference at Suwon, he notified General Ridgway that he was ready to begin Operation ROUNDUP. Ridgway that day ordered a westward shift of the X Corps–ROK III Corps boundary to give the South Koreans more of the territory north of P'yongch'ang. Hence, when ROUNDUP opened at 0800 on the 5th, General Yu's two divisions faced the bulk of the North Korean *II Corps* while General Almond's two assault units confronted the North Korean *V Corps* in the Hoengsong-Hongch'on area.[15]

Thunderbolt Continued

Amid the ROUNDUP preliminaries, the I and IX Corps to the west continued their THUNDERBOLT advance, pushing infantry and tanks supported by artillery and air strikes—and at the far west by naval gunfire—through isolated but stubborn defenses. *(Map 20)* The advances, slowed by careful lateral coordination and a full search of the ground, covered two to six of the remaining fifteen miles to the Han. The IX Corps registered the deepest gains as General Moore, now in command, shoved the 1st Cavalry and 24th Divisions up even with General Milburn's 25th and 3d Divisions.[16] The THUNDERBOLT front by 5 February traced a line running east and west through a point not far below Anyang on Route 1.[17]

As a result of General Ridgway's 31 January instructions to his G–3 to arrange air attacks to isolate the battlefield south of the Han, the daily army air requests to the Fifth Air Force came second only to close support. The requests called for round-the-clock interdiction with special attention to nighttime operations and with the intensity to prevent enemy forces from moving north or south of the Han. General Partridge worked the army requests into his daytime armed reconnaissance program and stepped up a current night intruder effort along the Han from a point north of Kimpo airfield eastward to a point near Yangp'yong. To prevent useless destruction in Seoul, Partridge instructed his pilots not to attack residential areas unless military targets were discovered within them.[18]

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[13] Colonel Peploe, the former commander of the 38th Infantry, had been transferred to IX Corps headquarters, where he became chief of staff and was promoted to brigadier general.

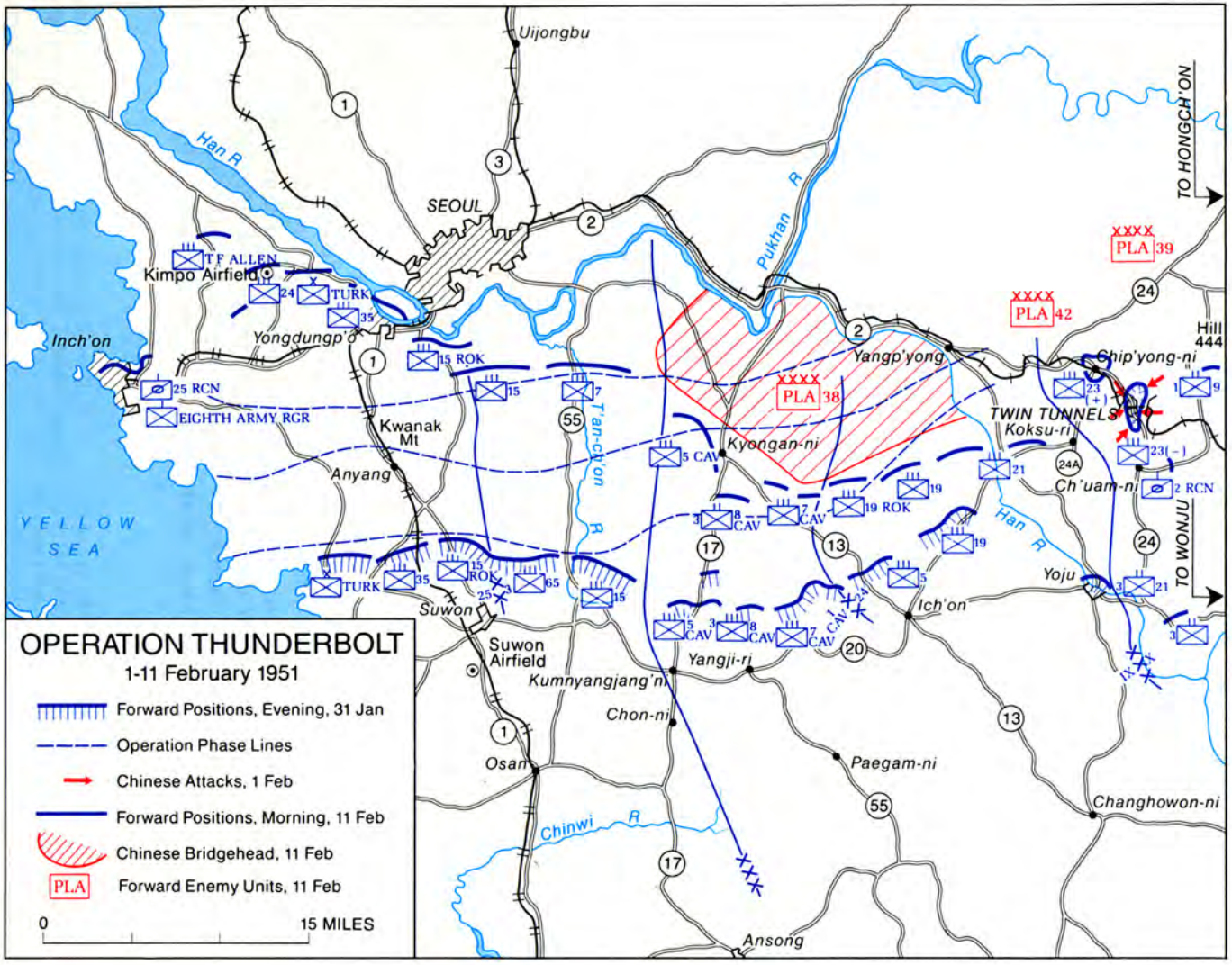
[14] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 1–4 Feb 51; X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51.

[15] Notes of Corps Commanders' Conference, Suwon, 041130 February, 4 Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 4 Feb 51.

[16] General Moore took command of the IX Corps on 31 January.

[17] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 1–4 Feb 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51.

[18] Ltrs, Eighth Army G3 Air, signed by Gen Allen, CofS, to CG Fifth Air Force, 1–4 Feb 51; Rad, OPC


OPERATION THUNDERBOLT
1-11 February 1951
Forward Positions, Evening, 31 Jan
Operation Phase Lines
Chinese Attacks, 1 Feb
Forward Positions, Morning, 11 Feb
Chinese Bridgehead, 11 Feb
PLA Forward Enemy Units, 11 Feb
0
15 MILES
Uijongbu
SEOUL
Han R
Pukhan R
TO HONGCH'ON
TO WONJU
Kimpo Airfield
TF ALLEN
Inch'on
Yongdungp'o
Kwanak Mt
Anyang
YELLOW SEA
T'an-ch'on R
Suwon
Suwon Airfield
Kumnyangjang'ni
Chon-ni
Osan
Yangji-ri
Kyongan-ni
Yangp'yong
Koksu-ri
TWIN TUNNELS
Chip'yong-ni
Hill 444
Ch'uam-ni
Yoju
Ich'on
Paegam-ni
Changhowon-ni
Chinwi R
Ansong
PLA 38
PLA 39
PLA 42
15 ROK
19 ROK
25 RCN
2 RCN
EIGHTH ARMY RGR
TURK
5 CAV
7 CAV
8 CAV
IX

MAP 20

Judging from reported results over the first four days of February, the air attacks were something less than intensive. Night intruder sorties totaled fifty-five, ranging from six on the 2d to twenty-two on the 3d. Targets reported destroyed or damaged included 50 troops, 1 antiaircraft gun, 14 vehicles, 4 railroad cars, 13 supply installations, and 517 buildings.[19]

The air effort had little effect on the gradual retraction of enemy forces from below the Han sensed late in January. The screen in front of the I and IX Corps by 5 February was one division stronger after the *114th Division, 38th Army*, appeared opposite the 24th Division on the IX Corps right. The addition raised the divisions in contact to seven: the North Korean *8th* on the west, the three of the *50th Army* in the center, and the three of the *38th Army* on the east. Behind the screen, much of the North Korean *I Corps'* reserve strength remained below the Han, the *47th Division* occupying Inch'on, the *17th Division* located in the Seoul-Yongdungp'o area. But the *XIII Army Group* commander had reassembled almost all of his reserves above the river and had shifted the *42d* and parts of the *39th* and *40th Armies* eastward into the area above Yangp'yong and Chip'yong-ni. The *66th Army*, whose troops had not moved below the Han, also was east and north of Seoul. As last known, it was assembled near Kap'yong.[20]

The newest prisoners and documents captured by the I and IX Corps indicated that the enemy units still south of the Han would keep only light forces engaged and would deploy in depth for a leapfrog delaying action pending an enemy offensive around 8 February. The choice of date seemed to be tied either to the opening of the Chinese New Year on the 6th or to the third birthday of the North Korean Army.[21] The eastward shift of considerable Chinese strength into the territory above Yangp'yong and Chip'yong-ni, as did the earlier engagements at the twin tunnels, pointed to the Han valley below Yangp'yong as the likely main axis of an enemy advance. Heavy enemy vehicular traffic also was sighted from the air, all of it moving south and over half of it moving from the Wonsan area toward Ch'unch'on. This shift could mean that the *IX Army Group* was rejoining the battle and was sending forces for employment in the central region.[22]

The indications that the enemy would employ only light forces and delaying tactics in front of the I and IX Corps provided some assurance that the THUNDERBOLT forces would reach their Han objectives. The enemy concentration to the northeast raised the same danger of envelopment that had partially prompted the Eighth Army's withdrawal to line D a month earlier, but it was possible that General

676, CG Fifth Air Force to CINCFE et al., 31 Jan 51; Rad, OPC 709, CG Fifth Air Force to CINCFE et al., 1 Feb 51; Rad, OPC 730, CG Fifth Air Force to CINCFE et al., 2 Feb 51; Rad, OPC 753, CG Fifth Air Force to CINCFE et al., 3 Feb 51.

[19] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, G3 Air Briefing Rpts, 2–5 Feb 51; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51.

[20] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; Eighth Army PIRs 204–208, 1–5 Feb 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51.

[21] The *North Korean People's Army* was officially activated on 8 February 1948.

[22] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; Eighth Army PIRs 204–208, 1–5 Feb 51.

Almond's ROUNDUP advance would spoil the enemy buildup and quite probable that the X Corps could at least protect the IX Corps' right flank.

The I Corps Reaches the Han

At the resumption of THUNDERBOLT on the 5th, the two I Corps assault divisions spearheaded their advance with tanks. General Milburn previously had arranged but had not yet called for the strong armored thrust along the west coast ordered by Ridgway on 31 January. On Milburn's further order, two tank battalions, two infantry battalions, an artillery battalion, and a company of engineers were to assemble under Brig. Gen. Frank A. Allen, Jr., assistant commander of the 1st Cavalry Division. When called, Task Force Allen was to exploit any breakthrough that might occur, especially in the 25th Division's zone, and was particularly to block the lateral Inch'on-Yongdungp'o road and cut off enemy forces located west of Kimpo airfield.[23]

Between 5 and 8 February the smaller armored forces ranging ahead of the I Corps' methodical infantry advance were frequently delayed but seldom hurt by numerous minefields located on the curves and shoulders of roads and on bypasses around destroyed bridges. The mines, mostly wooden boxes with five to six pounds of explosives in each, were poorly laid and camouflaged. Most were visible, and mine detectors picked up the metallic igniters of those more deeply buried.[24]

Gains of one to four miles through the 8th carried the 25th Division on the left within five miles of the Inch'on-Yongdungp'o road and took the forwardmost force of the 3d Division at the right within six miles of the Han itself. Beginning on the 6th, Milburn's forces captured troops from the North Korean *47th Division* in the area north and northeast of Anyang. By the 8th it appeared that all or part of the North Korean *17th Division* had relieved the *47th* at Inch'on; that the latter had joined the North Korean *8th Division* in holding back the I Corps, taking up positions near the center of the corps zone; and that the bulk of the *50th Army* was sideslipping to the east.[25]

The strongest enemy positions facing the I Corps on the 8th lay between Routes 1 and 55 across heights centered on Kwanak Mountain, due south of Seoul, where the North Korean *47th Division* had been identified. Since the Kwanak heights were the last defensible ground on the southern approaches to Seoul, their capture could climax the I Corps advance to the Han. General Ridgway emphasized this probability to General Milburn at a meeting of corps commanders on the 8th and urged him to push vigorously against the Kwanak defenses. Earlier, after learning of the *47th Division*'s entry on line, Ridgway asked Admiral Joy to arrange an amphibious landing demonstration at Inch'on to discourage further strengthening of the enemy screen and perhaps draw off some opposing forces. Joy dispatched ships from Sasebo, Japan, and from Pusan to join those already in

[23] I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; I Corps Opn Dir 43, 2 Feb 51.

[24] I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51.

[25] Ibid.; Conference Notes, Conference Between Eighth Army Commander and Corps Commanders at Tempest Tac, 8 February 1951, copy in CMH.

Inch'on waters for a demonstration on the 10th.[26]

Snow and low-hanging clouds shut down air operations on the 9th but had little ill effect on the I Corps. The 25th Division captured Kwanak Mountain and, west of Route 1, advanced its infantry line within two miles of the Inch'on-Yongdungp'o road. Armored forces from the division reconnoitered farther west and north within sight of Inch'on and Yongdungp'o. On the corps right, the 3d Division moved two to three miles north, and a small armored column, Task Force Meyer, spurted up Route 55 to become the first corps troops on the Han. Minefields harassed the advance, but assault forces otherwise consistently reported "no resistance."[27]

General Milburn judged that the *50th Army* forces previously in the 3d Division's zone had withdrawn above the Han or out of the I Corps zone to the east. The North Korean *8th* and *47th Divisions*, on the other hand, might have moved northwest to join the North Korean *17th Division* just above the Inch'on-Yongdungp'o road to defend the Kimpo peninsula. As part of a plan to spoil any such effort, Milburn on the night of the 9th called for Task Force Allen to assemble behind the 25th Division. The division was to seize the Inch'on-Yongdungp'o road by noon on the 10th, and Task Force Allen was then to advance above the road in multiple columns to clear the Kimpo peninsula.[28]

The landing demonstration at Inch'on scheduled for the 10th now seemed apt to hinder rather than ease the I Corps advance. The 25th Division armored force that had looked at Inch'on during the day had seen no enemy activity. The enemy's abrupt withdrawal apparently had included the Inch'on garrison. Since a simulated landing might prompt the North Koreans to reoccupy Inch'on and in turn make the port more difficult for the 25th Division to capture, the amphibious feint was canceled. The naval force assembled off Inch'on, however, did plan to investigate the port on the 10th using a small party of ROK marines acquired from an offshore security force on Tokchok-to, an island thirty miles southwest of Inch'on.[29]

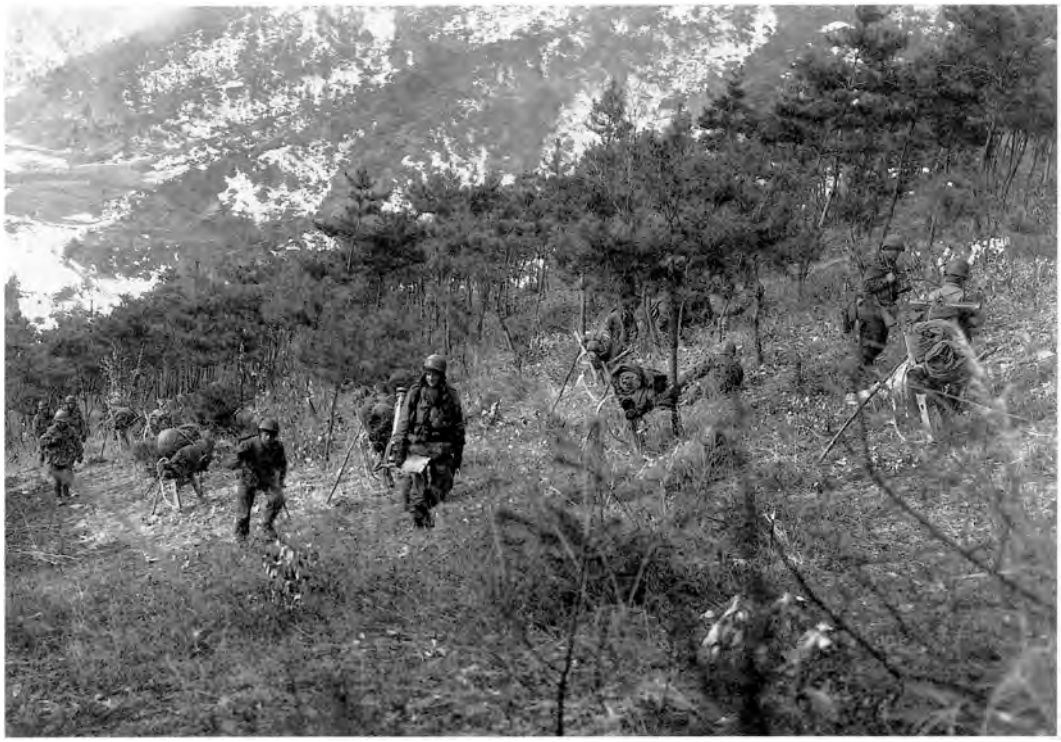
Snow showers through the morning of the 10th again canceled most of the I Corps' air support, but again with no ill effect. A total absence of resistance except for more antitank mines allowed the 25th Division to seize the Inch'on-Yongdungp'o road an hour ahead of schedule. Under clearing skies, Task Force Allen moved into the Kimpo peninsula in two columns promptly at noon. The column on the east aimed first for Kimpo airfield due north, then for the road leading northwest along

[26] Ibid.; Rad, GX–2–621 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CINCFE, 6 Feb 51; Rad, GX–2–699 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CTG 95.1, 7 Feb 51; Rad, MCN 32110, COMNAVFE to CTF 90 and CTF 95, 6 Feb 51; Rad, MCN 32674, COMNAVFE to CINCFE, 7 Feb 51; Rad, MCN 32587, COMNAVFE to COMSEVENFLT, 7 Feb 51; Field, *United States Naval Operations, Korea*, p. 324.

[27] Eighth Army G3 Air Briefing Rpt, 10 Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 9 Feb 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51.

[28] I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; I Corps Opn Dir 44 (Operation PACEMAKER), 9 Feb 51.

[29] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 10 Feb 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; Rad, MCN 34233, CTF 95 to CTG 95.1, 9 Feb 51; Rad, MCN 34279, CTE 95.14 to CTG 95.1, 9 Feb 51; Rad, MCN 34332, CTG 95.1 to CTE 95.14, 9 Feb 51.



MEN OF THE 5TH REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM ADVANCE *toward the Han River, 5 February 1951.*

the lower bank of the Han. The column on the west pushed up the center of the peninsula. The east force occupied the airfield without a contest in midafternoon, and by nightfall both columns were well up the peninsula, eight miles above the Inch'on-Yongdungp'o road. One machine gun position, a short fire fight with the tail of an enemy column withdrawing across the frozen Han, twelve stragglers captured, and a little long range fire were the only evidences of the North Korean *I Corps*.[30]

Behind Task Force Allen the 24th, 35th, and attached ROK 15th Regiments of the 25th Division moved to the Han between Kimpo airfield and the edge of Yongdungp'o. In the only brush with enemy forces, a South Korean patrol that moved across the ice into the lower edge of Seoul was chased back by small arms fire. On the corps right, the 15th and 7th Infantry Regiments of the 3d Division joined Task Force Meyer at the Han, moving onto the high ground between Yongdungp'o and Route 55. The only contact was an exchange of fire with enemy forces in position on the north bank of the river.[31]

[30] I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Air Briefing Rpt, 11 Feb 51.

[31] I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51.

On the opposite corps flank, the 25th Division's reconnaissance company and the Eighth Army Ranger company had moved westward onto the cape holding Inch'on in company with Task Force Allen's noontime advance above the Inch'on-Yongdungp'o road. Neither the Rangers, moving along the southern shore of the cape, nor the reconnaissance troops, heading directly for Inch'on, met resistance. The reconnaissance company entered the city at 1700, almost simultaneously with eighty ROK marines sent ashore in three small powerboats by Task Force 95. As suspected, the North Korean garrison was gone.[32]

The Rangers found a small spot of resistance on the 11th on a ridge a mile south of Inch'on. The Rangers and some of the reconnaissance troops eliminated it early in the afternoon. Task Force Allen meanwhile resumed clearing the Kimpo peninsula on the morning of the 11th, its troops in the van reaching the tip before noon. Immediately after General Allen reported the peninsula clear, General Milburn dissolved the task force and returned its components to their parent units now consolidating along the Han.[33]

The IX Corps Finds a Bridgehead

IX Corps gains from 5 through 8 February were slow and short. The resistance emulated that encountered by the I Corps, but the terrain was much rougher. Methodical coverage of the ground consumed considerable time. As of the 8th, General Moore nevertheless believed his corps could reach the Han in a reasonable length of time.[34]

Under a wet sky on the 9th, Moore's forces met decidedly stiffer resistance, including counterattacks that forced some corps units into short withdrawals. In sharp contrast to the virtual disappearance of enemy forces before the I Corps on that date, the Chinese opposite the IX Corps apparently planned to retain a bridgehead below the Han. The bridgehead area as defined by Moore's forces on the 9th and 10th was about fifteen miles wide, its west anchor located on the Han nine miles north of Kyongan-ni, its east anchor on the river four miles below Yangp'yong. The U-shaped forward edge dipped four to seven miles below the Han across a string of prominent heights between those points.[35]

By holding this position the Chinese could prevent IX Corps observation of the Yangp'yong area, already recognized as the possible starting point of an enemy attack down the Han valley. This theory gained support on the 10th when in clearing afternoon weather air observers sighted large numbers of enemy troops moving east on Route 2 along the north bank of the Han immediately behind the bridgehead area.[36]

Operation Roundup

As THUNDERBOLT forces came up to the Han on the 10th, General Almond's ROUNDUP operation was in

[32] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entries 1600 and 1850, 10 Feb 51; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; Field, *United States Naval Operations, Korea*, p. 324.

[33] I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51.

[34] Conference Notes, Conf Between Eighth Army Commander and Corps Commanders at Tempest Tac, 8 Feb 51.

[35] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51.

[36] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 10 Feb 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51.

its sixth day. Although the advance started in the THUNDERBOLT pattern, the harsh mountains ahead of the X Corps and ROK III Corps inhibited a complete ground search such as the I and IX Corps were making. In the X Corps zone, the ROK 5th and 8th Divisions advanced in multiple columns astride the best roads, tracks, or trails permitting passage through the convoluted ground. The ROK troops climbed the higher ridges only when necessary to reduce an enemy position. The main routes for the ROK 8th were Route 29 and a mountain road—actually a poor stretch of Route 2—reaching west from Route 29 at a point three miles above Hoengsong. *(Map 21)* The ROK 5th's principal paths followed the upstream traces of two small rivers east of Route 29. Physical contact between columns was rare, especially in the ROK 8th Division zone where the columns diverged as they proceeded north and northwest.

After three days Almond perceived that the attack on Hongch'on was as much a battle against terrain as against enemy opposition. Resistance did stiffen after an easy opening day, but the defending forces stayed to the tops of hills and allowed the South Koreans to bring down heavy artillery concentrations and to maneuver around them. The ROK assault forces, in Almond's estimation, had gained confidence over the three days, substantially from the presence and support of the American artillery and tanks. As of the 8th the success of the advance thus appeared largely to depend on overcoming terrain limitations on infantry maneuver, tank movement, and artillery forward displacement.[37]

Against the combination of enemy hilltop defenses and difficult terrain, the two ROK divisions by 8 February had moved three to six miles northwest, north, and northeast of Hoengsong. Almond decided on the 8th that the ROK 8th Division's main effort to envelop Hongch'on from the west could be eased by committing another division. Currently, one of the 8th Division's regiments was moving north astride Route 29 while the other two were pushing through rough ridges to the northwest to cut Route 24. If Almond set another force in the center to move up Route 29, the ROK 8th could make its enveloping move in full strength.[38]

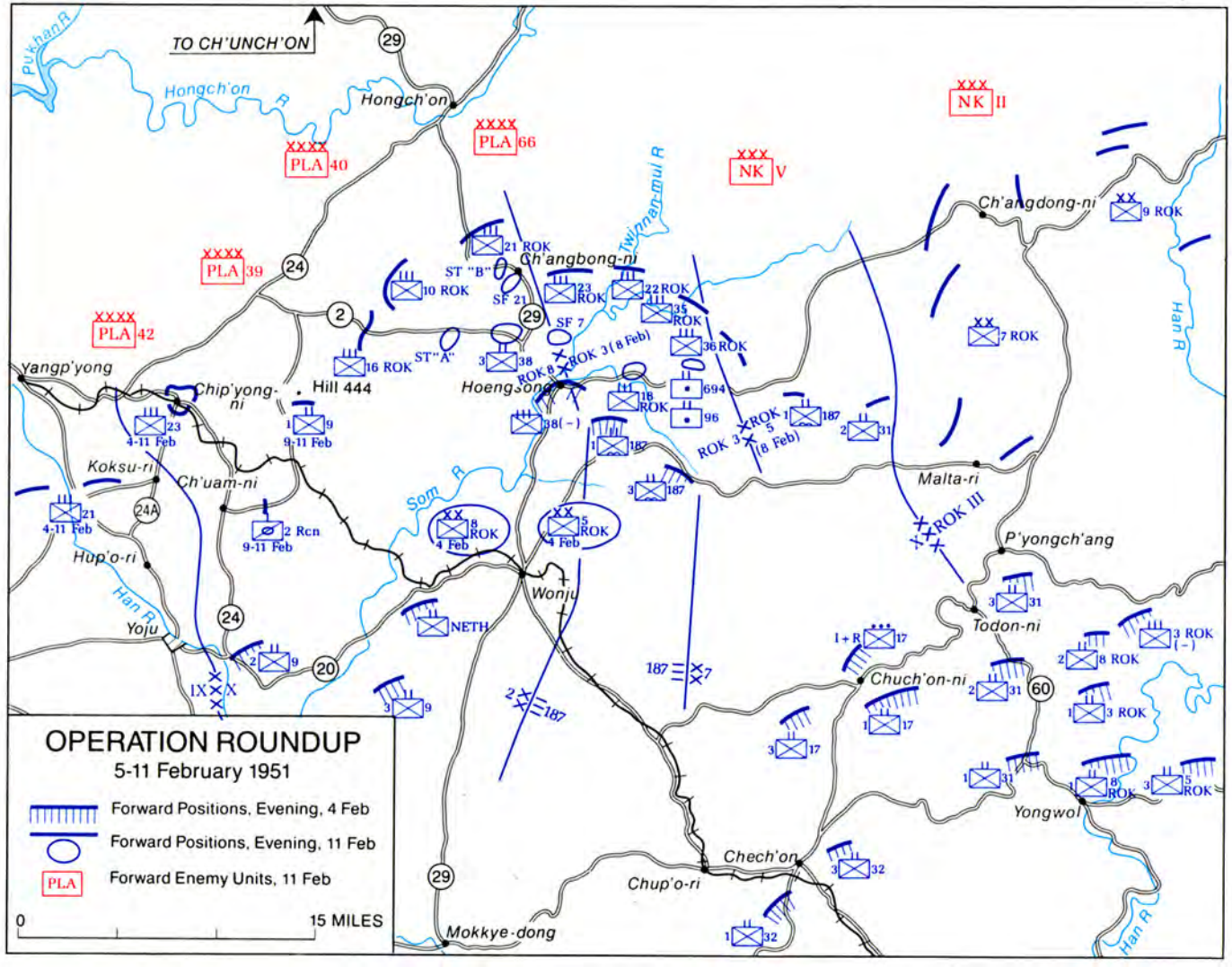
Almond mistrusted his own reserve division, the ROK 2d, still weak from losses in the Chinese New Year's offensive. He chose not to reduce the strength of the 2d or 7th Division defenses along the line of departure, and he could not use the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team. On 4 February General Ridgway had notified him that the airborne troops were scheduled to be taken off the line and that he was not to give them an offensive role.[39]

On the 8th Almond asked Ridgway for the ROK 3d Division, then in ROK III Corps reserve. Ridgway hesitated to take General Yu's only reserve. On the other hand, Yu's assault divisions were reporting good progress through light to moderate resistance. Moving astride Route 60 from P'yongch'ang toward Ch'angdong-ni, seventeen miles to the north, the ROK 7th had advanced one regiment within three miles of the latter town. On the corps right, the ROK 9th had moved above Chong-

[37] X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; Conference Notes, Conf Between Eighth Army Commander and Corps Commanders at Tempest Tac, 8 Feb 51.

[38] X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51.

[39] Ibid.; Eighth Army SS Rpt, Office of the CG, Feb 51, Incl 4.


TO CH'UNCH'ON
Pukhan R
Hongch'on R
Hongch'on
PLA 40
PLA 66
NK II
NK V
PLA 39
PLA 42
Twinnan-mul R
Ch'angdong-ni
9 ROK
7 ROK
Han R
21 ROK
Ch'angbong-ni
ST "B"
10 ROK
SF 21
23 ROK
22 ROK
35 ROK
SF 7
36 ROK
ROK 3 (8 Feb)
ST "A"
16 ROK
38
Hoengsong
694
96
18 ROK
38 (-)
187
31
ROK 5 (8 Feb)
Yangp'yong
Chip'yong-ni
Hill 444
23
4-11 Feb
9
9-11 Feb
Koksu-ri
Ch'uam-ni
21
4-11 Feb
2 Rcn
9-11 Feb
Hup'o-ri
Som R
8 ROK
4 Feb
5 ROK
4 Feb
Malta-ri
ROK III
P'yongch'ang
Wonju
NETH
Yoju
Han R
9
IX X X
3 9
2 187
187 7
Todon-ni
31
I + R 17
3 ROK (-)
8 ROK
Chuch'on-ni
3 ROK
17
Yongwol
8 ROK
5 ROK
Chech'on
32
Chup'o-ri
Mokkye-dong
OPERATION ROUNDUP
5-11 February 1951
Forward Positions, Evening, 4 Feb
Forward Positions, Evening, 11 Feb
PLA
Forward Enemy Units, 11 Feb
0
15 MILES

MAP 21

son through the upper Han valley for almost twenty miles. Since Yu could get help from the U.S. 7th Division, whose 31st Regiment was now following the ROK 7th Division above P'yongch'ang, Ridgway agreed to the transfer of the ROK 3d for the duration of Operation ROUNDUP, and Almond instructed the division to be in position for an advance above Hoengsong on the morning of the 11th.[40]

While Almond was arranging to assist the ROK 8th Division's northwestward swing, a greater problem arose east of Route 29. On 7 February the ROK 5th Division, then advancing with two regiments forward, had encountered a North Korean force estimated at four thousand. The division commander planned to eliminate the enemy group on the 8th by bringing up his reserve regiment on the left for an attack to the east concurrent with attacks to the north and west by the center and right regiments. But his plan was spoiled when the right regiment, the ROK 27th, was hit on the 8th by hard North Korean attacks from the northwest and northeast. One battalion was scattered, and the remainder of the regiment was forced to withdraw.[41]

The regiment continued to receive attacks until the early morning hours of the 9th when the North Koreans pulled away to the northwest. The alarming note was that some or all of these forces had come out of the ROK III Corps zone. The North Korean *II Corps* apparently was shifting forces westward to join the *V Corps* in opposing the X Corps.[42]

General Almond was obliged to prevent further incursion on his right if the envelopment of Hongch'on was to succeed. On the 10th he directed the ROK 5th Division to advance and establish blocking positions facing northeast near the corps boundary generally on the ground held by the ROK 27th Regiment when it was attacked, some thirteen miles northeast of Hoengsong. Along with this move, he ordered the U.S. 7th Division to send a battalion northwest out of the area above P'yongch'ang toward a ground objective sixteen miles due east of Hoengsong. This advance, he intended, would drive enemy forces located near the corps boundary into the path of the ROK 5th Division's attack. Almond also ordered a battalion of the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team to move into position nine miles east of Hoengsong to deepen the east flank blocking effort at the right rear of the ROK 5th Division.[43]

The ROK 3d Division, assembling just east of Hoengsong, was now to become the right arm of the maneuver against Hongch'on. Behind the protection of the ROK 5th Division to the east, the ROK 3d was to move north in two columns through the heights east of Route 29 to a point due east of Hongch'on. There the right column

[40] X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; Conference Notes, Conf Between Eighth Army Commander and Corps Commanders at Tempest Tac, 8 Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 7 Feb 51; X Corps OI 99, 8 Feb 51.

[41] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 7 and 8 Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Briefing for CG, 8 Feb 51.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 8, 9, and 10 Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entry 1305, 11 Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Briefing for CG, 11 Feb 51; X Corps OI 101 and 102, 10 Feb 51.

was to face east in blocking positions while the left column turned west toward the town. Both moves, the ROK 5th Division's blocking effort at the right and the ROK 3d's attack to the north, were to begin at noon on the 11th.[44]

Support Force 7 was now to support the ROK 3d Division. General Almond directed the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team to place its 674th Field Artillery Battalion in direct support of the ROK 5th Division and ordered the 96th Field Artillery Battalion, a corps unit previously assigned to reinforce the fires of Support Force 7, to switch its reinforcement to the 674th.[45]

Meanwhile, amid the adjustments in the X Corps zone between 8 and 11 February, the ROK III Corps continued to gain ground. The ROK 7th Division fought through Ch'angdong-ni and by evening of the 11th was echeloned left in regimental positions oriented north and northwest from three miles above Ch'angdong-ni to seven miles below town. On the corps right, the ROK 9th Division pushed nine more miles up the Han valley, making contact with the ROK I Corps' Capital Division in the high peaks rising east of the Han. Resistance was light on the 8th and 9th but stiffened over the next two days when General Yu's forces ran into parts of the North Korean *31st Division*. Obviously, not all of the *II Corps* had shifted west into the X Corps zone.[46]

The ROK I Corps, moving up the east coast under General Ridgway's 2 February order to seize Kangnung, more than achieved its objective. With naval gunfire support from the Task Force 95 contingent in the Sea of Japan, and against fainthearted opposition by the *69th Brigade*, a unit of the North Korean *III Corps* that disappeared altogether on the 8th, the Capital Division advanced in consistently long and rapid strides. In the Taebaek heights rising west of the coastal road, one regiment by evening of the 11th held positions five miles above Route 20, which meandered west and southwest out of Kangnung to Wonju. The remainder of the division moving over the coastal road occupied Kangnung, then Chumunjin eleven miles farther north, and at nightfall on the 11th had forces in position three miles above the latter town.[47]

Gains in the X Corps zone remained much shorter. East of Route 29, the ROK 3d Division by dark on 11 February advanced through light opposition to positions five miles above Hoengsong. Next east, the ROK 5th Division reoriented and moved through moderate resistance within four miles of its east flank blocking positions. The 1st Battalion, 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team, meanwhile went into the position designed to place it at the right rear of the ROK 5th Division; from the P'yongch'ang area the 2d Battalion, 31st Infantry, easily seized its terrain objective to the northwest in the effort to drive North Korean forces into the ROK 5th Division's path. The South Koreans, however, were yet some distance from their objectives.[48]

[44] Ibid.

[45] X Corps OI 100, 9 Feb 51, and OI 101, 10 Feb 51, Annex B (Arty).

[46] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 8, 9, 10, and 11 Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Briefing for CG, 9, 10, 11, and 12 Feb 51.

[47] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 11 Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Briefing for CG, 12 Feb 51.

[48] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 9, 10, and 11 Feb 51; Eighth Army PORs 638, 639, and 640, 10 Feb 51, and PORs 641, 642, and 643, 11 Feb 51; Eighth Army G3

On and west of Route 29, the ROK 8th Division found lighter resistance, enemy forces tending to withdraw before actually obliged to do so. By nightfall on the 11th the 21st Regiment stood astride Route 29 nine miles north of Hoengsong. To the west, the 10th and then the 16th Regiments held positions ten miles northwest of Hoengsong along the crest of the mountains between Hoengsong and Route 24. A three-mile gap separated the 21st and 10th Regiments, and about a mile of open space stood between the 10th and 16th.[49]

Two miles behind the 21st, the tanks and infantry of Support Team B, which had been attached to the ROK regiment, were assembled along Route 29. Another mile down the road, the infantry and artillery of Support Force 21 occupied positions near the town of Ch'angbong-ni. Below Support Force 21, the 3d Battalion, 38th Infantry, on General Almond's order had moved up from Hoengsong into a blocking position at the junction of Route 29 and the mountain road leading west. Support Team A, whose tanks and infantry were attached to the 16th Regiment, was two miles farther out on the mountain road. Still farther out, between Support Team A and the front of the 16th, which lay across the mountain road, were the ROK 20th and 50th Field Artillery Battalions and the command posts of both the 10th and 16th Regiments.[50]

The nearest of the 2d Division defenses around Chip'yong-ni now stood four miles southwest of the 16th Regiment. After securing Chip'yong-ni before the opening of Operation ROUNDUP, the 23d Infantry had established a perimeter around the town, and Colonel Freeman had run patrols east, west, and north. The patrol encounters with enemy forces were mostly minor, but by 9 February one particularly strong position was discovered on Hill 444 some four miles east of Chip'yong-ni. On the 9th Freeman sent a battalion east, and the 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry, came north from the Yoju area to reduce the enemy strongpoint. The latter battalion occupied the height on the 11th and thus held the 2d Division position closest to the ROK 8th Division.[51]

The Newest Army Estimate

Given continued reports of eastward Chinese shifts and taking them as clear signs of an imminent enemy offensive in the west central region, General Ridgway late on the 11th instructed General Almond to patrol but not to attempt further advances toward Route 24 in either the 2d Division or ROK 8th Division zones until the IX Corps had reduced the enemy's Han bridgehead below Yangp'yong. To move forward while the IX Corps was still held

Jnl, Briefing for CG, 10 and 11 Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entry 2115, 11 Feb 51.

[49] Ibid.

[50] X Corps Comd Rpt, Feb 51, Book of Inclosures, Incl 2, The Battle of Hoengsong; Ltr, Col Edwin J. Messinger, CO 9th Inf, to CG 2d Div, 16 Feb 51, sub: Report of Investigation, with Incls 1 and 2; Testimony Before the Eighth Army IG by Maj George Kessler, KMAG Advisor to G1 and G4, ROK 8th Div, hereafter cited as Kessler Testimony (with overlays), 15 Feb 51.

[51] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 11 Feb 51; X Corps Comd Rpt, Feb 51, Book of Inclosures, Incl 1, Battle of Chip'yong-ni.

up could isolate and overextend Almond's leftmost units in the area where the *39th, 40th, 42d,* and *66th Armies* were obviously massing.[52]

In view of an imminent enemy attack, Ridgway also expressed concern over Almond's complex organization for battle in Operation ROUNDUP, referring to the intertwined command and control arrangements among corps headquarters, the ROK assault units, the American support forces, and the latters' parent units on the line of departure. Ridgway was not sure that these measures would provide the tight control needed to prevent a confused intermingling of units during an enemy attack.[53]

At the time Ridgway called Almond's leftmost units to a halt, he had in hand one of the better intelligence estimates prepared by his headquarters since he assumed command. Always seeking to improve intelligence, he had directed the preparation of this analysis, stipulating that it contain a survey of enemy strategic capabilities as well as tactical courses of action.[54]

Stimulating Ridgway's unusual demand for a strategic estimate at field army level was the yet unexplained lull in Chinese offensive operations that had set in on 4 January after the Eighth Army gave up Seoul and that now had lasted a month. The question was whether the lull represented a changing strategy, from one of destroying UNC forces to one of containing them, or was merely the result of logistical problems. (North Korean influence in shaping enemy strategy obviously was discounted.)[55]

Col. Robert G. Fergusson, the acting G–2 who prepared the estimate, told Ridgway that the long lull was purely the consequence of Chinese resupply, transportation, and reinforcement difficulties. The slogan repeatedly given in statements by Chinese government officials continued to be to drive UNC forces out of Korea. Fergusson predicted that once the logistical problems were sufficiently relieved—and that time appeared to be near—the campaign to push the United Nation Command off the peninsula would be resumed with full acceptance of any further heavy personnel losses and supply problems that might occur.[56]

The concentration of Chinese forces, Fergusson pointed out, was in the area bordered on the northwest by the Pukhan River and on the southeast by Route 24 between Yangp'yong and Hongch'on. From southwest to northeast, the concentration included the *42d, 39th, 40th,* and *66th Armies*, whose total strength was around 110,000. He was not sure that all of these units had completed their shifts to the west central region.[57] But with the enemy mass centering there, the most likely paths of the next enemy advance were down the Han valley toward Yoju and down

[52] Rad, GX–2–1214 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG X Corps, 11 Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 11 Feb 51.

[53] Rad, G–2–1174, CG Eighth Army to CG X Corps, 11 Feb 51.

[54] On 1 February Ridgway personally told President Rhee that both U.S. and ROK intelligence were inadequate and asked Rhee to take all possible steps to improve the ROK product. See Eighth Army SS Rpt, Office of the CG, Feb 51, Nar and Incl 1. See also Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51.

[55] Eighth Army G2, Estimate of Enemy Situation, 10 Feb 51.

[56] Ibid.

[57] It was on the 10th that air observers sighted eastward troop movements behind the enemy bridgehead in the IX Corps zone.

Route 29 toward Wonju, with both paths then turning toward the same deep objective, Ch'ungju. The advance might include deep sweeps to the southwest to envelop the I and IX Corps.[58]

Because the enemy's problem of resupply would progressively worsen as supply lines lengthened during an advance, Fergusson judged that a sustained Chinese drive was unlikely. More probable was a series of shallow enveloping maneuvers interspersed with halts for reorganization and resupply. He believed that the Chinese would not open an offensive until major units of *IX Army Group* moved down from the Wonsan area within reinforcing range. These, he estimated, could reach the central region no sooner than 15 February.[59]

Fergusson was wrong in considering the arrival of *IX Army Group* units as a necessary condition and so was in error on the nearest date of a Chinese attack. But in measuring all other probabilities, he came remarkably close.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid.

CHAPTER XIV

The Battle for Hoengsong

Much along the lines drawn out for General Ridgway by Colonel Fergusson on 10 February, the *XIII Army Group* commander opened an attack on the night of 11 February toward Hoengsong. In shifting forces eastward he had moved the *66th Army* from Kap'yong to Hongch'on, whence one division struck south along Route 29. From start points near Route 24 between Hongch'on and Chip'yong-ni, a division of the *40th Army* and one of the *39th Army* joined the push on Hoengsong by attacking southeast.[1] In the path of these initial attacks lay the ROK 8th Division. *(Map 22)*

The ROK 8th Division Destroyed

Moving below Hongch'on astride Route 29, the *198th Division, 66th Army*, hit the front of the ROK 21st Regiment about 2030, then sent forces around the regiment's flanks, mainly on the west through the gap between the 21st and the ROK 10th Regiment. While the *198th* swung behind the 21st, the *120th Division, 40th Army*, penetrated the line of the 10th Regiment, and the *117th Division, 39th Army*, pushed through the left flank of the 16th.[2]

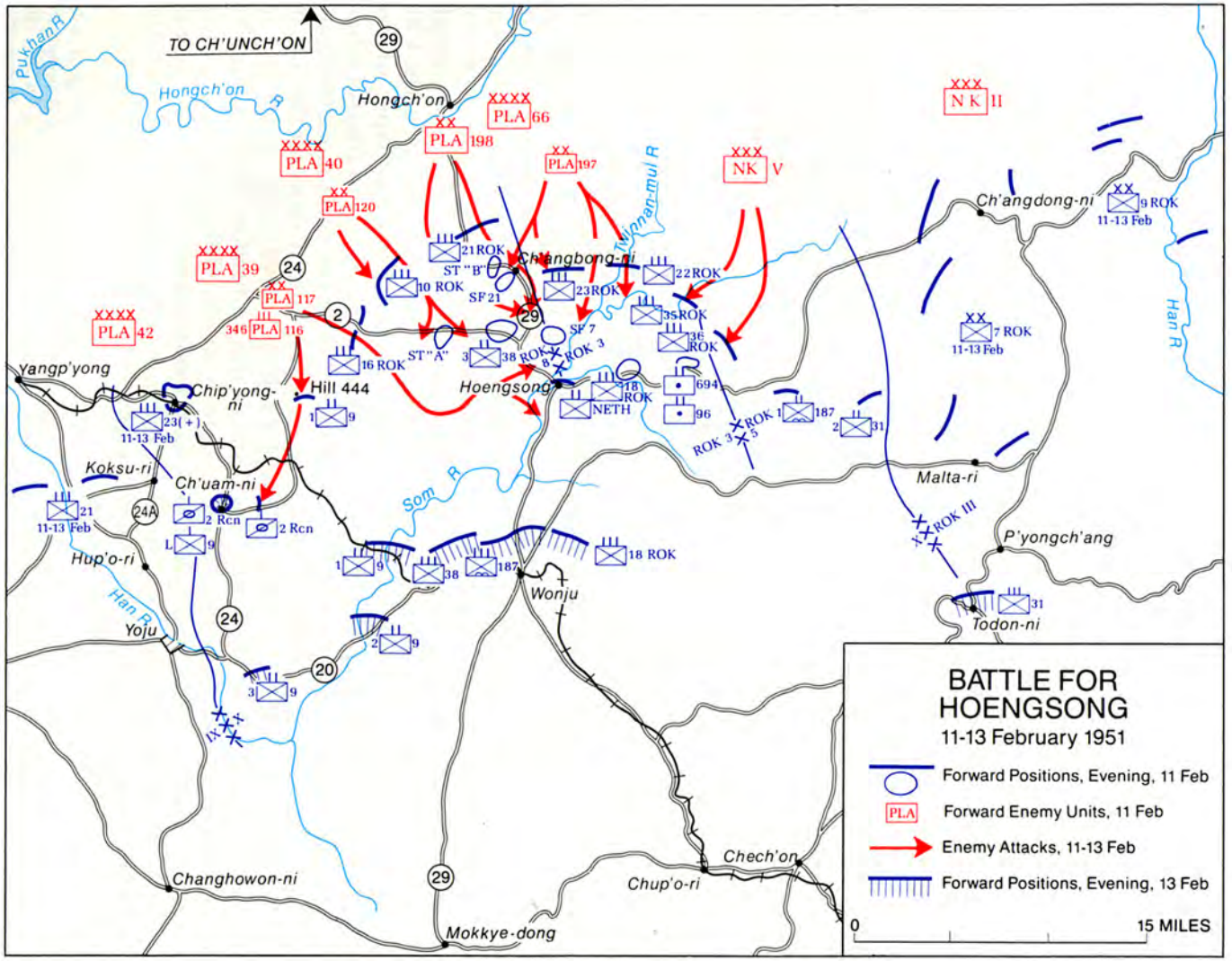
When word of the opening attack reached ROK 8th Division headquarters in Hoengsong, division commander Brig. Gen. Choi Yong Hee ordered the 21st Regiment to make a short withdrawal and instructed Support Team B to move back down Route 29 and join Support Force 21 at Ch'angbong-ni. The armored team reached the artillery force about 2200. Some of the *198th Division* forces who had swept around the 21st meanwhile raced down both sides of Route 29, bypassed the American position at Ch'angbong-ni, and blocked the road near a bridge three miles farther south.[3]

The *120th Division*, about the same time, pushed more strength through the ROK 10th Regiment, some troops turning in behind both the 10th and 16th, others striking southeast toward the mountain road leading west from Route 29. Around midnight the latter overran the command posts of the 10th and 16th Regiments on the mountain road and cut off the ROK 20th and 50th Field Artillery Battalions and Support Team A, also on the road, by establishing strong blocks between the

[1] X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; X Corps Rpt, The Battle of Hoengsong.

[2] Ibid.; Ltr, CG Eighth Army to CINCFE, 1 Mar 51, sub: Performance of the 5th and 8th ROK Divisions, 11–13 February 1951.

[3] X Corps Rpt, The Battle of Hoengsong; Ltr, Lt Col Harold Maixner, CO 3d Bn, 38th Inf, to CO 38th Inf, 15 Feb 51, sub: Summation of Action of 3d Battalion, 38th Infantry, During the Period 11–12 February 1951 (hereafter cited as Maixner Ltr); Ltr, Lt Col William P. Keleher, CO 1st Bn, 38th Inf, to CO 38th Inf, 14 Feb 51, sub: Summation of Action of 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry During the Period 11–12 February 1951 (hereafter cited as Keleher Ltr).


TO CH'UNCH'ON
Pukhan R
Hongch'on R
Hongch'on
PLA 66
PLA 198
PLA 197
PLA 40
PLA 120
PLA 39
PLA 117
PLA 42
346 PLA 116
NK V
NK II
Imjin-mul R
Ch'angdong-ni
9 ROK
11-13 Feb
7 ROK
Han R
Changbong-ni
21 ROK
22 ROK
23 ROK
10 ROK
ST "B"
SF 21
SF 7
35 ROK
36 ROK
ST "A"
16 ROK
38 ROK
8 ROK
ROK 3
Yangp'yong
Chip'yong-ni
Hill 444
Hoengsong
18 ROK
NETH
694
96
ROK 1
187
31
23 (+)
11-13 Feb
Koksu-ri
Ch'uam-ni
Malta-ri
ROK III
P'yongch'ang
21
11-13 Feb
2 Rcn
Som R
Hup'o-ri
Wonju
Todon-ni
Han R
Yoju
Changhowon-ni
Chech'on
Chup'o-ri
Mokkye-dong
BATTLE FOR HOENGSONG
11-13 February 1951
Forward Positions, Evening, 11 Feb
Forward Enemy Units, 11 Feb
Enemy Attacks, 11-13 Feb
Forward Positions, Evening, 13 Feb
0
15 MILES

MAP 22

support units and Route 29. Below the *120th*, the *117th Division* reinforced its frontal attack on the 16th Regiment and deepened its penetration of the regiment's left flank, sending forces eastward through the ground below the mountain road directly toward Hoengsong.[4]

By 0100 on 12 February communications were out between ROK 8th Division headquarters and all regiments as well as between each regiment and its subordinates. Boxed between frontal pressure and Chinese to the rear, the three regiments had started to withdraw; but with the main threads of control broken and the better routes of withdrawal blocked, units became separated and divided, and most were surrounded. The rearward move of those not trapped steadily disintegrated into individual efforts to escape.[5]

Members of the 21st Regiment straggled into the Support Force 21 perimeter at Ch'angbong-ni about 0115. The support force commander, Lt. Col. John W. Keith, Jr., reported the ROK withdrawal to Brig. Gen. Loyal M. Haynes, the 2d Division artillery commander, and asked permission to withdraw a little over three miles to a position he formerly had occupied just above the 3d Battalion, 38th Infantry, at the junction of Route 29 and the mountain road leading west. He also requested that General Haynes ask the ROK 8th Division commander to stop the 21st Regiment's withdrawal until Keith got Support Force 21 and Support Team B in march order. Members of Keith's own infantry protection, Lt. Col. William P. Keleher's 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry, were at the time trying to collect the South Koreans and deploy them on the American perimeter, but with little success. Haynes contacted General Choi, but Choi was no longer in communication with the 21st Regiment and was, besides, under the impression that the 21st was making only the short withdrawal he had called for earlier. He did nothing. Haynes meanwhile hesitated to clear Keith's withdrawal without General Ruffner's approval. When he asked the division commander, Ruffner told him to check with the X Corps artillery commander.[6]

Ruffner's deference to corps emphasized the command and control arrangement for which General Ridgway had expressed concern the day before. As a matter of orders, and as an eventual matter of practice in controlling the artillery support forces, unity of command in Operation ROUNDUP was vested in corps headquarters, no lower. The arrangement worked well enough during the advance. But after the Chinese engineered the collapse of the ROK 8th Division, corps control inhibited the American commanders of support forces and of units on the line of departure in reacting rapidly. How much this inhibition assisted the Chinese is moot. Delays and piecemeal movements among the smaller American units nevertheless colored the course of withdrawal operations.

[4] X Corps Rpt, The Battle of Hoengsong; Kessler Testimony, 15 Feb 51.

[5] X Corps Rpt, The Battle of Hoengsong; Ltr, CG Eighth Army to CINCFE, 1 Mar 51, sub: Performance of the 5th and 8th ROK Divisions, 11–12 Feb 51.

[6] Ltr, Hq 2d Div Arty to CG 2d Div, 16 Feb 51, sub: Responsibility for Losses of Personnel and Equipment of Support Force 21 (hereafter cited as 2d Div Arty Ltr), Incls 1 and 7; Ltr, Maj Warren D. Hodges, S3, 38th Inf, to CG 2d Div, 17 Feb 51, sub: Report on Activities, 12–13 Feb 51 (hereafter cited as Hodges Ltr); Keleher Ltr.

In one instance, Capt. Sherman D. Jones, the commander of Support Team A, scorned any need to get permission to withdraw and fought east over the blocked mountain road toward the 3d Battalion, 38th Infantry. He withdrew a little after midnight amid uncontrolled ROK vehicles, guns, and troops and under heavy fire from Chinese small arms, machine guns, rocket launchers, and mortars. The last A team troops to survive the move reached the 3d Battalion, 38th Infantry, about dawn. Losses included two tanks. Jones, the tank platoon leader, and five others were wounded, and nearly a hundred fifty men were missing.[7]

Similarly, few ROK 8th Division troops found their way to safety. Most remained encircled in the mountains and were eventually killed or captured. On 13 February, after straggler lines were set and after General Almond moved the division into corps reserve at Chup'o-ri, west of Chech'on, the division strength stood at 263 officers and slightly over 3,000 men, of whom about half were division service troops. Casualties, either dead or missing, stood at 323 officers (among them the commander and entire staff of the 10th Regiment, the executive officer of the 16th Regiment, seven battalion commanders, and thirty company commanders) and 7,142 men. Division equipment losses included 14 artillery pieces, 5 antitank guns, 68 trucks, 249 radios, 87 mortars, 137 rocket launchers, 164 machine guns, 102 automatic rifles, 2,389 carbines, and 4,096 rifles.[8]

Support Force 21

Earlier, as the ROK 8th Division began to fall back after midnight on 11 February, the *66th Army* commander widened his advance below Hongch'on, sending the *197th Division* south through the ground five miles east of Route 29 against the ROK 3d Division. In the mold of the attacks along and west of Route 29, infiltrating Chinese attacked the command post of the 23d Regiment and of one battalion of the 22d after engaging the South Koreans with heavy frontal assaults. Before the Chinese could get a trap fully set, the two ROK regiments withdrew to a position about three miles northeast of Hoengsong.[9]

A finger of the *197th*, about three hundred men, thrust southwest toward Ch'angbong-ni during the attack and near 0230 on the 12th hit Company A, 38th Infantry, holding the northeast sector of Support Force 21's perimeter. The company stood its ground but remained under fire. Though still waiting for permission to withdraw, Colonel Keith meanwhile began to put his artillery units in march order.[10]

Keith received clearance to move back about 0245, an hour and a half after he asked for it—good time consid-

[7] Ltr, Col Edwin J. Messinger, CO 9th Inf, to CG 2d Div, 16 Feb 51, sub: Report of Investigation, with Incls 1 and 2.

[8] X Corps Rpt, The Battle of Hoengsong; Ltr, Office of the IG, KMAG, to IG Eighth Army, 22 Feb 51, sub: Losses Sustained in Action North of Wonju, 11–13 February 1951.

[9] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 12 Feb 51; ibid., Entries 0600 and 1550, 12 Feb 51; X Corps Rpt, The Battle of Hoengsong, and Incl 4, Action of the 11th ROK FA Battalion.

[10] X Corps Rpt, The Battle of Hoengsong; Ltr, Lt Col Milton G. Norum, Exec Off 38th Inf, to CG 2d Div, 15 Feb 51, sub: Losses of Materiel and Personnel (hereafter cited as Norum Ltr); Keleher Ltr; Ltr, 1st Lt George W. Gardner, CO Co A, 38th Inf, to CO 1st Bn, 38th Inf, 16 Feb 51, sub: Summary of Combat Action of Company "A," 38th Inf Regiment, During 11–12 February 1951 (hereafter cited as Gardner Ltr).

ering the route his request and its answer had taken. General Haynes, after General Ruffner instructed him to check with corps, consulted Col. William P. Ennis, Jr., the corps artillery commander, around 0130. Colonel Ennis, in turn, spoke to Col. William J. McCaffrey of the corps chief of staff's office, who asked General Almond himself. Almond approved the withdrawal, and his word passed back from McCaffrey to Ennis to Haynes to Keith. Almond was under the impression, however, perhaps because of the several hands through which Keith's request had passed, that Support Force 21 would withdraw to Hoengsong, not just to a position near the 3d Battalion, 38th Infantry.[11]

Keith started his withdrawal about 0300. Ahead of the main body, two tanks and two squads of infantry from Support Team B moved to secure the bridge three miles south, just above the area to be occupied, unaware that the Chinese had blocked Route 29 near the bridge and that they now had organized additional fire blocks above and below the crossing, the latter actually in the area Keith intended to occupy.[12]

Chinese machine gunners overlooking route 29 from the east harassed the tank-infantry team the moment it started south. The infantry hugged the tanks for protection, as did a group of South Korean troops trying to stay with the American force. A mile down the road, an explosion under the second tank brought 2d Lt. William M. Mace, the platoon leader, out of the turret even as the tank, undamaged, continued to move. Machine gun fire from the left kept Mace from getting back inside, and a grenade, apparently thrown from the ditch on the east side of the road, then blew him off the tank, although without wounding him. His and the leading tank continued down the road, neither crew aware that Mace was no longer with them.[13]

The two tanks gradually outdistanced the infantry that had started with them but moved no more than another mile before the leading tank was hit by a rocket launcher round and ran off the steep edge of the road and overturned. The following tank attempted to pass but was hit in the engine compartment by a grenade or mortar round and capsized off the opposite side of the road. The two crews fled into the hills to the west, then turned south toward the 3d Battalion, 38th Infantry.[14]

To the rear, following the same westward drift to escape fire coming in from left of the road, Lieutenant Mace, the two infantry squads, and a number of South Koreans took cover in the ground on the right. The group moved south after daylight toward the 3d Battalion, 38th Infantry, but became scattered during several small skirmishes with Chinese. The survivors, including Mace, finally reached the 3d Battalion near 0930.[15]

Behind the scattered tank-infantry team, Colonel Keith's main column received heavy small arms and machine

[11] Ltr, Brig Gen George C. Stewart, ADC 2d Div, to CG 2d Div, 19 Feb 51, sub: Investigation of Heavy Losses of Material and Personnel in 2d Division Task Force Operating in Support of 8th ROK Division (hereafter cited as Stewart Ltr); Testimony Before Eighth Army IG by Col William P. Ennis, Jr., CG X Corps Arty (hereafter cited as Ennis Testimony), 16 Feb 51; Hodges Ltr; X Corps Arty S3 Jnl, Entry 6, 12 Feb 51.

[12] X Corps Rpt, The Battle of Hoengsong; Stewart Ltr, Incl 2, Exhibit C–11; 2d Div Arty Ltr, Incl 1.

[13] Stewart Ltr, Incl 2, Exhibit C–11.

[14] Ibid., Exhibits C–11 and C–12.

[15] Ibid., Exhibits C–11, C–14, C–15, and C–16.

gun fire from the heights east of Route 29 while it formed and stretched out on the road below the support force perimeter. As Battery A of the 503d Field Artillery Battalion, the leading artillery unit, started to get its guns in column, a Chinese raiding party dashed onto the road from the east, captured the battery commander, first sergeant, and several men, and took them back into the hills. Chinese gunners meanwhile concentrated fire on vehicles, damaging many and killing or wounding several drivers.[16]

By 0400 the Chinese had stopped Keith's column, actually before it had got a full start. Infantry and artillery troops at the head of the column formed a line facing east along the road and returned fire while to the north Company A, assigned to be rear guard, redeployed facing northwest, north, and northeast. Enemy forces reengaged the company, but with help from the remaining two tanks of Support Team B the rear guard troops kept the Chinese from rolling up the column.[17]

Colonel Keith put some artillery pieces back in action near dawn and laid direct fire on the ridges to the east. Colonel Keleher then deployed two rifle companies, one into the heights on each side of the road, while troops on the road shoved disabled vehicles out of the way and rounded up replacements for missing drivers of others. Stubborn resistance slowed Keleher's infantry east of the road, but the support force was moving before 0600.[18]

At the tail of the column, Company A backed out of position just after the skies lightened but had to fight a running engagement with Chinese who followed. As the company prepared to move, the commander, 1st Lt. George W. Gardner, sighted three 155-mm. howitzers attached to their M–5 tractors, a full ammunition truck, and several jeeps and trailers, all unattached, in a roadside paddy southwest of his position. Gardner's executive officer located at least one more howitzer, still in firing position. For reasons not clear, Battery A, 503d Field Artillery Battalion, to whom the weapons and vehicles belonged, had withdrawn with only one tube.[19]

Gardner had no men who could drive the tractors and had neither time nor explosives to destroy them or the howitzers. Company A fought briefly from the artillery position, Gardner's men using the machine guns mounted on the artillery vehicles until the ammunition was gone, then left the wealth of weapons, artillery ammunition, and vehicles to the Chinese.[20]

Gardner found the fifth weapon of Battery A, 503d Field Artillery Battalion, on the road where Lieutenant Mace's two tanks had been knocked out and where the main body of the support force also had come under heavy mortar and machine gun fire. Among several vehicles disabled by the fire was the tractor pulling the 155-mm. howit-

[16] 2d Div Arty Ltr, Incls 1 and 7; Keleher Ltr.
[17] Ibid.; Gardner Ltr.
[18] 2d Div Arty Ltr, Incl 7; Keleher Ltr.

[19] Gardner Ltr; Ltr, Lt Col William P. Keleher, CO 1st Bn, 38th Inf, to CO 38th Inf, 15 Feb 51, sub: Supplement to Summation of Action of the 1st Bn, 38th Inf, During the Period 11–12 February 1951. Gardner's executive officer actually reported finding two howitzers. Since Battery A, 503d Field Artillery Battalion, had only five pieces and had taken one south, the count between Gardner and his executive officer was off by one. The 15th Field Artillery Battalion later reported the loss of one 105-mm. howitzer during the withdrawal from Ch'angbong-ni. Perhaps this weapon was one of those reported by Gardner's executive officer.
[20] Gardner Ltr.

zer. Gardner's men had to manhandle the abandoned gun off the road to permit the two tanks with them to pass.[21]

The support force received more fire at the bridge, another mile south, and in the area just below the crossing where Colonel Keith had intended to redeploy. As Keith's column pushed through each fire block, Chinese closed in on the road behind it and pressed hard against Gardner's rear guard. Keith, judging it impossible to establish positions as planned after coming under fire below the bridge, moved on to join the 3d Battalion, 38th Infantry, not far beyond, and got the tail of the column inside the 3d Battalion perimeter about 1000. No careful muster was made after entering, but support force casualties so far appeared to exceed four hundred. Company A had suffered the highest rate, losing two officers and around a hundred ten men in its rearguard action. Keith, after discovering that five 155-mm. howitzers and one 105-mm. howitzer had been left behind, relayed a request to division for air strikes on the weapons.[22]

From the Road Junction to Hoengsong

The 3d Battalion, by the time Support Force 21 arrived, had been under fire and periodic assaults from the north and northwest for some five hours. After clearing with regimental commander Coughlin at his headquarters in Hoengsong (although Coughlin really had no authority over Support Force 21), 3d Battalion commander Lt. Col. Harold Maixner deployed Keith's artillery and Keleher's infantry to strengthen the perimeter against the assaults, which were growing stronger. Withdrawing the combined force to Hoengsong was a logical alternative except that the 3d Battalion remained under X Corps orders to hold the Route 29–mountain road junction.[23]

A second situation now complicated a withdrawal to Hoengsong. By the time Keith and Keleher joined Maixner, those forces of the *117th Division* moving east below the mountain road reached Route 29 and blocked it between Hoengsong and the road junction three miles north. Colonel Coughlin discovered the new block when in response to a request from division artillery he sent the 38th's headquarters security platoon and a platoon from the regimental tank company north out of Hoengsong to help Support Force 21 get through the blocks below Ch'angbong-ni. The two platoons ran into the Chinese position a mile above Hoengsong and withdrew after losing a tank and half the infantry. Coughlin placed mortar and artillery fire on the enemy position and called in air strikes, the first reaching the target around 1030. He also asked for the return of the 2d Battalion from division reserve in Wonju with a view to sending it forward to clear the road, but General Ruffner chose not to release it.[24]

Ruffner, at the same time, advised Coughlin to be ready to assume control of Support Force 21 and get it back to Hoengsong. Coughlin recommended that the 3d Battalion also return whenever he received word to withdraw the

[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.; 2d Div G3 Jnl, Entry 57, 12 Feb 51.
[23] Maixner Ltr; Hodges Ltr.
[24] X Corps Rpt, The Battle of Hoengsong, and Incl 8, After Action Interview, 38th RCT; X Corps Arty S3 Jnl, Entry 11, 12 Feb 51; 2d Div G3 Jnl, Entry 28, 12 Feb 51; Norum Ltr.

support force, but his bid was futile. Denied use of the 2d and 3d Battalions, Coughlin faced the prospect of pulling the support force through the intervening roadblock without being able to do much more than he already had done to help. While he might have used the attached Netherlands battalion, currently deployed along the northern limits of Hoengsong, it was the main security force for the headquarters and artillery installations in and below town. In any case, Coughlin, was under the impression that changes in the Netherlands' assignment could come only from corps.[25]

Around 1100 2d Division headquarters received instructions from General Almond to reconstitute the 38th as a regimental combat team with the 2d and 3d Battalions remaining in place until further orders. Almond lifted the restriction on the 2d Battalion not long after, but General Ruffner then took direct control of the unit. He alerted the battalion to be prepared to block a Chinese force, apparently from the *117th Division*, observed earlier two miles southwest of Hoengsong. In transmitting Almond's reconstitution order to the forces at the road junction, Ruffner directed Support Force 21 to withdraw to Hoengsong. Colonel Coughlin was to control the withdrawal, but with his use of the 2d and 3d Battalions still restricted, he was too weak to help the support force.[26]

General Almond meanwhile learned of his misconception about Colonel Keith's movement when he asked his artillery officer, Colonel Ennis, for the current locations of both Support Force 21 and Support Force 7. The latter, Ennis reported, was three miles north of Hoengsong and a mile and a half east of Route 29 in the initial position taken to support the ROK 3d Division. Unaware that General Ruffner had just ordered Keith to continue his withdrawal, Ennis explained that Keith's force had joined the 3d Battalion, 38th Infantry. Almond ordered both support forces to withdraw to Hoengsong immediately, fighting their way out if necessary. Ennis relayed the order through artillery channels around noon.[27]

The prescience of Almond's order to Support Force 7 became clear in the afternoon. Earlier, sometime around 0900, the ROK 3d Division had tried to advance against the *197th Division* but moved only a short distance before being hit hard by the Chinese unit. By 1300 both forward regiments of the ROK 3d were under attack, one surrounded. Both began to fight back toward Hoengsong. To the ROK 3d's right, the ROK 5th Division also started northeast during the morning toward its objectives near the corps boundary. But the assault regiments ran into hard counterattacks by the North Korean *V Corps*, which now appeared to be joining the advance on Hoengsong, and by early afternoon were withdrawing to escape being enveloped. With both ROK divisions falling back east of Route 29, their supporting artillery potentially faced a situation similar to that of Support Force 21.[28]

[25] 2d Div G3 Jnl, Entry 49, 12 Feb 51; 2d Div Arty Ltr, Incl 1.

[26] X Corps Rpt, The Battle of Hoengsong; 2d Div G3 Jnl, Entries 59, 67, 71, and 74, 12 Feb 51.

[27] Ennis Testimony, 16 Feb 51.

[28] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 12 Feb 51; X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; X Corps PIR 139, 12 Feb 51; 2d Div G3 Jnl, 12 Feb 51; 2d Div G2 Jnl, 12 Feb 51.

Lt. Col. Barney D. White, the Support Force 7 commander, decided against withdrawing over the route he had used to reach his current position since it led west to the bridge on Route 29 where Keith's forces had come under fire. White had sent a reconnaissance party west to investigate, and it had been ambushed even before it reached the bridge. He notified corps headquarters that he would move due east to the Twinnan-mul River, which flowed southwest past the northern edge of Hoengsong, then follow a primitive road through the Twinnan-mul valley. The little-used road was ice coated and in poor shape, but White had engineers who could make hasty repairs. With no interference from the enemy, White got his column started at 1500 and pulled out his rear guard about two hours later.[29]

At the same time, the 674th and 96th Field Artillery Battalions, which had been supporting the ROK 5th Division from positions six miles east of Hoengsong, moved to new firing positions four miles south. At the time, General Bowen, the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team commander and coordinator of these two artillery battalions, expected the ROK 5th Division to make a stand above the new artillery positions in defense of Hoengsong. The 1st Battalion of the combat team, which earlier had taken a blocking position below the ROK 5th, moved back with the artillery units.[30]

Colonel Keith meanwhile led Support Force 21 south from the road junction just before noon, two companies of Colonel Keleher's infantry moving through the high ground on both sides of Route 29 to protect the motor column and remaining foot troops on the road. Both Support Team A and Support Team B remained with Colonel Maixner to help defend the perimeter which was still under assault. Mortar and artillery fire and air strikes arranged by Colonel Coughlin pounded the ridges ahead of the support force, but Keleher's men almost immediately ran into strong resistance and lost momentum after a mile. Keleher committed the remainder of his battalion, but it was not enough to revitalize his attack.[31]

About the time Keleher's attack stalled, word reached Colonel Coughlin that the 18th Regiment, ROK 3d Division, assembled about three miles east of Hoengsong, would send a battalion north astride Route 29 at 1400 to help open the road. General Almond had ordered this attack shortly after instructing the artillery support forces to withdraw. Support Team E (Company G, 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team, and a platoon from the 72d Tank Battalion), also assembled nearby, was to accompany the South Koreans. The assistant commander of the ROK 3d Division was to head the force, but Almond assigned the corps armored officer, Lt. Col. Jack F. Wilhm, to coordinate the organization and opening of the infantry-armor advance. Coughlin had no part in it at all.[32]

The South Korean battalion was late getting started, then advanced only a half mile north of Hoengsong onto the

[29] Interv, Eighth Army IG with Lt Col Barney D. White, CO 49th FA Bn and SF 7; 49th FA Bn Unit Rpt no. 134, 12 Feb 51.

[30] X Corps Rpt, The Battle of Hoengsong.

[31] Keleher Ltr; Hodges Ltr; Norum Ltr.

[32] Interv, Eighth Army IG with Lt Col Jack F. Wilhm, Actg Armored Off, X Corps; Norum Ltr; Hodges Ltr; Stewart Ltr, Incl 2, Exhibit C–1.

first hills above the Twinnan-mul. Support Team E moved only as far as the river's lower bank. Observing the short advance and halt, Coughlin's operations officer, Maj. Warren D. Hodges, sought out the South Korean commander and argued for continuing the advance. The ROK officer refused. His orders, he insisted, were to take the hills he now occupied and hold them only until dark. His one concession was that he would remain in position until the forces withdrawing from the road junction passed through.[33]

Coughlin did not have the authority to order the South Korean–American force farther up Route 29, but he had finally regained his 3d Battalion to assist the withdrawal from the road junction. General Almond released the battalion from its blocking assignment at 1430.[34]

Just before releasing the battalion Almond had discussed corps operations with General Ridgway, who flew into Almond's Wonju headquarters a little past noon. Almond announced that he now planned to give up Hoengsong and defend Wonju. His formal order issued late in the day called for the 2d Division, with the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team attached, to defend a long line which from an anchor on the west at Chip'yong-ni stretched out to the southeast and east, passing two miles north of Wonju and continuing nine miles beyond the town. In the right portion of the corps sector, the ROK 3d and 5th Divisions were to stand between Route 29 and the corps east boundary some seven miles farther north. Placing the South Koreans on this forward line would tie the X Corps to the left of the ROK III Corps, whose line now bulged out to the north far beyond the X Corps front. To back up the South Koreans and secure the corps east flank in depth, the 31st Infantry of General Ferenbaugh's 7th Division was to occupy positions at Todon-ni, a road junction four miles below P'yongch'ang. Ferenbaugh's 32d Infantry, still holding positions between Chech'on and Yongwol, would lend further depth, and the 17th Infantry, now scheduled to assemble in corps reserve near Wonju, could be committed to help.[35]

To improve control, Almond during his talk with Ridgway requested that the ROK I Corps headquarters be attached to the X Corps to take charge of the ROK 3d and 5th Divisions. General Kim and his staff, by virtue of past service under Almond in northeastern Korea, were experienced in joint operations and were well acquainted with the X Corps staff. Ridgway approved. He arranged to have General Kim and a partial staff flown into the X Corps sector on the 13th and to have Kim's remaining staff follow by truck. The ROK Capital Division, in the meantime, was to pass to ROK III Corps control.[36]

Colonel Coughlin, after receiving word of the 3d Battalion's release about 1600, instructed Colonel Maixner and Colonel Keleher to drive through the roadblock with the 1st Battalion attacking on the east side of the road, the 3d Battalion on the west, and the motor

[33] Ibid.
[34] Stewart Ltr.

[35] Staff Sec Rpt, Office of the CG Eighth Army, Feb 51, Incl 12; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 12 Feb 51; ibid., Entries 1416 and 1605, 12 Feb 51; X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; X Corps OI 104 (confirms oral instructions), 12 Feb 51.
[36] X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; Rad, GX–1–1287 KG, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA and CG X Corps, 12 Feb 51.

column between them. Maixner disengaged at the road junction and joined Keleher in the attack by 1800. The two battalions were able to move, but only at a costly creep. Chinese mortar, machine gun, and small arms fire meanwhile continued to punish the motor column. Coughlin's inability to assist with an attack north out of Hoengsong was clearly enfeebling the withdrawal.[37]

A little after 1800 Colonel Wilhm, the corps armored officer, came into the 38th Infantry command post to notify Coughlin to take charge of all American troops in the Hoengsong area. Wilhm had got this word from corps when he called his headquarters to report the short South Korean advance above Hoengsong. The restriction to American forces prevented Coughlin from using the South Korean battalion to help his withdrawing forces, but he at least could employ Support Team E. He placed his regimental tank company commander in charge of the support team and ordered him to link up with the forces coming from the north. The tank company commander, spearheading with two of his own tanks, started the tank-infantry team up Route 29 within minutes.[38]

Around 1900 Coughlin discovered troops of Support Force 7 to be moving through Hoengsong. Lt. Col. Baker, commanding the 2d Battalion, 17th Infantry, was directing his foot troops and the leading serial of artillery into an assembly southeast of town. Up to this moment, Coughlin had not known of Support Force 7's withdrawal through the Twinnan-mul valley, which had been worked out with corps through artillery channels. He had believed Colonel White's force to be somewhere behind his own on Route 29.[39]

Under the corps order placing him in charge of American troops in Hoengsong, Coughlin now could use Support Force 7 to help the forces withdrawing over Route 29. He notified Colonel Baker (who was unaware of the new command arrangement until Coughlin told him) that the support force artillery should withdraw to Wonju but that Baker's infantry battalion would be sent north to help clear Route 29. Baker left Coughlin to give these instructions to Colonel White, still northeast of town with the remainder of Support Force 7, and then to return to Coughlin's command post for further word on the attack north.[40]

When Baker radioed Coughlin's instructions to Colonel White, he learned that a 155-mm. howitzer and its tractor had slipped off the road about a mile northeast of Hoengsong where the road was little more than an icy ledge in a steep ridge bordering the Twinnan-mul. Considerable road work was needed at that point before the remainder of the motor column could continue.[41]

The ROK 3d and 5th Divisions, the latter being followed by forces of the North Korean *V Corps*, meanwhile were passing south through the area east of Hoengsong en route to their newly assigned defense line. Ahead of the South Koreans, General Bowen was pulling his infantry battalions and the 674th and 96th Field Artillery Battalions back to Wonju. A KMAG officer with the

[37] Maixner Ltr; Keleher Ltr; Norum Ltr.

[38] Interv, Eighth Army IG with Wilhm; Stewart Ltr, Incl 2, Exhibit C–1.

[39] Ibid.; 49th FA Bn Unit Rpt no. 135, 13 Feb 51.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ennis Testimony, 16 Feb 51; 49th FA Bn Unit Rpt no. 134, 12 Feb 51, and no. 135, 13 Feb 51.

South Koreans passing nearest Hoengsong informed Colonel Baker that the enemy forces following the ROK 5th Division had cut the lateral road stretching eastward from Hoengsong which the leading troops of Support Force 7 had used to reach their assembly southeast of town. Although the cut was beyond the support force assembly, Baker began to pull the leading troops and trucks back into Hoengsong and reassemble them along Route 29 south of town. He was still shifting forces around 2200 when the remainder of Support Force 7 began to arrive from the northeast, and he had yet to return to Colonel Coughlin's command post for his attack order.[42]

At that late hour an attack up Route 29 by Baker did not appear necessary. Suffering moderate casualties and losing one tank, Support Team E had fought forward for about a mile and a half and joined Coughlin's forces coming south around 2100. After the E team tanks turned around and took the lead, the combined force, though still receiving heavy fire from left and right and still obliged to attack Chinese positions bordering the road, was able to move south at a steady pace. By the time the force reached the position taken by the ROK battalion a half mile above Hoengsong, the South Koreans already had withdrawn to rejoin their division. But this premature departure seemed of no consequence. Before 2200 the long column began to pass behind the Netherlands battalion positions along the upper edge of Hoengsong.[43]

Colonel Coughlin intended that the forces coming in from the north continue through Hoengsong, reorganize in an assembly area three miles south of town, then proceed to the new defense line at Wonju. Support Force 7 was to do likewise as it came in from the northeast. Coughlin's own headquarters and remaining troops, except for the Netherlands battalion and part of the regimental tank company, were already on the way out of Hoengsong. The Netherlands battalion was to continue covering the passage of the withdrawing forces, then act as rear guard en route to Wonju. The regimental tankers were assembled just below town, prepared to attack any roadblock the Chinese might establish between Hoengsong and Wonju.[44]

Coughlin's plan was interrupted not long after the leading units coming down Route 29 entered Hoengsong, when Chinese forces attacked all along the line of the Netherlands battalion and soon afterward began to press hard from the flanks and rear on the withdrawing column still strung out on Route 29. Had the ROK battalion not withdrawn ahead of schedule, it now would have been of considerable help.[45]

One of the first enemy jabs at the Dutch penetrated their line and reached the battalion command post. Lt. Col. M. P. A. den Ouden, the battalion commander, led headquarters troops in a successful attack to eliminate the penetration but was killed by a grenade. Members of Colonel den Ouden's staff also were killed or wounded. Despite these grave losses at battalion headquarters, the Dutch line companies held at the edge of town

[42] X Corps Rpt, The Battle of Hoengsong; 49th FA Bn Unit Rpt no. 135, 13 Feb 51; Stewart Ltr, Incl 2, Exhibit C–1.

[43] Stewart Ltr, Incl 2, Exhibit C–1; Norum Ltr; Hodges Ltr; Maixner Ltr.

[44] Stewart Ltr, Incl 2, Exhibit C–1; Hodges Ltr.

[45] Norum Ltr; Maixner Ltr.

while Support Force 7 scurried toward town from the northeast and Coughlin's other forces struggled to get in over Route 29.[46]

Support Force 7 received small arms, machine gun, and mortar fire as Colonel White led it out of the Twinnanmul valley, and considerable confusion occurred inside Hoengsong as White's column merged with the vehicles Colonel Baker was moving through town. But Baker pushed part of his infantry back toward White to help keep enemy forces away from White's flanks, and artillerymen at White's rear managed to ward off enemy troops attempting to roll up the column. These efforts and excellent covering fire from the Dutch kept losses low and allowed Support Force 7 to pass behind the Netherlands battalion by 2330.[47]

Baker's battalion helped cover Hoengsong for another hour while Colonel White started the artillery units down Route 29 toward Wonju. Baker's troops then mounted their own trucks to bring up the support force rear. Part of the artillery reached Wonju without further trouble, but as this segment passed a point about a mile and a half below Hoengsong, Chinese forces crowded in on the road from the west and opened fire. Some twenty vehicles ran the gauntlet before the fire grew too heavy to risk. Colonel Baker, bringing up infantry and some of Coughlin's tanks from the rear, attacked and destroyed the enemy position, allowing the support force to move on to Wonju with no further encounter. Support Force 7 casualties suffered above and below Hoengsong totaled 12 killed, 125 wounded, and 53 missing. The major equipment losses were 35 vehicles, the 155-mm. howitzer that slipped off the road, and an M–16 antiaircraft weapon that threw a track above Hoengsong.[48]

Colonel Coughlin's column coming toward Hoengsong on Route 29 was less fortunate. Behind those forces leading the column into Hoengsong, a mortar round struck a 2½-ton truck towing a 105-mm. howitzer, and the two jackknifed across the road. The occupants of the truck were either killed or scattered, and an alert Chinese machine gunner opened sustained fire on the cab to prevent anyone from trying to reach and restart the vehicle. The one chance of pushing the wreckage off the road evaporated when Lieutenant Mace's two tanks, the only ones not already in Hoengsong, merely moved around the obstruction through a bordering rice paddy and went into town. High paddy dikes made it impossible for the trucks, many of them pulling howitzers, to bypass the wreckage as the tanks had done. Enemy forces meanwhile began to squeeze the column from the flanks and rear.[49]

The troops caught behind the obstruction had no alternative except to abandon vehicles and guns and move south on foot. Many did not reach safety, among them Colonel Keith. Those able to escape, as they neared Hoengsong and discovered the Netherlands battalion engaged, drifted west to get away from the fire fight, by-

[46] X Corps Rpt, The Battle of Hoengsong; Norum Ltr; Ltr, Gen M. B. Ridgway to Mrs. M. P. A. den Ouden, 20 Mar 51, copy in CMH.

[47] Ltr, Lt Col Barney D. White, CO 49th FA Bn and SF 7, to CG 2d Div, 17 Feb 51, sub: Evacuation of 49th Field Artillery Battalion From Osan-ni, Korea; 49th FA Bn Unit Rpt no. 135, 13 Feb 51.

[48] 49th FA Bn Unit Rpt no. 135, 13 Feb 51; Interv, Eighth Army IG with White.

[49] Stewart Ltr, Incl 2, Exhibits C–7, C–10, C–11, and C–12; Maixner Ltr; Keleher Ltr.

passed Hoengsong, then returned to Route 29 below town. After reorganizing behind the cover of the Netherlands battalion, they moved on to Wonju. The Dutch broke contact and followed just before 0100. Chinese flooded Hoengsong after the Dutch withdrawal but made no motion to pursue, and since Colonel Baker already had eliminated the only enemy position south of town, Coughlin's forces reached Wonju with no further contest.[50]

The Costs

Given the conditions of the enemy attack and the corps withdrawal, a breakdown of X Corps casualties into categories of killed, wounded, and missing was not possible for some units, especially the ROK 8th Division, and hardly certifiable for any. Total casualties suffered between nightfall on 11 February and daylight on the 13th were around 11,800—9,800 South Koreans, 1,900 Americans, and 100 Dutch.[51] *(Table 4)*

The equipment toll was correspondingly heavy. Major items lost by the ROK 3d, 5th, and 8th Divisions, mostly by the last, included 14 105-mm. howitzers, 901 other crew-served weapons, 390 radios, and 88 vehicles. American units and the Netherlands battalion lost 14 105-mm. howitzers, 277 other crew-served weapons, 6 tanks, 195 radios, and 280 vehicles.[52]

TABLE 4—LOSSES BY MAJOR UNIT
11–13 FEBRUARY 1951

Unit	*Total*
ROK	
3d Division	1,238
5th Division	1,141
8th Division	7,465
Total ROK casualties	9,844
U.S. and U.N.	
2d Division (includes 38th Infantry, artillery with Support Force 21 tanks with Support Team B, Netherlands battalion, and Support Team A)	1,769
7th Division (Support Force 7)	190
187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team (includes Support Team E, 674th Field Artillery Battalion, and 96th Field Artillery Battalion)	59
Total U.S. and U.N. casualties	2,018
Total casualties	11,862

General Ridgway initially considered these high equipment losses evidence of weak leadership. "While there is nothing sacrosanct about a piece of artillery, compared to the loss of the lives of men," he wrote General Almond on the 13th, "I don't expect to hear again of such loss as reported to me this morning of five 155 Hows of Battery A, 503rd. It is prima facie indication of faulty leadership of serious import in some echelon." [53] On the following day he instructed his inspector

[50] X Corps Rpt, The Battle of Hoengsong; 2d Div G3 Jnl, Entries 7 and 17, 13 Feb 51; Norum Ltr; Stewart Ltr, Incl 2, Exhibits C–7, C–10, and C–11.

[51] Figures compiled from X Corps Rpt, The Battle of Hoengsong; Ltr, Eighth Army IG to CG Eighth Army, 12 Mar 51, sub: Report of Investigation Concerning the Loss of Equipment by X Corps; Lt Col Eugene Wolfe, Asst IG Eighth Army, Tabulation of Personnel Losses Suffered by X Corps Units, 11–13 February 1951; Memo, X Corps G1 to CG X Corps, 13 Feb 51, sub: Casualties, 11–13 February 1951; Rad, X 17780, CG X Corps to CG Eighth Army, 13 Feb 51.

[52] Lt Col Eugene Wolfe, Asst IG Eighth Army, Tabulation of Major Items of Equipment Lost by X Corps Units, 11–13 February 1951.

[53] Ltr, Gen Ridgway to Gen Almond, 13 Feb 51, copy in CMH.

general to investigate all "the circumstances attending the loss by X Corps of artillery pieces and other major items of equipment on or about 12 February 1951." [54]

Almond was equally disturbed by the heavy loss of equipment, especially the loss of fourteen howitzers by the 15th Field Artillery Battalion and five by the 503d, and by what he considered excessive personnel casualties among all 2d Division units that had supported the ROK 8th Division. Late on the 13th he directed General Ruffner to investigate and report the underlying reasons. He was particularly critical of Support Force 21's halt at the road junction position of the 3d Battalion, 38th Infantry, believing that losses would have been fewer had the support force continued directly to Hoengsong. He took this preliminary view from an impression that Support Force 7, on the other hand, had withdrawn immediately after being ordered back and that this prompt move accounted for its lighter losses. Pending receipt of Ruffner's report, Almond presumed that "aggressive leadership on the part of commanders concerned was lacking." [55]

If in softer terms, he repeated much the same view on the 14th when he replied to General Ridgway's note of admonition. Without being specific, but obviously referring to Support Force 21, he told Ridgway that "in only one instance, now under investigation, have I found loss of U.S. equipment due to faulty leadership, and all the facts on this are not evident yet." [56]

Recalling Ridgway's earlier concern for ROUNDUP control arrangements, Almond assured him that "the operation, as conceived and coordinated, included the protection of the U.S. artillery units involved and was, in my opinion, all that could be desired. It worked out as planned except for 2 battalions of infantry and 1 of artillery which became enmeshed in the onslaught of Chinese who poured through the ROK formations. There has never been any loss of control of the major units." [57]

The 2d Division report, rendered five days later, absolved Support Force 21 of any command deficiency. General Stewart, the assistant division commander who conducted the inquiry for General Ruffner, concluded that there had been only "strong, courageous, and aggressive" leadership at all levels. Support force commander Colonel Keith had withdrawn from Ch'angbong-ni as soon as cleared to do so, had not yet received orders to proceed to Hoengsong when he stopped and joined the 3d Battalion of the 38th Infantry, and had made every effort to reach Hoengsong as soon as such orders reached him. The cause of the losses in equipment and personnel among 2d Division units, General Stewart testified, was the sudden and complete defeat of the ROK 8th Division with little or no warning to the 2d Division forces. He recommended that there be no similar intermingling of

[54] Memo, Office of the CG Eighth Army for The Inspector General, Headquarters, Eighth Army, 14 Feb 51.

[55] Rad, X 17778, CG X Corps to CG 2d Div, 132321 Feb 51.

[56] Ltr, Gen Almond to Gen Ridgway, 14 Feb 51, copy in CMH.

[57] Ibid.

U.S. and South Korean units in the future.[58]

The Army investigation confirmed Stewart's findings. All losses, in both men and materiel, stemmed from "the surprise and overwhelming attack of at least four CCF Divisions and two NK Divisions . . . against numerically inferior and widely spread forces of the 8th and 3d ROK Divisions." In chain reaction, the rapid disintegration of the ROK 8th Division "exposed the left flank of the [X Corps] salient and permitted the enemy forces in strength to advance rapidly to positions in the rear and along the MSR, thus blocking the only route of withdrawal for the tanks, artillery and motor elements caught north and west of Hoengsong." In this unexpected situation, "there [were] insufficient US or other UN forces available to the X Corps Commander or the 2d U.S. Infantry Division Commander to form a task force of sufficient strength to defeat the enemy's efforts and to break . . . the roadblocks that delayed the withdrawal of the friendly units located north." Hence, the heavy toll was a result of enemy action and not attributable to the "fault, neglect, incompetence, acts or omissions of the U.S. Commanding Officers concerned." [59]

Ridgway accepted this explanation but did not withdraw a warning he had issued on the 14th. The "loss or abandonment to enemy of arms and equipment in usable condition," he notified all corps commanders and the KMAG chief, General Farrell, "is a grave offense against every member of this command. I shall hereafter deal severely with commanders found responsible and shall expect you to do likewise." [60]

[58] Stewart Ltr.

[59] Ltr, Eighth Army IG to CG Eighth Army, 12 Mar 51, sub: Report of Investigation Concerning the Loss of Equipment by X Corps.

[60] Check Slip, Eighth Army Chief of Staff to IG, 22 Mar 51, sub: Investigation Concerning the Loss of Equipment by X Corps; Rad, GX TAC 7 KCG, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps, IX Corps, X Corps, and KMAG, 14 Feb 51.

CHAPTER XV

Defending the Wonju Line

The X Corps Position, 13 February

The Chinese entering Hoengsong made no immediate effort to follow the 2d Division down Route 29. General Almond nevertheless expected the next hard blow to come at the X Corps center and on 13 February ordered General Ruffner to organize strong positions before Wonju. Given the 18th Regiment of the ROK 3d Division as well as the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team by Almond, Ruffner set the airborne unit astride Route 29 two miles above Wonju and put the ROK regiment on its east. Standing to the west of the 187th were the 38th Infantry and the 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry. Thus, the 2d Division's defense of Wonju proper ranged from three miles east to eight miles west of town. The remainder of the 9th Infantry, in division reserve, manned two blocking positions southwest of Wonju along the road to Yoju.[1]

To the east, the units of the 7th Division on whom Almond counted to deepen the defense in the right half of the corps sector also were well established. The 31st Infantry held positions below P'yongch'ang at the corps east boundary, and the bulk of the 32d Infantry was concentrated in Chech'on. The remnants of the ROK 8th Division, of possible help, remained at Chup'o-ri, west of Chech'on. Available for employment either at corps center or in the east, the bulk of the 17th Infantry of General Ferenbaugh's division was assembled in Wonju.[2]

Almond modified the defense assignments of the ROK 3d and 5th Divisions in the east sector early on the 13th after learning that North Korean forces were following the South Koreans as they withdrew from the Hoengsong area and that both divisions needed reorganizing after their punishment above Hoengsong. Instead of manning a forward line at the X Corps right as Almond had ordered on the 12th, the two divisions were to occupy positions farther south on line with and between the 2d Division at Wonju and the 31st Infantry of the 7th Division near P'yongch'ang. A regiment of the ROK 5th Division was to occupy Malta-ri, five miles above P'yongch'ang, to tie the new X Corps line to the bulging front of the ROK III Corps. (Almond instructed the ROK III Corps also to place a regiment near Malta-ri to strengthen the connection.) The two ROK divisions were still

[1] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum and Situation Overlay, 13 Feb 51; X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; X Corps OI 105, 13 Feb 51.

[2] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum and Situation Overlay, 13 Feb 51; X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51.

moving toward these new positions at nightfall on the 13th.[3]

While arranging the deeper withdrawal of the South Koreans, Almond decided also that the 23d Regimental Combat Team should withdraw from its advanced position at Chip'yong-ni on the corps west flank to the Yoju area fifteen miles south. He could move Colonel Freeman's force that far back and still meet his continuing Operation THUNDERBOLT responsibilities of maintaining contact with the IX Corps at Yoju, preventing enemy movements south of the Yoju-Wonju line, and making diversionary efforts to the north.[4]

Almond's decision to pull the 23d Regimental Combat Team back to the Yoju stemmed from General Ruffner's insufficient strength to man all of the 2d Division's twenty-mile front between Wonju and Chip'yong-ni. There was, as a result, a twelve-mile gap between the 1st Battalion of the 9th Infantry, the westernmost unit defending Wonju, and the 23d. This gap left Freeman's force isolated and in danger of encirclement. The 2d Division reconnaissance company, sent out earlier to patrol Route 24, the combat team's main supply route, was some six miles south of Chip'yong-ni blocking a pass two miles out on a lateral road branching eastward from Route 24 at the village of Chuam-ni. But although the company thus stood at the midpoint of the gap, it could scarcely be counted on to prevent a strong enemy force from moving behind and trapping the combat team.[5]

Indications that the Chinese would exploit the gap already had appeared, the first on 12 February when the 1st Battalion of the 9th Infantry, then holding Hill 444 four miles east of Chip'yong-ni, received an attack by two Chinese battalions and withdrew to its present position northwest of Wonju. Air observers noted other Chinese movements toward the gap during the morning of the 13th, some toward the 2d Division reconnaissance company east of Chuam-ni. At General Ruffner's direction, Company L of the 9th Infantry reinforced the reconnaissance company around noon, arriving just ahead of an attack from the northeast. When the Chinese pulled away late in the afternoon and moved north in an apparent attempt to encircle the blocking force, Ruffner ordered the two companies west into a new blocking position on Route 24 at Chuam-ni.[6]

The Chinese, now at least within two miles of Route 24, probably would cut the 23d Regimental Combat Team's main supply route. An alternative arterial road, Route 24A, lay nearer the Han, its lower segment resting in the IX Corps sector. But on the 12th Chinese had skirted the Chip'yong-ni position on the west and driven off a 24th Division outpost on the alternate route

[3] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 13 Feb 51; X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; X Corps OI 105, 13 Feb 51; Rad, X 17751, CG X Corps to Chief KMAG, 122201 Feb 51.

[4] X Corps Rpt, Battle of Chip'yong-ni; Rad, GX–2–2270 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG X Corps, 28 Jan 51 (confirms oral instructions of 23 January).

[5] X Corps Rpt, Battle of Chip'yong-ni; 2d Div POR 519, 13 Feb 51; Testimony Before Eighth Army IG by 1st Lt Vincent W. Lang, 2d Div Rcn Co (hereafter cited as Lang Testimony), 4 Mar 51.

[6] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 12 Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Briefing for CG, 1 Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entry 2030, 13 Feb 51; Ltr, Eighth Army IG to CG Eighth Army, 13 Mar 51, sub: Investigation of 2d Infantry Division Incident at Chuam-ni, Korea, with 12 Exhibits; Rad, X 17780, CG X Corps to CG Eighth Army, 12 Feb 51.

at Koksu-ri, four miles south of Chip'yong-ni. Route 24A was now likely blocked.[7]

General Almond's decision to withdraw the 23d Regimental Combat Team, however, was about to be reversed. At noon on the 13th General MacArthur landed at Suwon airfield for his second visit to Korea since General Ridgway had assumed command of the Eighth Army. Ridgway took the opportunity to check once more with him the fundamental basis of his operations, namely that the acquisition of terrain meant nothing except as it facilitated the destruction of enemy forces and the conservation of his own. MacArthur agreed but added that Ridgway should hold strongly to the line of the Han River.[8]

Holding at the Han was part of MacArthur's latest report to Washington, submitted on 11 February, evaluating what could be achieved in Korea based on the policy of confining the fighting to Korea and on the general belief—with which he now agreed—that UNC forces could withstand all enemy attempts to drive them off the peninsula. "It can be accepted as a basic fact," he reported, "that, unless authority is given to strike enemy bases in Manchuria, our ground forces as presently constituted cannot with safety attempt major operations in North Korea." His long range plan, therefore, was to continue a ground advance until his forces developed the enemy's main line of resistance or determined that no such line existed south of the 38th parallel. Should the latter prove the case, he would request instructions from Washington.[9]

While he now believed that the Chinese could not achieve a decisive victory, he judged that as long as "Manchuria is immune to our attack," they had enough offensive power to force UNC withdrawals. Consequently, his immediate plan was to hold the line of the Han up to the point of a major and decisive engagement. "It is impossible to predict where, once we withdraw from this line, the situation will again stabilize," he reported, "but stabilization will be certain. The capability of the enemy is inversely and geometrically proportionate to his distance from the Yalu."[10]

Ridgway assured MacArthur that he fully intended to keep the I and IX Corps at the Han. Working against Ridgway's intention was an increased likelihood that the Chinese now in and west of Hoengsong would attempt to enter the Han valley and envelop his western forces. A 23d Regimental Combat Team withdrawal from Chip'yong-ni would remove a prinicipal strongpoint blocking Chinese access to the valley. Ridgway therefore wanted Chip'yong-ni held, and so instructed General Almond. Next, in countermove against a possible Chinese sweep through the gap between Chip'yong-ni and Wonju, Ridgway reached for two IX Corps units not engaged at the enemy bridgehead below the Han. He ordered General Moore to move the ROK 6th Division and the British 27th Brigade to Yoju, where they were to

[7] X Corps Rpt, Battle of Chip'yong-ni; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entry 2200, 12 Feb 51, and Entry 0245, 13 Feb 51; 2d Div POR 519, 13 Feb 51.

[8] Eighth Army SS Rpt, Office of the CG, Feb 51, Incl 13; MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, pp. 401–02.

[9] Rad, C–55315, CINCFE Personal for Gen Taylor, G3, DA, 11 Feb 51.

[10] Ibid.

pass to X Corps control and be deployed in the gap.[11]

Chip'yong-ni in the meantime was likely to become an isolated post under siege. Route 24A appeared to be blocked at Koksu-ri and Route 24 about to be cut at Chuam-ni, and 23d Regimental Combat Team patrols ranging up to three miles beyond Chip'yong-ni through the day reported enemy forces approaching from the north, east, and west. Should Colonel Freeman's force be cut off, Ridgway directed, Almond was to attack north to relieve it.[12]

The West Shoulder, 13–14 February

Chip'yong-ni straddles a stream in the lower end of a small valley hugged on the northeast by a low mountain mass, Pongmi-san, and by the foothills of Mangmi-san, a higher ridge to the south. *(Map 23)* From a mile out, the peak of Mangmi-san, Hill 397, dominates Chip'yong-ni from the south. Elsewhere, from one to two miles out, Hill 248 dominates from the southwest, 345 from the northwest, 348 from the north, 506 from the northeast, and 319 from the southeast. Colonel Freeman considered the terrain well suited for defense by a force the size of the 23d Regimental Combat Team, which was made up of the 23d Infantry; French battalion; 1st Ranger Company; 37th Field Artillery Battalion; Battery B, 503d Field Artillery Battalion; Battery B, 82d Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion; and Company B, 2d Engineer Combat Battalion. He developed a perimeter based on the Pongmi mass and Mangmi foothills and otherwise tracing lower hills inside the dominating heights. So locating his main position facilitated the organization of defensive fires, construction of obstacles, and resupply. Furthermore, Chinese occupying the distant higher ground around the position would not be able to deliver effective small arms fire on the perimeter but would themselves be vulnerable to the combat team's supporting fires.[13]

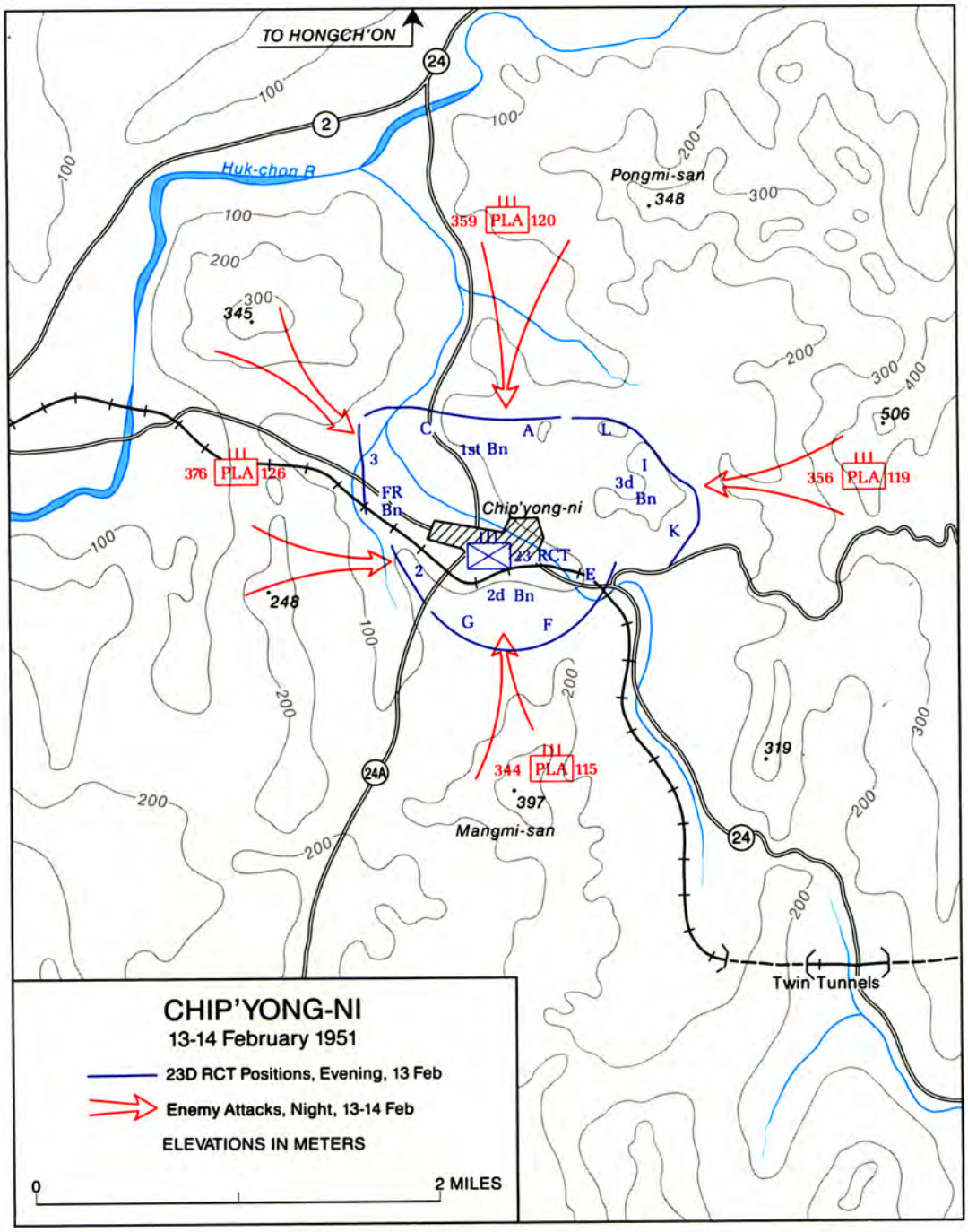
Freeman deployed the bulk of the 1st Battalion on the northern arc of the perimeter, the 3d on the east, the 2d on the south, and the French battalion on the west. Company B and the Ranger company were in reserve close behind the 1st Battalion line. Gaps in the perimeter were mined, blocked by barbed wire, or covered by fire. Twin 40s, quad 50s, and regimental tanks were in position to add their direct fire to the defense, prearranged artillery and mortar concentrations ringed the perimeter to the maximum range of the weapons, and a tactical air control party was present to direct air strikes.

All day on the 13th Freeman kept enemy formations approaching his position under artillery fire and air attacks. Against the probability that the

[11] MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, p. 402; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 13 Feb 51; Eighth Army SS Rpt, Office of the CG, Feb 51,Incl 14; Interv, Appleman with Ridgway, 2 Nov 51; Rad, GX–2–1414 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG IX Corps and CG X Corps, 13 Feb 51; Ltr, Gen Almond to Gen Ridgway, 14 Feb 51.

[12] 23d Inf AA Rpt, 29 Jan – 15 Feb 51; Rad, GX–2–1414 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG IX Corps and CG X Corps, 13 Feb 51.

[13] The Chip'yong-ni account is based on the following sources: X Corps Rpt, Battle of Chip'yong-ni; 23d Inf AA Rpt, 29 Jan – 15 Feb 51; Interv, Appleman with Col Paul L. Freeman, 17 Apr 52; Gugelar, *Combat Actions in Korea*, pp. 108–17; Mono, Capt. Edward C. Williamson, "Chip'yong-ni: Defense of South Sector of 23d Regimental Combat Team Perimeter by Company G, 13–15 February 1951," copy in CMH; Freeman, "Wonju Thru Chip'yong," p. 24.


TO HONGCH'ON
24
2
Huk-chon R
100
200
300
400
345
359 PLA 120
Pongmi-san
348
506
376 PLA 126
356 PLA 119
C
A
L
1st Bn
3
FR
Bn
Chip'yong-ni
3d
Bn
I
K
23 RCT
2
2d Bn
E
G
F
248
24A
344 PLA 115
397
Mangmi-san
319
Twin Tunnels
CHIP'YONG-NI
13-14 February 1951
23D RCT Positions, Evening, 13 Feb
Enemy Attacks, Night, 13-14 Feb
ELEVATIONS IN METERS
0
2 MILES

MAP 23

Chinese would attack after dark and the possibility that they would penetrate his position, he meanwhile marked out a second ring of defenses inside his perimeter to be manned at nightfall by Company B of the 2d Engineers and by battalion and regimental headquarters troops. Since his main supply route appeared about to be cut, he requested that a resupply of food, ammunition, and signal and medical items be airdropped on the 14th.

Distance signal flares went up around Chip'yong-ni late in the afternoon and in the evening. After dark, men of the 1st Battalion on the north sighted a line of torches about two miles out and watched the bearers maintain their line despite artillery and mortar fire as they brought the torches south within a half mile of the perimeter. Just after 2200 machine gun and mortar fire struck Company C astride Route 24 in the valley and on the western nose of Pongmisan. Enemy artillery fire joined the bombardment, striking Freeman's heavy mortars, artillery, and regimental command post as well as the outer perimeter. A cacophony of whistle, horn, and bugle blasts preceded an attack on Company C about 2330. The discordant signals later sounded all around the perimeter and were followed by attacks on Company G in the south, at two points in the French sector on the west, and near the center of the 3d Battalion position on the east.

Freeman's tight perimeter prevented the Chinese from fixing a position and flowing around its flanks. Pushing frontal assaults against the wire and through heavy defensive fires, they managed one penetration in the Company G sector but were blunted by reinforcements from Company F and help from the regimental tank company. Following a strong but failing effort against the 3d Battalion at 0630 and another against the French an hour later, the Chinese withdrew into the dominating heights around Chip'yong-ni.

By daybreak on the 14th Colonel Freeman's casualties numbered about a hundred. Freeman himself had suffered a leg wound from a mortar fragment. General Almond had X Corps G–3 Col. John H. Chiles flown into Chip'yong-ni during the morning to take command, but Freeman, though he required hospitalization, refused immediate evacuation and remained in command.[14]

High winds and enemy mortar and artillery fire striking the perimeter intermittently through the day inhibited and finally stopped the helicopter evacuation of other casualties. The poor flying weather also delayed close air support. Three flights of fighters eventually arrived after 1430 and in combination with the combat team's mortars and artillery kept Chinese troops digging in on the surrounding high ground under fire. Over a three-hour period starting around 1500, two dozen C–119s of the Far East Air Forces' Combat Cargo Command flying out of Japan dropped the supplies requested by Freeman the day before. The Chinese meanwhile opened no daylight assaults, but captives taken the previous night claimed the attack would be renewed after dark. Four regiments appeared to have sent assault forces against the perimeter during the initial attack. Since these regiments represented four

[14] Colonel Chiles served under General Almond as secretary of the General Staff at General Headquarters, Far East Command, and became Almond's G–3 when the X Corps was activated.

different divisions, the *115th, 119th, 120th,* and *126th,* and, in turn, three different armies, the *39th, 40th,* and *42d,* the renewal predicted by the prisoners might be considerably stronger than the first attack.

At Chuam-ni, a regiment of the *116th Division, 39th Army,* opened an attack around 0500 on the 14th against the 2d Division reconnaissance company and Company L, 9th Infantry. After about half its troops the day before had attacked the two companies at their blocking position two miles farther east, this regiment apparently swung its full strength around the Chuam-ni perimeter during the night.[15]

At midmorning, after suffering considerable losses to small arms, machine gun, and mortar fire and to assaults from almost all directions, the two companies withdrew south over Route 24. Apparently anticipating such a move, the Chinese had set fire blocks along the road below Chuam-ni and had blown a bridge two miles below town. Running the gauntlet and getting around the destroyed crossing cost the two companies several vehicles as well as additional casualties that brought the total to 212, of whom at least 114 were dead.[16]

Along the northwestern portion of the Wonju defenses, just inside the corner position of the 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry, Chinese coming out of the Hoengsong area meanwhile hit the 38th Infantry. (*Map 24*) The assaults forced a short withdrawal by the attached Netherlands battalion on the 38th's left and penetrated the 3d Battalion on the regimental right, but counterattacks restored the lost ground before noon.[17]

Captives identified the force moving on Wonju to be in division strength and to comprise two regiments of the *120th Division* and one of the *117th.* The bulk of this force was sighted from the air moving in several columns across the Som River northwest of Wonju. Taken and kept under air and massed artillery attack, the Chinese at first ignored losses and continued toward Wonju. But as casualties mounted the Chinese faltered, and most turned southwest before reaching the Wonju defenses. By 1500 the air strikes and artillery fire stopped the enemy movement altogether.[18]

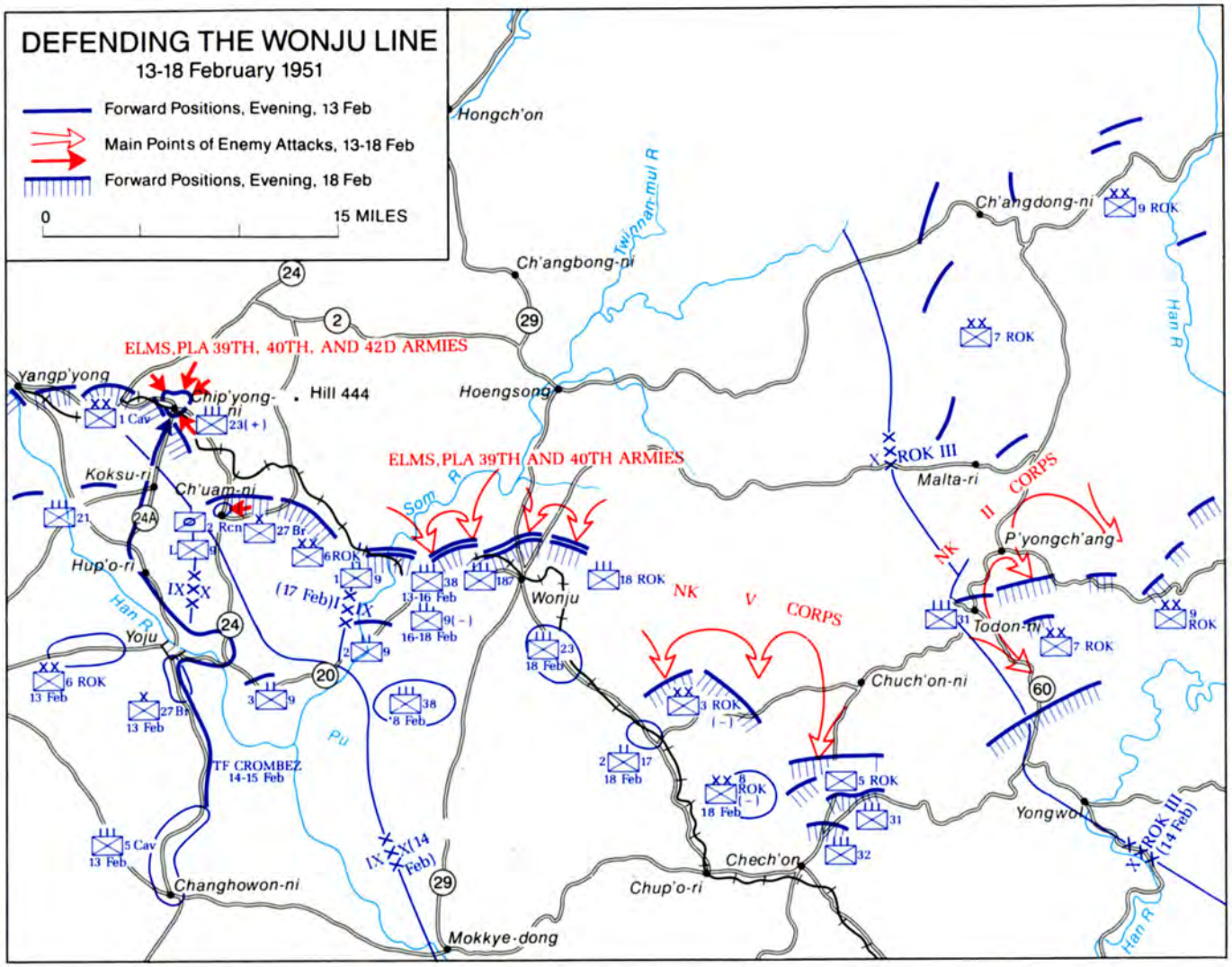
Chinese losses at Chip'yong-ni, Chuam-ni and Wonju between midnight on the 13th and nightfall on the 14th appeared heavy. Six hundred forty-eight bodies were counted; the estimate of additional casualties was thirty-two hundred killed and twenty-five hundred wounded. But in view of nearby Chinese reserves, the *XIII Army Group* commander might continue an advance on the twenty-mile front between Chip'yong-ni and Wonju with no delay for regroupment and in even

[15] The Chuam-ni account is based on Williamson, "Chip'yong-ni"; Ltr, Eighth Army IG to CG Eighth Army, 13 Mar 51, sub: Investigation of 2d Infantry Division Incident at Chuam-ni, Korea; Rad, X 17826, CG X Corps to CG Eighth Army, 16 Feb 51.

[16] The Chuam-ni episode led to a report by a Canadian Press correspondent that "68 soldiers were slaughtered in a village they had captured because they posted only a single sentry and then went to sleep." The report drew a sharp question from Washington and prompted an investigation by the Eighth Army inspector general. The implied charge of negligence proved unfounded.

[17] Eighth Army PORs 650, 651, and 652, 14 Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Briefing for CG, 15 Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entries 0415, 0730, and 0830, 14 Feb 51; X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; X Corps PIR 141, 14 Feb 51.

[18] Rad, X 17826, CG X Corps to CG Eighth Army, 16 Feb 51; X Corps PIR 141, 14 Feb 51.


DEFENDING THE WONJU LINE
13-18 February 1951
Forward Positions, Evening, 13 Feb
Main Points of Enemy Attacks, 13-18 Feb
Forward Positions, Evening, 18 Feb
0
15 MILES
Hongch'on
Twinnan-mul R
Ch'angdong-ni
9 ROK
Ch'angbong-ni
Han R
7 ROK
ELMS, PLA 39TH, 40TH, AND 42D ARMIES
Yangp'yong
Chip'yong-ni
Hill 444
Hoengsong
1 Cav
23(+)
ELMS, PLA 39TH AND 40TH ARMIES
ROK III
Malta-ri
II CORPS
Koksu-ri
Ch'uam-ni
Som R
P'yongch'ang
NK
Hup'o-ri
Han R
Wonju
18 ROK
NK V CORPS
Todon-ni
9 ROK
7 ROK
Yoju
Chuch'on-ni
6 ROK
13 Feb
27 Br
13 Feb
TF CROMBEZ
14-15 Feb
Pu
3 ROK (-)
18 Feb
5 ROK
Yongwol
5 Cav
13 Feb
Changhowon-ni
Chech'on
Chup'o-ri
ROK III (14 Feb)
Mokkye-dong
Han R

MAP 24

greater strength. Considering the Chinese failure at Chip'yong-ni and Wonju and numerous air sightings of Chinese troops between the two X Corps strongpoints, the enemy commander might also center his principal thrust and aim it at the junction of the Han and Som rivers seven miles below Yoju.[19]

Ameliorating the X Corps' stance—or lack of one—between Chip'yong-ni and Wonju, the British 27th Brigade and ROK 6th Division were now en route to positions in the gap. The British unit crossed the Han over a ponton bridge near Yoju around 0600 on the 14th and passed from IX Corps to X Corps control. General Almond attached the brigade to the 2d Division, and General Ruffner ordered it to occupy the upper segment of the gap adjacent to Chip'yong-ni. Behind the British, the ROK 6th Division crossed the Han and passed to X Corps and 2d Division control at 1100. Ruffner directed it into the lower section of the gap west of the 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry. Traveling separate trails northeast into the mountains, the two leading regiments of the division at dark took up blocking positions some three to four miles short of their assigned fronts. The South Koreans thus were near at hand to oppose any Chinese push toward the confluence of the Han and Som rivers.[20]

As a result of a midmorning conference between General Ridgway and General Almond at the main X Corps headquarters in Ch'ungju, the British brigade received an intermediate mission as it moved north on Route 24 toward its assigned sector. In discussing steps to be taken in handling the Chinese offensive, now in its third day, Ridgway emphasized that the Chinese pushing through the western and central portions of the X Corps sectors represented the bulk of the Chinese opposing the Eighth Army. He wanted these as well as the North Koreans farther east confined to Almond's sector by holding the shoulders of the penetration. Army orders were then being prepared terminating Operation ROUNDUP and taking the ROK III Corps from X Corps control. Ridgway himself would give the ROK III Corps instructions for holding its portion of the east shoulder. Almond was to hold fast elsewhere, subject to the standing, overriding requirement that units be maintained intact.[21]

As Ridgway and Almond met, Chinese forces stood across Route 24 in and below Chuam-ni and the 2d Division reconnaissance company and Company L of the 9th Infantry were fighting their way south. It was also clear by then that the Chinese, as suspected, had cut Route 24A; a 24th Division patrol reinvestigating Koksu-ri ran into Chinese. With both roads to Chip'yong-ni interdicted, the 23d Regimental Combat Team was isolated. Ridgway instructed Almond to give priority to opening Route 24 since holding the western shoulder required an anchor at Chip'yong-ni.[22]

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[19] X Corps PIR 141, 14 Feb 51.

[20] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum and Entries 0300, 0430, and 1315, 14 Feb 51; Eighth Army POR 652, 14 Feb 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51.

[21] Eighth Army SS Rpt, Office of the CG, Feb 51, Incl 14; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 14 Feb 51; Rad, GX–2–1513 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG X Corps, 14 Feb 51; Rad, GX–2–1469 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA and CG X Corps, 14 Feb 51.

[22] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 14 Feb 51; Eighth Army POR 652, 14 Feb 51; Eighth Army SS Rpt, Office of the CG, Feb 51, Incl 14.

The British 27th Brigade consequently received orders to open the 23d Regimental Combat Team's main supply route before moving into position in the gap. Continuing north, the British met the 2d Division reconnaissance company and Company L, 9th Infantry, about five miles south of Chuam-ni. North of that point, the brigade could push only slowly through Chinese rimming the road; the 27th stopped for the night over a mile short of Chuam-ni and some seven miles short of Chip'yong-ni.[23]

After meeting with Almond, Ridgway briefed the IX Corps commander on the concept of holding the shoulders of the enemy penetration in the X Corps sector and opening Route 24 to Chip'yong-ni. Two days earlier General Moore had assembled the 5th Cavalry at Changhowon-ni, the site of IX Corps headquarters twelve miles below Yoju, in case it became necessary to counterattack enemy forces east of the Han. In light of the priority Ridgway had given to opening the 23d Regimental Combat Team's supply road, Moore developed a plan for using the 5th Cavalry to clear Route 24A into Chip'yong-ni. Moore's plan called for the 5th Cavalry, two companies of tanks, two artillery battalions, and a platoon of engineers to clear 24A and to set up at Koksu-ri a base of operations from which to keep the road open.[24]

Late in the afternoon, after learning that the British 27th Brigade was advancing very slowly up Route 24, Moore ordered Col. Marcel G. Crombez, commander of the 5th Cavalry, to move the attack force immediately. Moore meanwhile coordinated the movement of ambulances and loaded supply trucks, most of them from the 2d Division, so they could follow Colonel Crombez' column into Chip'yong-ni. Crombez got his units across the Han and onto Route 24A before midnight but was forced to halt at Hup'o-ri, more than eight miles below Chip'yong-ni, while his troops built a bypass around a demolished bridge. This development destined the 23d Regimental Combat Team to remain isolated at least through the remainder of the night.[25]

The East Shoulder, 14–18 February

Amid the attempts to fill and hold the Chip'yong-ni–Wonju line on the west, stabilizing the east shoulder in both the X Corps and ROK III Corps sectors was proving another problem. The ROK 3d and 5th Divisions, ordered by General Almond on the 13th to withdraw into positions between Wonju and P'yongch'ang, continued to withdraw on the 14th somewhat below that line. North Korean *V Corps* forces caught up with both divisions during the afternoon of the 14th and briefly engaged each. The ROK 3d, missing its 18th Regiment and otherwise hurt by casualties, nevertheless managed to put up fair defenses slightly southeast of Wonju and twelve miles above Chech'on. But the ROK 5th, next east, became even more disorganized as it withdrew and at dark on the 14th was still assembling around Chuch'on-ni, ten miles above Chech'on. Its artillery was intact, but it had lost half its other

[23] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 14 Feb 51; Eighth Army POR 652, 14 Feb 51.

[24] Eighth Army SS Rpt, Office of the CG, Feb 51, Incl 14; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; IX Corps POR 427, 14 Feb 51; Mono, 1st Lt. Martin Blumenson, "Task Force Crombez," copy in CMH.

[25] Blumenson, "Task Force Crombez."

crew-served weapons and could muster only the equivalent of four infantry battalions. This left the division scarcely fit to establish defenses before Chech'on, let alone send a regiment northeast to Malta-ri, as Almond had directed, to help tie the X Corps line to the extended position of the ROK III Corps.[26]

Left with a twenty-mile west flank neither tied to the X Corps nor solidly manned, and feeling some pressure on this flank from North Korean *II Corps* forces, especially at Malta-ri, General Yu ordered the ROK 7th and 9th Divisions at the left and center of the ROK III Corps sector to withdraw near noon on the 14th. The ROK 7th moved toward positions adjacent to General Ferenbaugh's 31st Infantry below P'yongch'ang, the ROK 9th toward positions at the ROK 7th's right.[27]

General Ridgway earlier had recognized that the enemy attacks in the X Corps sector and the X Corps withdrawals might compel some adjustment of the ROK III Corps position. Preempting to a degree the authority he had given General Almond to coordinate ROK III Corps movements during Operation ROUNDUP, Ridgway on the 12th permitted General Yu to halt the ROK III Corps advance pending the outcome of the attack against Almond's forces. On the 13th, after the X Corps had pulled back some fifteen miles, he authorized Yu to withdraw his three divisions into defenses along a general southwest-northeast line between P'yongch'ang and Kangnung on the coast. But he intended that Yu withdraw only as a result of enemy pressure and then only in a well-fought delaying action, whereas Yu's order on the 14th appeared to be an unnecessary surrender of east shoulder territory.[28]

To prevent future ROK withdrawals that did not punish and delay enemy forces, Ridgway directed the KMAG chief, General Farrell, to make a habit of posting himself with major ROK units when they were withdrawing and to insure personally that they stayed in contact. In response to the latest ROK III Corps move, he flashed a reminder to Yu on the 15th that any general withdrawal not forced by enemy pressure violated standing instructions. Yu received the admonition in time to hold the bulk of the ROK 9th Division generally in its original position. But the ROK 7th Division and 30th Regiment of the ROK 9th had completed their withdrawals, the regiments of the ROK 7th standing along Route 60 from a point six miles above Yongwol north to P'yongch'ang, the 30th Regiment extending the line to the northeast. Since North Korean *II Corps* forces from the *9th* and *27th Divisions* were then approaching P'yongch'ang from the northwest, Yu attached the 30th Regiment to the ROK 7th Division and left the force where it was.[29]

[26] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entries 1947 and 2045, 14 Feb 51; ibid., Sum, 14 and 15 Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Briefing for CG, 16 Feb 51; X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; Hq, FEC, History of the North Korean Army, 31 Jul 52.

[27] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entries 1430, 1432, 1931, and 2045, 14 Feb 51; ibid., Sum, 14 Feb 51; Eighth Army POR 652, 14 Feb 51; Hq, FEC, History of the North Korean Army, 31 Jul 52.

[28] Rad, GX–2–1311 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA, 12 Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 13 and 14 Feb 51; Rad, GX–2–1551 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA, 15 Feb 51.

[29] Eighth Army SS Rpt, Office of the CG, Feb 51, Incl 14; Rad, GX–2–1551 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA, 15 Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 15 Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Briefing for CG, 16 Feb 51; Hq, FEC, History of the North Korean Army, 31 Jul 52.

The ostensible aim of the North Koreans moving on P'yongch'ang was to drive Yu's forces out of the town and back from Route 60, thereby opening the road for a strike south against Yongwol. From late afternoon on 15 February through early morning on the 18th, the *9th* and *27th Divisions* launched repeated company and battalion assaults, seized P'yongch'ang itself, and, in their best effort, drove down Route 60 within eight miles of Yongwol. On the 16th, after it was clear that Yu would not be able to return the ROK 7th Division and 30th Regiment to their former positions to the north, General Ridgway allowed him to pull the remaining ROK III Corps units to the P'yongch'ang-Kangnung line and gave him specific instructions to stand fast in the P'yongch'ang area and hold the North Koreans out of Yongwol. Yu consequently placed a second regiment in the P'yongch'ang area as he brought the rest of his forces south. The North Korean units, still worn from previous operations, could not sustain their drive against the strong South Korean position, lost most of their gains to ROK counterattacks, and finally withdrew. By evening of the 18th Yu's line units were reporting no contact.[30]

In the adjacent X Corps sector North Korean *V Corps* forces pushed toward Chech'on on 15 February, hitting hard at the 22d Regiment in the right half of the ROK 3d Division's sector. The regiment gave way some on the east but with fire support from 7th Division artillery near Chech'on otherwise stood its ground. With no serious results, a few North Koreans reached Chuch'on-ni to the southeast and briefly fired on the ROK 5th Division, which was still assembling straggling forces and feebly attempting to establish defenses centered on the town.[31]

Under the arrangements made on 12 February by General Almond and General Ridgway, the ROK I Corps headquarters took control of the ROK 3d, 5th, and 8th Divisions at 1400 on the 15th. Almond directed General Kim, the ROK I Corps commander, to defend the Wonju-P'yongch'ang line, a large order given the debilitated condition of the ROK 5th and 8th Divisions and the presence of North Korean forces below that line. Because of the current threat to Chech'on, Kim's initial act was to form a provisional battalion from remnants of the ROK 8th Division as corps reserve, which he assembled north of Chup'o-ri behind a two-mile gap between the two forward divisions.[32]

Additional *V Corps* forces from the *6th, 7th,* and *12th Divisions* meanwhile massed in front of the ROK I Corps and early on the 16th opened strong assaults against both forward divisions. The ROK 3d Division, after the 22d Regiment on the right lost some ground, contained the attack in its sector; but the ROK 5th Division, having been able to organize only fragile positions at Chuch'on-ni, withdrew after North Koreans penetrated the 36th Regiment on the division left.

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[30] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 15–18 Feb 51; Rad, GX–2–1703 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA and CG X Corps, 16 Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Briefing for CG, 19 Feb 51; Hq, FEC, History of the North Korean Army, 31 Jul 52.

[31] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entries 1050, 1900, and 2330, 15 Feb 51; ibid., Sum, 15 Feb 51; X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51.

[32] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entry 1720, 15 Feb 51; X Corps O1 112, 15 Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Briefing for CG, 16 Feb 51.

KMAG advisors with the 5th Division and ROK I Corps headquarters notified General Almond that the division's units were not being hit especially hard but were being outmaneuvered and in the process were disintegrating. Before the North Korean attack diminished in the evening, the division had fallen back five miles and, in the judgment of the KMAG advisors, was no longer to be counted as an effective force.[33]

To ease the danger to Chech'on, only five miles behind the ROK 5th Division, Almond directed General Ferenbaugh's U.S. 7th Division to move the 31st Infantry from the P'yongch'ang area, where the ROK 7th Division was holding its own, to a position behind the ROK 5th. While the enemy threat remained potentially serious, the 31st Regiment in its new position and the 32d Infantry in and around Chech'on itself considerably increased Almond's chances of holding the North Koreans out of the town and off the main X Corps supply route. Further improving the defense of Chech'on, the tail-end battalion of the 17th Infantry, which had been moving up Route 29 to the regimental assembly at Wonju, halted along the road behind the ROK 3d Division. In addition, General Kim shaped another provisional battalion from ROK 8th Division remnants and started it forward to assemble with the one he had formed the day before below the gap between the two forward divisions. That gap had opened to three miles when the ROK 5th withdrew.[34]

An even wider gap of about seven miles had opened between the right of the ROK 5th Division and the nearest ROK III Corps position to the northeast. Although General Yu's left flank forces were handling the North Korean *II Corps* units attempting to push down Route 60 into Yongwol, the gap offered the North Koreans opposite the ROK 5th Division an opportunity to sweep around Yu's flank. Yu, his leftmost forces well occupied and anyway obliged by General Ridgway's orders of the 16th to stand fast in the P'yongch'ang area, could do nothing about filling the gap; neither could any of the weak ROK divisions in the X Corps sector. Ridgway on 17 February consequently directed Almond to push American troops northeast to clear out the North Koreans and establish firm contact with the ROK III Corps.[35]

As Ridgway acted to cover the gap between corps, it began to appear that the hard assaults on the ROK 3d and 5th Divisions on the 16th had spent the North Korean *V Corps*. Infiltration and assaults harassed both South Korean divisions on the 17th and 18th but failed to yield any permanent gain, and on the 18th even the weak ROK 5th Division was able to make one short advance. As contact diminished on the 18th, a battalion from the 31st Infantry patrolled five miles ahead of ROK lines before encountering a North Korean position. The North Koreans may have backed off only to reorganize for new attacks; but in light of what had taken place in the meantime along the X Corps' west shoulder, their move was

[33] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entries 0230, 1000, 1710, 1905, and 2340, 16 Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 16 Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Briefing for CG, 17 Feb 51.

[34] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entries 1000 and 2340, 16 Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 16 Feb 51.

[35] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 17 Feb 51; Rad, GX–2–1767 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG X Corps, 17 Feb 51.

more likely part of a general withdrawal.[36]

Chip'yong-ni and Task Force Crombez

Though General Almond, expecting a strong Chinese strike south of the Hoengsong, had emphasized the defense of Wonju, enemy forces made no concerted effort to seize the town after failing to do so on the 14th. Local skirmishes occurred along the Wonju front on the 15th, but on the 16th contact lightened and faded out.[37]

To the northwest, the ROK 6th Division and the British 27th Brigade also encountered diminishing resistance in the area between Wonju and Chip'yong-ni. On the 15th South Korean patrols went out from positions the division had reached the night before and reported only light contact. On the 16th the two leading regiments advanced with no contact within one to three miles of their assigned fronts. The British, while advancing in column up Route 24 toward Chip'yong-ni, were held up by an enemy battalion on the 15th, then found resistance almost nonexistent the next day. Moving with intentional slowness nevertheless, the brigade had not reached Chuam-ni by dark on the 16th.[38]

The *XIII Army Group* commander clearly had chosen not to push southwest in strength through the gap but to concentrate on eliminating the Chip'yong-ni position. His forces around the 23d Regimental Combat Team reopened their attack with mortar fire after dark on the 14th. Near midnight both mortars and artillery began an hour-long barrage on the regimental command post and other installations inside the perimeter, and a hard assault off Hill 397 to the south struck Company G. Assaults next hit Companies A and C on the north, then Companies I and K on the east. Sharp, close fighting in the 1st and 3d Battalion sectors abated around 0400 with no more than the temporary loss of one position by Company I and ceased altogether about daylight. But in the south, where the Chinese had decided to make their main effort, persistant pressure slowly carried enemy troops through the Company G area.[39]

Weak counterattacks by artillerymen from Battery B, 503d Field Artillery Battalion, whose 155-mm. howitzers were in position close behind Company G, and by a squad drawn from Company F on line to the east failed to restore the breaks in the Company G line. Around 0300 the company surrendered the rest of its position and withdraw to a rise just behind the 503d's howitzers. The artillerymen followed suit, as did tankers and antiaircraft gunners, and joined a continuing exchange of fire with Chinese holding the original Company G position. The defensive fire discouraged the Chinese from advancing on the artillery pieces, which rested in a hollow between the two firing lines.

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[36] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 17 and 18 Feb 51.

[37] X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 15 and 16 Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Briefing for CG, 16 Feb 51.

[38] *Ibid.*

[39] The remainder of this section is based on the following sources: X Corps Rpt, Battle of Chip'yong-ni; 23d Inf AA Rpt, 29 Jan–15 Feb 51; Gugeler, *Combat Actions in Korea*, pp. 117–42; Williamson, "Chip'yong-ni"; Blumenson, "Task Force Crombez"; Ltr, Lt Col James W. Edwards to Col Paul L. Freeman, 7 May 51, copy in CMH.

Lt. Col. James W. Edwards, the 2d Battalion commander, organized a stronger counterattack, reinforcing Company G with a platoon of Company F, the total of his own reserve, and a platoon of Rangers obtained from regiment. Attacking around 0400, the composite force regained part of the lost ground but then was driven back and heavy casualties. By daylight Company G occupied positions on a low ridge a quartermile behind the former Company G position, as did members of Battery B, 503d Field Artillery Battalion. The battery's guns remained near the center of the quarter-mile no-man's-land. Immediately west of Company G, French troops, who had attempted unsuccessfully to assist the counterattack, also pulled back to refuse the French battalion's left flank.

Colonel Freeman, who remained at Chip'yong-ni and in command until finally evacuated at midmorning on the 15th, released Company B and the remainder of the Ranger company around 0800 for a stronger effort. This release committed all available troops save the company of engineers, although by that hour action elsewhere on the perimeter had ceased. At 1000, behind a mortar barrage and supported by fire from tanks and antiaircraft weapons, Company B tried to retake the Company G position alone but was kept off the crest by fire from Chinese on the southern slopes where the preliminary and supporting fires had chased them.

Air strikes requested by Colonel Edwards during the morning began somewhat tardily at noon. Edwards meanwhile ordered tanks accompanied by Rangers south on Route 24A beyond the attack objective so the tank gunners could fire east onto the southern slopes. After mines previously placed on the road were removed and several Chinese armed with rocket launchers killed or driven off, Edwards' tanks reached a point on the road from where they could hit the Chinese. About 1630, as the tank fire in combination with artillery fire and air strikes began to break up the Chinese position, Company B regained the rest of the objective. Almost at the same time, the head of a tank column came into view on Route 24A to the south. After a moment of surprise, Edwards' men realized the tanks were part of the 5th Cavalry relief force which had started toward Chip'yong-ni the day before.

Colonel Crombez had renewed his advance up Route 24A at 0700 on the 15th, about an hour after his engineers completed the bypass around the destroyed bridge at Hup'o-ri. The 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry, and two platoons of tanks in the lead first encountered resistance about two miles below Koksu-ri where Chinese had dug in on Hill 152 bordering Route 24A on the east. Crombez deployed the 1st Battalion against 152 and sent the 2d Battalion up Hill 143 edging the road on the west just opposite. Hill 143 fell easily, but the 1st Battalion cleared the 152 mass only in midafternoon.

Suspecting that the remainder of the road north would be just as stoutly defended, Crombez doubted an infantry attack could carry to Chip'yong-ni by dark but believed an armored task force could. For the armored thrust he assembled twenty-three tanks, which included all of Company D, 6th Tank Battalion, and a platoon of Company A, 70th Tank Battalion. Needing infantry protection for the armor but hav-

ing no armored personnel carriers, he instructed the hundred sixty members of Company L, 5th Cavalry, to ride the tanks. As agreed between the Company L commander and the commander of the tanks, the infantrymen were to dismount and deploy to protect the tanks during any halt and were to remount on signal from the tankers when the column was ready to proceed. Four members of the engineer company with Crombez also were to ride a tank near the head of the column to lift any mines on the road.

At midafternoon, as Crombez completed preparations for the armored thrust, not all the supply trucks and ambulances scheduled to follow the 5th Cavalry into Chip'yong-ni had reached the regiment's location. Doubting anyway that wheeled vehicles could safely accompany the tank column, Crombez decided to call the supply train forward after he had opened the road. The new 23d Regimental Combat Team commander, Colonel Chiles, whom Crombez contacted by radio before leading the task force forward, did not object. Since the 23d at the time was having trouble reestablishing the Company G positions on the south, Chiles wanted Crombez to come, "trains or no trains."

Ahead of Task Force Crombez' departure from behind the 1st and 2d Battalions at 1545, artillery fire and air strikes pounded the hills bordering Koksu-ri. Lest the infantry aboard the tanks be hit, Crombez sacrificed any further supporting artillery fire on the high ground edging Route 24A.

Despite the heavy preliminary fire, a strong Chinese force remained on the Koksu-ri heights and twice forced Crombez' column to halt, once as the lead tank approached the town, again just after the task force passed through. No tanks were lost in heavy exchanges of fire during the halts, but Crombez lost about ninety of his infantrymen who, according to plan, dismounted at each stop. Some were hit in the firefight; the bulk simply were stranded when Crombez, believing the success of his task force depended on keeping the tanks moving, ordered his column forward and the tankers responded without allowing time for all members of Company L to remount. The able-bodied cavalrymen left behind returned south to the regimental line, most of them moving through the ground west of Route 24A where resistance had been lightest. Men in a 2½-ton truck, dispatched by the 3d Battalion commander on his own volition to trail the task force (Colonel Crombez had made no provision for evacuating casualties), picked up some of the wounded. Others were recovered later by tankers of Company A, 70th Tank Battalion, not taking part in the thrust toward Chip'yong-ni.

Proceeding above Koksu-ri with fewer than seventy infantrymen aboard, Crombez' column received almost constant but lighter fire as far as a cut through the western slopes of Hill 397 a mile below Chip'yong-ni. To that point no tank had been damaged, but more infantrymen were lost, some shot off the tanks, a few pushed off as tank gunners swung turrets and tubes to return fire, others stranded as before after brief halts.

Heavy small arms and mortar fire struck the column as it reached the road cut; as the tanks started through, Chinese atop the steep embankments on either side fired rocket launchers and

threw down satchel charges. A rocket that struck the turret of the lead tank wounded the gunner and loader, and the road wheels of the second tank were damaged, but both got through. The third tank was not touched, but the fourth, carrying Capt. Johnnie M. Hiers, commanding Company D of the 6th Tank Battalion, took a turret hit from a rocket, apparently a 3.5-inch round, that penetrated and exploded ammunition in the racks. The men in the fighting compartment, including Captain Hiers, were killed, and the tank caught fire. The driver, though severely burned, raced the tank through the cut and off the road so as not to block the remainder of the column.

As each of the following tanks rammed into the cut, crews of tanks still to enter and of those already through delivered heavy cannon fire on the embankments. They dampened enemy fire enough to permit all remaining tanks to pass safely. The Chinese, however, further thinned the infantry riding the tanks, and the 2½-ton truck at the tail of the column, its driver wounded and one of its tires flat, rolled to a stop in the cut. Most of the wounded who had been riding the truck hobbled through the cut and got aboard one of the last tanks.

The leading forces of Task Force Crombez and the 23d Regimental Combat Team tankers earlier sent south on Route 24A by Colonel Edwards sighted each other as the task force reached the north side of the cut. In the mutual moment of surprise before recognition—a result of not being in radio contact with each other—the commander of Crombez' second tank began calling out an order to fire on the armor up the road. The Chinese on the upper slopes of Hill 397 to the east, already loosened from their position by Edwards' counterattack and demoralized by the appearance of Crombez' column, meanwhile began to run. Edwards had never seen "a sight like that and never expect to see another like it. There were more targets than we had weapons."

After helping Edwards clean the Chinese from the slopes east of the road with high explosive fire from the 90-mm. guns, Crombez led his column inside the 23d Regimental Combat Team perimeter about 1715. In covering the six miles from below Koksu-ri into Chip'yong-ni the task force had had three tanks and the 2½-ton truck damaged. Casualties among the armored troops were three killed and four wounded. Still with Crombez were all four engineers but just twenty-three members of Company L, many of them wounded. Altogether, the rifle company lost twelve killed, forty wounded, and nineteen missing—almost half its strength.

Because so little daylight remained, Crombez elected to remain in Chip'yong-ni overnight. He also considered it advisable to hold the supply trucks and ambulances below Koksu-ri until after he made the return trip and rechecked the road. Air observers meanwhile reported the Chinese to be moving away from Chip'yong-ni not only from the slopes of Hill 397 in the south but from all around the perimeter. Colonel Chiles nevertheless anticipated an attack during the night. Against this possibility, Crombez placed some of his tanks on the perimeter, most of them on the north and northwest to help cover the valley approaches to Chip'yong-ni.

Small arms and mortar ammunition meanwhile had become scarce commodities at the perimeter. The two dozen airdrops on the 14th and thirty air deliveries during the morning of the 15th contained mostly artillery rounds. In Colonel Edwards' battalion, which had had the hardest fight, men searched trailers and truck glove compartments to get two clips to each rifleman. None of Edwards' rifle companies had more than six rounds of 60-mm. mortar ammunition, and only thirty rounds remained for the 81-mm. mortars. Emergency nighttime airdrops on zones outlined by truck headlights finally replenished the smaller ammunition types between 2130 and midnight. The light guiding the cargo planes attracted some enemy small arms and mortar fire, which made retrieving the ammunition packages hazardous. This fire proved to be the extent of further Chinese action. As reported earlier by air observers, the Chinese were hurriedly leaving Chip'yong-ni. Verification came from patrols moving outside the perimeter after daylight on the 16th.

Casualties inflicted on the Chinese by the 23d Regimental Combat Team, counted and estimated, totaled 4,946. Colonel Crombez judged that his task force inflicted over 500 more. The perimeter troops also captured 79 Chinese who at interrogation identified five divisions from the *39th, 40th,* and *42d Armies* as having taken part in the attacks. The attack force itself, however, appeared to have been no more than six regiments, one each from the *115th, 116th, 119th,* and *120th Divisions* and two from the *126th Division.* These six had not attacked in concert, nor had any of them thrown a full strength assault against the perimeter. Almost all attacks had been made by company-size forces, some followed by a succession of attacks of the same size in the same or nearby places. This kind of successive small unit assault had permitted the Chinese to invest the Company G position on the southern arc of the perimeter.

The remaining regiment of the *126th Division* had opposed Colonel Crombez' forces at Koksu-ri and along the road north. The 1st and 2d Battalions of the 5th Cavalry, after a quiet night on Hills 143 and 152 below Koksu-ri, advanced close to the lower edge of town during a snowstorm on the morning of the 16th, picking up Chinese stragglers who identified their regiment and reported that it had withdrawn hastily during the night. Colonel Crombez confirmed the enemy withdrawal during his return trip, which he delayed until the snowstorm lifted around noon. He found the borders of Route 24A from Chip'yong-ni to Koksu-ri free of Chinese.

After returning to Koksu-ri with Crombez, Capt. John C. Barrett, commanding Company L, went back north over the road by jeep in search of any wounded members of his company who might still be lying along the route. He located four between Koksu-ri and the road cut below Chip'yong-ni. Behind Barrett, Capt. Keith M. Stewart, assistant S–3 of the 5th Cavalry, led the supply trucks and ambulances forward. Moving with thirteen tanks, a platoon of infantry, and a wrecker in his column, Stewart caught up with Barrett at the road cut in midafternoon and took aboard the casualties the latter had recovered. Stewart found another wounded man from Company L

beyond the cut. The wrecker meanwhile towed in the truck and tank that had been damaged at the cut.

Colonel Chiles, having been fairly resupplied with ammunition by airdrop, was not so anxious for the arrival of Stewart's supply trucks as he was for the ambulances. Casualties in the 23d Regimental Combat Team now totaled 52 killed, 259 wounded, and 42 missing. Chiles had been able to evacuate only a few of the wounded by helicopter after daybreak on the 16th before fog and snow grounded the aircraft. He was now able to load all remaining wounded on a few emptied supply trucks as well as the ambulances, and Stewart delivered them to the 5th Cavalry clearing station at Koksu-ri before dark.

A Turning Point

As the battle of Chip'yong-ni climaxed, General Ridgway felt that the Eighth Army had reached a turning point, that it had substantially regained the confidence lost during the distressing withdrawals of December and early January. In his judgment, the successful defense of Chip'yong-ni by an isolated combat team without grievous losses against a force far superior in strength symbolized the revitalization. Task Force Crombez, in its relief role, epitomized the offensive spirit. Although being forced to place infantry aboard the tanks had proved costly, Ridgway judged Colonel Crombez' decision to advance with armor when his infantry moved too slowly to be one of the best local decisions of the war. With renewed spirit, as evidenced at Chip'yong-ni, Ridgway considered his forces quite capable of further offensive operations, which he immediately proceeded to design.[40]

[40] Interv, Appleman with Ridgway, 2 Nov 51.

CHAPTER XVI

The KILLER Operation

The Concept

Even before the Chip'yong-ni engagement came to a close, General Ridgway had instigated planning for an attack to clear the Chinese from the Chip'yong-ni area and the mountains to the southeast as far as the Som River. He assigned the task to the IX Corps on 15 February. On the 17th, after the Chip'yong-ni battle had abated, he shifted the IX Corps–X Corps boundary eastward almost to the Som, a move which returned the ROK 6th Division and the British 27th Brigade to IX Corps control and, for the time being, also placed the 23d Regimental Combat Team under General Moore's jurisdiction.[1]

General Moore scheduled a relatively short advance for 18 February in which the 1st Cavalry Division, British 27th Brigade, and ROK 6th Division were to seize high ground overlooking a segment of the Wonju-Seoul rail line from the town of Hajin, three miles northwest of Chip'yong-ni, southeastward to the Som. This line of heights offered a strong defensive position from which to block enemy attempts to drive into the Han River valley.[2]

The attack was widened to the west early on the 18th after resistance in Moore's zone west of the Han, now reduced to include only the enemy bridgehead area below the river, seemed to have disappeared. Forces of the 5th Regimental Combat Team, 24th Division, made this discovery when they investigated heights inside the lower edge of the bridgehead near midnight on the 17th. The investigation revealed that the Chinese had abandoned the heights and in doing so had left behind six hundred dead as well as weapons and equipment, which indicated a hurried withdrawal. When Moore notified Ridgway of this development, Ridgway instructed him to seize a line running from the corps left boundary eastward through Yangp'yong to Hajin. This tactic would clear the bridgehead and help block an enemy entry into the valley of the Han.[3]

Assigning the 24th Division to attack through the bridgehead area, Moore opened a full corps attack early on the 18th. The I Corps assisted by sending the 25th Division through the western third of the bridgehead area. Meeting some light, scattered resistance but in the main uncovering more indications of a hasty enemy withdrawal, all IX Corps units were on or very near their

[1] Eighth Army, SS Rpt, Office of the CG, Feb 51, Incl 15; Rad, GX–2–1171 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG IX Corps and CG X Corps, 16 Feb 51.

[2] IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; IX Corps Opn O 12, 17 Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entry 0805, 18 Feb 51.

[3] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entry 0200, 18 Feb 51; Eighth Army SS Rpt, Office of the CG, Feb 51, Incl 18.

objectives by 1800. The 24th Division reached the heights overlooking the Han at its bend at Yangp'yong. The 1st Cavalry Division occupied the Hajin–Chip'yong-ni area. In the process, the 5th Cavalry relieved the 23d Regimental Combat Team, which then moved south into an assembly three miles east of Yoju. Slightly above Chuam-ni, the British 27th Brigade deployed athwart Route 24 (where it would be reinforced on the 19th by the Canadian battalion, the 2d of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, which had just completed its training at Miryang). The ROK 6th Division filled in the remainder of the IX Corps front between the British and the X Corps positions northwest of Wonju.[4]

Evidence available by evening of 18 February, not only from the results of the IX Corps advance but also from the lull and lack of contact in the X and ROK III Corps zones, made clear that the Chinese and North Koreans were retiring from the salient they had created in the central region. The withdrawal fit the pattern of enemy operations observed before, especially Chinese operations, in which assault forces were obliged to pause for refitting after a week or so of battle.[5]

During the evening of the 18th Ridgway planned an advance designed to deny the enemy any respite in which to prepare new attacks and, in particular, designed to destroy those enemy forces moving north out of the Chech'on salient. He intended that two principal thrusts by American forces, up Route 29 from Wonju beyond Hoengsong and up Route 60 from Yongwol beyond P'yongch'ang, would block the main paths of enemy withdrawal. (*Map 25*) Other forces were to move through and clear the adjacent ground. Given the particular purpose of the attack, he called it Operation KILLER.[6]

Intelligence Problems

Ironically, as Ridgway developed the concept of Operation KILLER with confidence in the spirit of his line units, he found reason still to question the attitude of principal members of his own staff. On 18 February he received the staff recommendations he had asked for in late January on the terrain lines the Eighth Army should attempt to occupy during the spring and summer months. In sum, the staff proposed that the Eighth Army abandon offensive operations, defend in place until spring, then voluntarily withdraw to the old Pusan Perimeter. Astonished that his staff would recommend the voluntary and complete surrender of the initiative, Ridgway disapproved the recommendations immediately and informed his staff once again that they would think primarily in terms of attack.[7]

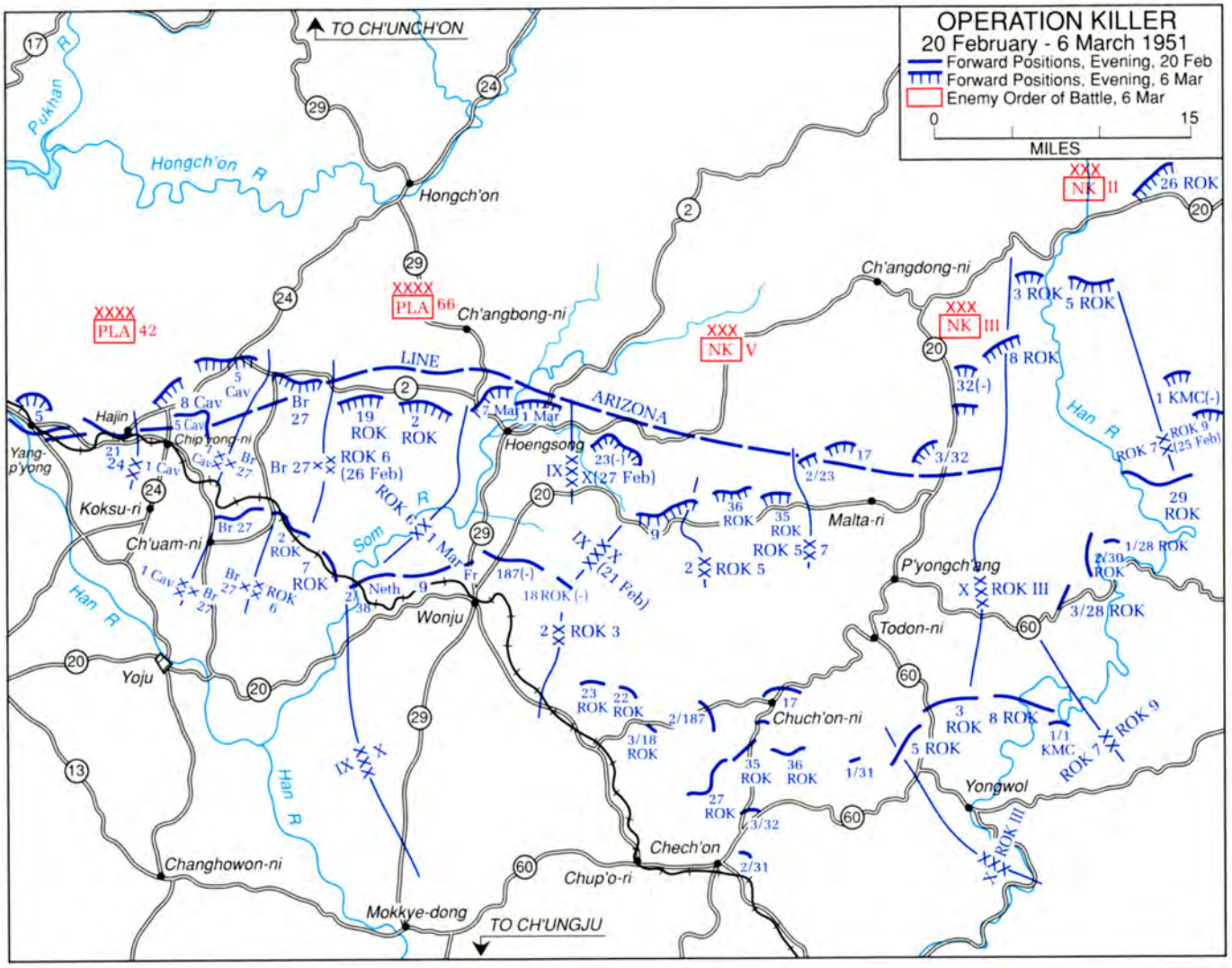
Meanwhile, his largest concern as he moved to capitalize on the enemy's withdrawal was his want of definite knowledge about his adversaries, especially about enemy reserves. His best information was an estimate of enemy forces at the front prepared by his intel-

[4] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entries 0805 and 2340, and Sum, 18 Feb 51; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51.

[5] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51.

[6] Ridgway, *The Korean War*, p. 108; Eighth Army SS Rpt, Office of the CG, Feb 51, Incl 18; Rad, GX–2–2002 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA et al., 19 Feb 51.

[7] MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, pp. 386–87.


OPERATION KILLER
20 February - 6 March 1951
Forward Positions, Evening, 20 Feb
Forward Positions, Evening, 6 Mar
Enemy Order of Battle, 6 Mar
0
15
MILES
TO CH'UNCH'ON
TO CH'UNGJU
Pukhan R
Hongch'on R
Han R
Som R
Hongch'on
Ch'angbong-ni
Ch'angdong-ni
Hajin
Chip'yong-ni
Yang-p'yong
Koksu-ri
Ch'uam-ni
Hoengsong
Malta-ri
P'yongch'ang
Todon-ni
Wonju
Yoju
Chuch'on-ni
Yongwol
Chech'on
Chup'o-ri
Changhowon-ni
Mokkye-dong
LINE
ARIZONA
XXXX PLA 42
XXXX PLA 66
XXX NK V
XXX NK III
XXX NK II
26 ROK
3 ROK
5 ROK
8 ROK
1 KMC(-)
29 ROK
1/28 ROK
3/28 ROK
X ROK III
8 Cav
5 Cav
1 Cav
Br 27
19 ROK
2 ROK
ROK 6 (26 Feb)
7 ROK
Neth
1 Mar
2 Mar
IX X (27 Feb)
IX X (21 Feb)
187(-)
18 ROK (-)
2 ROK 3
2 ROK 5
ROK 5 7
36 ROK
35 ROK
2/23
17
3/32
32(-)
23(-)
9
22 ROK
23 ROK
2/187
3/18 ROK
1/31
27 ROK
3/32
2/31
ROK 7
ROK 9 (25 Feb)
1/1 KMC
2/30 ROK

MAP 25

ligence staff on 16 February. According to this estimate, five Chinese armies and three North Korean corps were on the line, and three Chinese armies and a North Korean corps were immediately behind them. In the area along the Han from Seoul eastward to Yangp'yong the intelligence staff had identified the North Korean *I Corps* and the Chinese *50th* and *38th Armies*. The staff also determined that the *I Corps* was now composed of the *8th, 17th,* and *47th Divisions* and that the *17th Division* was now a mechanized unit with perhaps twenty tanks. With some uncertainty, the staff placed the Chinese *42d, 40th,* and *66th Armies* on line between Yangp'yong and Hoengsong and, with even less sureness about both identification and location, showed the *37th, 39th,* and *43d Armies* behind these units. The staff estimated that the North Korean *V* and *II Corps* held the region between Hoengsong and P'yongch'ang with the North Korean *III Corps* concentrated in rear of them and identified the North Korean *69th Brigade*, now controlled by the *II Corps*, in the Kang-nung area on the east coast.[8]

Ridgway's intelligence sources had not yet picked up recent organizational changes in the North Korean *II* and *V Corps* made as a result of the high casualties incurred over the past several weeks. In the *II Corps*, the *31st Division* was inactivated and its troops distributed among three other divisions, the *2d, 9th,* and *27th*. (The reduced *10th Division*, behind Eighth Army lines in the P'ohang-dong–Andong–Yongdok area, also was still carried on *II Corps* roles.) In the *V Corps*, the *38th* and *43d Divisions* were inactivated and their troops transferred to the remaining *6th, 7th,* and *12th Divisions*. This kind of up-to-date information was an example of what Ridgway had been urging and continued to urge his intelligence sources to produce. Beyond the general location of the enemy mass at the front, he wanted to know its composition and strength; the identification, specific location, and status of supply and morale of all enemy units; and the trend of their movements. In making these items the essential elements of an immediate intelligence campaign on 18 February, he emphasized the influence such information could have on plans for future operations and insisted on its timely dissemination, even in fragmentary form.[9]

Of particular relevance to Operation KILLER, scheduled to begin at 1000 on 21 February, was Ridgway's very limited knowledge about enemy reserves except for a rear area buildup that was under way. His intelligence officers had reported that seven new Chinese armies had entered Korea, four assembling in the P'yongyang-Sinanju area, the remainder joining the three armies of the *IX Army Group* in the Hungnam-Wonsan region. But they could not tell Ridgway definitely whether any of these reserves were moving south. Nor was there any helpful response from Tokyo when Ridgway asked UNC headquarters for accurate intelligence on the movement of fresh enemy forces to the front. As of 20 February none of his attempts to obtain precise information about the ten Chinese armies now re-

[8] Eighth Army G2 Estimate, 16 Feb 51.

[9] GHQ, FEC, Order of Battle Information, North Korean Army, 16 Sep 51; Rad, GX–2–1812 KCG, CG Eighth Army to CG Eighth Army (Forward), CG I Corps, CG IX Corps, CG X Corps, CG 1st Marine Div, and Chief KMAG, 18 Feb 51.

ported to be in North Korea had succeeded. Thus, while he proceeded to open Operation KILLER, he was forced to do so without a full picture of the possible opposition and with the realization that the entry of enemy reserves in the battle might compel him to cancel his attack.[10]

Adopting the prudent course, Ridgway credited enemy reserves with the capability of appearing at the front within any 24-hour period. In so advising his corps commanders and the South Korean chief of staff on 20 February, he frankly admitted that he did not know when or whether a reinforcement of enemy forward units would occur. This uncertainty was all the more reason, he told them, for taking proper precautions while advancing in Operation KILLER. They must maintain major units intact, make proper use of terrain, and carefully coordinate movements within and between corps. With the recent experience above Hoengsong in mind, he warned them against being "sucked in and destroyed piecemeal, whether by ruse, or the temptation to your own aggressiveness to pursue beyond your capability of providing powerful support, or of timely disengagement and local withdrawal."[11]

Ridgway's wariness over possible enemy moves increased on 20 February when General MacArthur, after learning of the KILLER plan, came to Korea. MacArthur characteristically appeared on the scene at or near the beginning of an operation.[12] Ridgway met him at the X Corps forward command post in Wonju, where he gave MacArthur fuller details. At a following press conference, which customarily ended each of MacArthur's visits to Korea, Ridgway was disturbed to hear MacArthur announce that he had "just ordered a resumption of the offensive." MacArthur, of course, had had no part in conceiving or ordering the operation. More to the point, the incident drew Ridgway's attention to the possibility that the predictable pattern of MacArthur's visits to Korea and the open ceremony always attending the excursions would alert the Chinese and North Koreans to future operations. Here was enough danger, Ridgway decided, to risk repercussions and try to discourage MacArthur from appearing in the future to sound the starting signal.[13]

The Plans

When the code name Ridgway had chosen for the coming attack was heard in Washington, he received a courteous but immediate protest from the Army chief of staff. The word *killer*, General Collins indicated, was difficult to deal with in public relations. Ridgway nevertheless kept the name, which fully

[10] Eighth Army G2 Estimate, 16 Feb 51; Rad, G–2–1760 KCG, CG Eighth Army to CINCFE, Personal for Gen Hickey, 17 Feb 51; Eyes Only Memo, Ridgway for All Corps Commanders and C/S ROKA, 20 Feb 51.

[11] Eyes Only Memo, Ridgway for All Corps Commanders and C/S ROKA, 20 Feb 51.

[12] General Mark W. Clark, chief of Army Field Forces, also was in Korea at this time. He was after a firsthand view that would help him improve the training of recruits. He talked with commanders at all levels, and they emphasized the Chinese and North Korean preference to attack at night and in heavy weather. Clark thus saw a need to increase training for nighttime operations, and he did so immediately after returning to the United States. See Mark W. Clark *From the Danube to the Yalu* (New York: Harper, 1954), pp. 25–28.

[13] Eighth Army, SS Rpt, Office of the CG, Feb 51, Incl 20; Ridgway, *The Korean War*, pp. 108–09.

described his main objective.[14] He instructed the IX and X Corps to destroy enemy forces located east of the Han and south of a line, designated Arizona, running from Yangp'yong eastward across Route 29 three miles above Hoengsong and across Route 60 six miles above P'yongch'ang. The principal thrust up Route 29 was to be made by the IX Corps, the one up Route 60 by the X Corps. To accommodate the scheme of attack, the IX Corps–X Corps boundary was to be relocated east of Route 29 and the X Corps–ROK III Corps boundary shifted to the east side of Route 60 when the advance was opened on the 21st.[15]

The west flank of the advance would be adequately protected by the I Corps and 24th Division positions along the lower bank of the Han. To protect the east flank, the ROK III Corps was to send its leftmost division, the ROK 7th, north through the heights east of Route 60, gaging the division's rate by the progress of the X Corps. The ROK III Corps' remaining divisions, the 9th and Capital, were to secure the lateral Route 20 winding southwest through the mountains out of Kangnung on the coast. If General Yu was unable to develop continuous defenses above the road, he was at least to guarantee possession of Kangnung, the road's eastern gate. If necessary, Yu was to set the Capital Division in a strong perimeter around the coastal town, and Ridgway would see that the division thereafter was supplied by sea or air and supported by naval gunfire.[16]

During the week past, as Chinese forces broke up the X Corps' ROUNDUP advance and threatened to strike deep through the Han valley, Ridgway had ordered the 1st Marine Division from P'ohang-dong to Ch'ungju. With the exception of the 7th Marines, scheduled to leave P'ohang-dong on 21 February, the division was in Ch'ungju by evening of the 18th.[17] For the KILLER operation, Ridgway attached the division to the IX Corps. The marines were to relieve the 2d Division and 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team in the Wonju area, which on the 21st would fall within the zone of the IX Corps. The 2d Division and the airborne unit then were to shift east and rejoin the X Corps.[18]

General Moore chose the 1st Marine Division to make the IX Corps drive

[14] Ridgway later wrote, "I did not understand why it was objectionable to acknowledge the fact that war was concerned with killing the enemy. . . . I am by nature opposed to any effort to 'sell' war to people as an only mildly unpleasant business that requires very little in the way of blood." See Ridgway, *The Korean War*, pp. 110–11.

[15] Rads, GX–2–2002 KGOO and GX–2–2193 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA et al., 19 and 20 Feb 51, respectively; Rad, GX–2–2195 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG IX Corps et al., 20 Feb 51.

[16] Rad, GX–2–2202 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA et al., 19 Feb 51; Rads, GX–2–2209 KGOO and GX–2–2255 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA, 20 and 21 Feb 51, respectively; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51.

[17] The 1st Korean Marine Corps Regiment, which had been attached to the Marine division, joined the ROK III Corps in the Yongwol area. The ROK 2d Division, which was protecting segments of the X Corps supply route, received the added responsibility of securing the area vacated by the marines.

[18] Rad, GX–2–1220 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA et al., 12 Feb 51; Rads, GX–2–1247 KGOO and GX–2–1268 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA and CG 1st Marine Div, 12 Feb 51; Rad, GX–2–1285 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG 1st Marine Div, 12 Feb 51; Rad, GX–2–1424 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA et al., 13 Feb 51; Rad, GX–2–1942 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG IX Corps and CG 1st Marine Div, 19 Feb 51; Rad, GX–2–2002 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA et al., 19 Feb 51; Eighth Army SS Rpt, Office of the CG, Feb 51, Incl 13; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entry 0923, 20 Feb 51.

along Route 29. The division initially was to seize high ground just south of Hoengsong from which it could control that road center. To the west, the ROK 6th Division, British 27th Brigade, and 1st Cavalry Division were to clear the mountains between the marines and the Han.[19]

In the X Corps zone, the 7th Division and ROK 3d Division were to open the advance to line Arizona; they were to be joined later by the 2d Division after it shifted east from Wonju. The damaged ROK 5th and 8th Divisions were to move off the line, the 5th to help protect the corps supply route, the more severely reduced 8th to go south to Taegu, where it was to be rebuilt under ROK Army control. [20]

The 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team, when it moved from Wonju, was to assemble northeast of Chech'on ready to assist the 7th Division's attack. General Almond was not to commit the unit, however, without Ridgway's approval. Depending on the favorable progress of Operation KILLER, Ridgway intended to move the airborne troops to the Taegu airfield for refresher jump training. He was looking to possible future operations, in particular to plans prepared at his direction in January for the seizure of Seoul. These plans in part called for an airborne landing behind the capital to block enemy escape routes.[21]

General Almond assigned the 7th Division to make the X Corps' thrust up Route 60 on the corps right. Initially the 7th was to clear P'yongch'ang and seize the junction of Routes 60 and 20 five miles north of the town. Almond wanted General Ferenbaugh then to block Route 20 to the northeast and at the same time strike west across the corps front along Route 20 to a juncture with the IX Corps to seal off enemy forces remaining in the Chech'on salient. At the left of the corps zone, the ROK 3d Division was to clear enemy forces from an area narrowing to a point on Route 20. The 2d Division, less the 38th Infantry (which was to become corps reserve), was to start north on 22 February to clear a wide area of rough ground in the center of the corps zone and to occupy positions commanding Route 20. If the timing was right, General Ruffner's forces could hammer enemy units against an anvil provided by 7th Division troops driving west over Route 20.[22]

The Advance

By 21 February the Chinese and North Koreans had had at least three days in which to withdraw from the salient and had given no indication that they would stop before they had moved north beyond line Arizona. If these forces were to be destroyed, Ridgway's assault had to advance rapidly. But the weather made speed impossible from the outset.

For the first twenty days of February, weather conditions in the battle zone had been within their normal range.

[19] IX Corps Opn O 13, 21 Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entry 0925, 20 Feb 51.

[20] X Corps Opn O no. 14, 19 Feb 51; Rad, GX–2–1987 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG X Corps, 19 Feb 51; Rad, GX–2–2205 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA and CG X Corps, 20 Feb 51.

[21] X Corps Opn O no. 14, 19 Feb 51; Rads, GX–2–2182 KGOO and GX–2–2293 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG X Corps, 20 and 21 Feb 51, respectively; Hq, Eighth Army, Outline Plan, Seizure of Seoul, 27 Jan 51.

[22] X Corps Opn O no. 14, 19 Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entry 0845, 21 Feb 51.

The average extremes of temperature varied from scarcely a degree above the freezing point to fifteen degrees below, and precipitation was largely snow that remained on the ground, sometimes as ice. An abrupt and unexpected change accompanied the opening of Operation KILLER. The temperature rose to almost 50 degrees on the 21st and that night barely fell to the freezing mark. The higher temperature range persisted during the remainder of the month. The 21st and the three days following saw steady to intermittent rainfall. Together, the unseasonable rain and warmer temperatures changed rivers and streams into courses of deep, fast water filled with floating ice. Fords became unusable, and low bridges were washed out or damaged beyond use. The rain and daytime thawing made quagmires of the roads and countryside, and landslides blocked or partially blocked tunnels, roads, and rail lines. Night freezes made the roads difficult to negotiate, especially where grades were step and curves sharp.[23]

The KILLER operation, as a result, became at once a plodding affair, not so much an advance with two main thrusts as a more uniform clearing operation in which assault forces fought hardest to overcome the effects of weather. Ahead of the advance, the Chinese and North Koreans concentrated on evacuating the salient, leaving behind only scattered forces to fight occasional but strong delaying actions.[24]

Ridgway kept a careful watch over the operation, reconnoitering much of the zone of advance from the air and questioning corps commanders closely during the first three days of the operation on the problems weather had created. Although Moore and Almond were experiencing difficulty in supplying the operation, neither advocated abandoning or postponing the advance. Frequent airdrops kept the supply problem from becoming critical, and by 25 February engineers had repaired much of the damage to main lines of communication. The advance continued, if far more slowly than anticipated.[25]

As the impeded operation entered its fourth day, the IX Corps lost its commander. About 1030 on 24 February the helicopter carrying General Moore crashed into the Han River. Neither the corps commander nor his pilot was seriously hurt in the crash, but General Moore died a half hour later of a heart attack.[26]

When General Ridgway notified Tokyo of the loss of the officer he personally had selected to command the IX Corps, he named Maj. Gen. Joseph M. Swing, currently the commandant of the Army War College, as his preference to succeed General Moore. While his request for General Swing was being considered, Ridgway appointed the 1st Marine Division commander, General Smith, to assume temporary command of the corps. As he took the rare step of placing a Marine officer in command of a major Army unit, Ridgway coun-

[23] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Rad, GX (TAC) 38 KCG, CG Eighth Army to CGs I, IX, and X Corps, 22 Feb 51; Rad X 17970, X Corps to Eighth Army, 22 Feb 51; Rad, GX (TAC) 43 KCG, CG Eighth Army to CG IX Corps, 23 Feb 51; Eighth Army SS Rpt, Office of the CG, Feb 51, Incl 23; Rad, G–2–3145 KGLK, CG Eighth Army to CINCFE, 25 Feb 51.

[26] Montross, Kuokka, and Hicks, *The East-Central Front*, p. 71; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51.



CHINESE TAKEN CAPTIVE *by men of the 1st Cavalry Division during Operation Killer.*

seled the IX Corps staff and the commanders of the Army divisions in the corps to cooperate fully with General Smith.[27] The interim command arrangement, Ridgway believed, offered an excellent opportunity to bring the Army and Marine Corps closer together.[28]

Laboring forward through the remainder of February, Ridgway's central forces largely eliminated the enemy's recent ground gains. From west to east, the IX and X Corps front on the last day of the month traced a shallow concave arc from positions five miles above Chip'yong-ni, along high ground overlooking Hoengsong and Route 20 from the south, to the high hills four miles north of the Routes 20–60 junction. The two corps thus were on or above line Arizona on the extreme west and east but somewhat short of it elsewhere.[29]

[27] In other instances of marines commanding major Army units, Maj. Gen. John A. Lejeune led the 2d Infantry Division in World War I and Maj. Gen. Roy S. Geiger commanded the Tenth Army during the closing days of the battle for Okinawa in World War II.

[28] Eighth Army SS Rpt, Office of the CG, Feb 51, Incls 24 and 26. In other command changes in February under the Department of the Army rotation policy, General Gay relinquished command of the 1st Cavalry Division to Brig. Gen. Charles D. Palmer, and General Kean relinquished command of the 25th Infantry Division to Brig. Gen. J. Sladen Bradley.

[29] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, Situation Overlay, 28 Feb 53; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51; X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb 51.

Meanwhile, in the ROK III Corps zone General Yu opened a lateral attack, sending two regiments of the Capital Division from the Kangnung area westward over Route 20 across the fronts of his other two divisions as a preliminary to establishing defenses above the road. The regiments, moving in column, advanced easily until late in the afternoon of 3 March when the leading regiment ran headlong into an ambush near Soksa-ri, some twenty-five miles west of Kangnung. Hit from both north and south by a regiment of the North Korean *2d Division*, the South Korean regiment lost almost a thousand men—59 killed, 119 wounded, and 802 missing. The damaged regiment returned to the Kangnung area to reorganize and Yu canceled what from the outset had been a decidely risky movement.[30]

To the west, in the meantime, those IX and X Corps units not yet on line Arizona continued their advances to reach it. In the IX Corps zone, the 1st Marine Division cleared Hoengsong against little opposition on 2 March en route to Arizona objectives three miles north of town. By evening of 6 March all IX Corps assault units had established positions near or slightly above the Arizona line, the final advances encountering no resistance at all. The X Corps units met stiff opposition over the first five days of March, particularly the 2d Division as it attempted to occupy the high ground just above Route 20. But during the night of the 5th the North Korean defenders vacated their positions, and by 7 March General Almond's forces were for far the most part in full possession of their Arizona objectives.[31]

Over the fourteen days the two corps took to reach and consolidate positions along line Arizona, each reported having inflicted substantial enemy casualties. The IX Corps alone reported 7,819 enemy killed, 1,469 wounded, and 208 captured. But from the outset it had become steadily clearer that the primary KILLER objective of destroying all enemy forces below the Arizona line would be only partially achieved. The enemy forces' head start in withdrawing, their disinclination to take a defensive stand below the objective line other than in spotty delaying actions, and Eighth Army difficulties in negotiating the ground had prevented any other result.[32]

The Ripper Concept

As the KILLER operation had entered its final week with limited results already predictable, General Ridgway published plans for another attack, again with the main effort in his central zone but with all units on the Eighth Army front involved. As in KILLER, the primary purposes of the attack, which Ridgway called Operation RIPPER, were to destroy enemy forces and equipment and to interdict enemy attempts to organize an offensive. A secondary purpose was to outflank Seoul and the area north of the city as far as the Imjin River. Aware of General MacArthur's interest in recapturing Seoul but pre-

[30] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, Mar 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 6 Mar 51; Eighth Army PIR 237, 6 Mar 51.

[31] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, Mar 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

[32] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb and Mar 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb and Mar 51; X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb and Mar 51.

ferring to avoid a direct assault across the Han into the capital (although plans had been prepared for such an operation), Ridgway hoped to gain a position from which he could take Seoul and the ground to the north by a flanking attack from the east or simply by posing a threat that would induce enemy forces to withdraw from that area.[33]

Ridgway published the RIPPER plan on 1 March but deferred setting an opening date because of forward area supply shortages, particularly in food, petroleum products, and ammunition. The shortages resulted partially from conscious efforts during February, especially during the enemy offensive in midmonth, to hold down stockpiles in forward dumps as a hedge against losses through forced abandonment or destruction. In addition, as stocks were expended in the KILLER advance, the damage to roads, rail lines, bridges, and tunnels caused by the rains and melting ice and snow severely hampered resupply. Before setting a date for the RIPPER operation Ridgway wanted a five-day level of supplies established at all forward points. The best estimate at the beginning of March was that this level could be reached in about five days.[34]

Regardless of success in meeting this logistical requirement, Ridgway intended to cancel the RIPPER operation if in the time taken to raise forward supply levels new intelligence disclosed clear evidence of an imminent enemy attack. Neither the capture of new ground nor the retention of ground currently held were essential features of Eighth Army operations as Ridgway conceived them. "Terrain," he maintained, "is merely an instrument . . . for the accomplishment of the mission here," that of inflicting maximum losses on the enemy at minimum cost while maintaining major units intact.[35]

Information available at the moment indicated that those forces giving ground before the KILLER advance in the IX and X Corps zones were moving into defensive positions just above the Arizona line. Colonel Tarkenton, the army G–2, believed these forces would tie in with the existing enemy front tracing the north bank of the Han in the west and passing through the ridges above Route 20 in the east. Lending support to this judgment, the Chinese *39th Army* had moved up on the line in front of the IX Corps, and the North Korean *III Corps*, less its *3d Division*, had entered the line before the X Corps. Thus, as of 1 March six Chinese armies and four North Korean corps were arrayed between Seoul and the spine of the Taebaek Mountains.[36]

On the 1st, as he had earlier, Colonel Tarkenton carried the Chinese *37th Army* in his enemy order of battle, locating it immediately behind the center of the enemy front in the vicinity of Ch'unch'on. In his earlier estimate he tentatively had placed the *43d Army* in the same area but had since decided that this unit was not in Korea at all. Tarkenton now also had reports that

[33] Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; Ridgway, *The Korean War*, p. 114; Eighth Army Outline Plan, Seizure of Seoul, 27 Jan 51.

[34] Rad, GX–3–134 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CGs I, IX, and X Corps and 187th RCT, 1 Mar 51; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Feb and Mar 51; Eighth Army CG SS Rpt, Mar 51.

[35] Eighth Army CG SS Rpt, Mar 51.

[36] Eighth Army PIR 232, 1 Mar 51; Operation Ripper, Annex "A" (Intelligence), 1 Mar 51; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.



AIR INTERDICTION OF THE RAIL LINES

two Chinese armies, the *24th* and *26th*, had moved south from the Hungnam-Wonsan region to a central assembly just above the 38th parallel north of Ch'unch'on. Thus three reserve armies might be immediately available for offensive operations in the central region. To add substance to this possibility, agents recently returning from behind enemy lines brought back reports that the enemy high command at one time had planned to open an offensive on 1 March, then had postponed the opening date to the 15th. During interrogation, recently taken prisoners of war partially substantiated the agent reports by stating that their forces were preparing to launch an offensive in the Eighth Army's central zone early in March.[37]

It also now appeared that the North Korean *VI Corps*, one of the units that had withdrawn into Manchuria the past autumn, had returned to Korea and was moving toward the front in the west. At last report the corps, or a part of it, was approaching the 38th parallel northwest of Seoul and thus was near enough to join an enemy offensive. Tarkenton concluded, however, that although the enemy high command was

[37] Operation Ripper, Annex "A" (Intelligence), 1 Mar 51; Conference Notes, Eighth Army CG with Corps Comdrs, 1 Mar 51.

preparing an offensive, its opening was not imminent. He reached that conclusion mainly on grounds that the bulk of the enemy's reserves were too far north for early employment.[38]

Amid efforts to acquire fuller information on enemy preparations and plans, Ridgway arranged an amphibious demonstration in the Yellow Sea in an attempt to fix enemy reserves and to distract enemy attention from the central zone in which the main RIPPER attack was to be made. Minesweepers of Task Force 95 began the demonstration with sweeps along the west coast and into the Taedong estuary in the vicinity of Chinnamp'o. A cruiser and destroyer contingent followed to bombard pretended landing areas. Troop and cargo ships next left Inch'on, steamed part way up the coast, then reversed course. On 5 March the same ships made an ostentatious departure from Inch'on to continue the illusion of an impending amphibious landing. In the Sea of Japan, Task Force 95 had placed the Wonsan area under bombardment in February and continued the campaign into March. This bombardment, coupled with the occupation of an offshore island by a small party of South Korean marines, added to the impression of imminent landing operations.[39]

Ridgway had learned that two recently federalized National Guard infantry divisions, the 40th and 45th, were soon to leave the United States for duty in Japan. In an attempt to enlarge the amphibious threat, he proposed to General MacArthur that the departure of the divisions be publicized and a deception plan be developed to indicate that the two units would make an amphibious landing in Korea. Extending the idea further, Ridgway also proposed creating the illusion of forthcoming airborne operations by having three replacement increments of six thousand men each put on 82d Airborne Division patches after arriving in Japan and wear them until they reached Korea. He made this second proposal on the basis of intelligence indicating that the enemy thought the 82d was in Japan. Nothing came of either proposal.[40]

A continuing interdiction campaign opened by the Far East Air Forces in January and about to be joined by the carriers and gunnery ships of Task Force 77 offered possible help in blunting enemy offensive preparations.[41] In laying out this campaign General Stratemeyer had emphasized attacks on the rail net since its capacity for enemy troop and supply movements was much greater than that of the roads; he had stressed in particular the destruction of railroad bridges. To date, results had been less than originally hoped for, because of both an overestimate of Far East Air Forces capabilities and an underesti-

[38] Operation Ripper, Annex "A" (Intelligence), I Mar 51.

[39] Eighth Army CG SS Rpt, Mar 51; Field, *United States Naval Operations, Korea*, pp. 326–31.

[40] Rads, G–3–245 KGOP and G–3–1033 KGO, CG Eighth Army to CINCFE, 2 and 6 Mar 51, respectively; Rad, C 57127, CINCFE to CG Eighth Army, 7 Mar 51.

[41] Rear Adm. Ralph A. Ofstie now commanded Task Force 77. In other naval command changes, Rear Adm. Ingolf N. Kiland had replaced Admiral Doyle as commander of Task Force 90, and Vice Adm. Sir William G. Andrewes, Royal Navy, had replaced Admiral Smith as commander of Task Force 95. On 28 March Vice Adm. Harold M. Martin would replace Admiral Struble as commander of the Seventh Fleet.

mate of enemy countermeasures.[42] But as the attacks continued, a principal point in the selection of targets remained that dropping the railroad bridges and keeping them unserviceable would leave the Chinese and North Koreans with no usable stretch of rail line more than thirty miles long.[43]

On 5 March General Ridgway had his five-day forward supply levels in all items except petroleum products. Severely taxed railroad facilities would need two more days to complete petroleum shipments. In the meantime, intelligence operations provided no confirming clues that an enemy offensive was an immediate threat. In evaluating the enemy's most likely course of action Colonel Tarkenton predicted that the Chinese and North Koreans would defend the line he had described at the first of the month, but with changes in the frontline order of battle. The Chinese *39th* and *40th Armies* appeared to have withdrawn from the front. This withdrawal left the North Korean *I Corps* and Chinese *50th Army* in the western sector of the line, the *38th, 42d,* and *66th Armies* in the central area, and the North Korean *V, III,* and *II Corps* and *69th Brigade* in the remaining ground to the east. With supply requirements all but met, the IX and X Corps finishing their advance to line Arizona, and no clear indication of an imminent enemy offensive at hand, Ridgway on 5 March ordered Operation RIPPER to begin on the morning of the 7th.[44]

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[42] Because of strong enemy air opposition between the Ch'ongch'on and Yalu rivers in the far northwest, that area became known as "MIG Alley."

[43] CMH Study, "Air and Naval Interdiction in the Korean War," 1964, copy in CMH; Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea,* pp. 289–92; Field, *United States Naval Operations, Korea,* pp. 309, 318–19, 328–31, 341.

[44] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; Eighth Army PIRs 233–237, 2–6 Mar 51; Rad, GX–3–884 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CGs I, IX, and X Corps, 187th Abn RCT, and C/S ROKA, 5 Mar 51.

CHAPTER XVII

Operation RIPPER

The Plan

The final objective line of the RIPPER operation, line Idaho, was anchored in the west on the Han River eight miles east of Seoul. From that point it looped steeply northeastward through the eastern third of the I Corps zone and almost to the 38th parallel in the IX Corps' central zone, then fell off gently southeastward across the X Corps and South Korean zones to Hap'yong-dong, an east coast town six miles north of Kangnung. Since line Idaho traced a deep salient into enemy territory, a successful advance to it would carry the Eighth Army, in particular the IX Corps in the center, into an area believed to hold a large concentration of enemy forces and supplies.[1]

Prize terrain objectives in the central zone were the towns of Hongch'on and Ch'unch'on. *(Map 26)* Both were roads hubs, and Ch'unch'on, nearer the 38th parallel, appeared to be an important enemy supply center. In the major RIPPER effort, the IX Corps, now commanded by Maj. Gen. William M. Hoge, was to seize the two towns as it moved some thirty miles north to the deepest point of the Idaho salient.[2] The 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team, currently undergoing refresher training at Taegu, was to assist the IX Corps attack should an opportunity arise to employ airborne tactics profitably.[3]

To General Hoge's right, the X Corps was to move to a segment of line Idaho whose most northerly point lay about twenty miles above the present corps front. *(Map 27)* In clearing enemy forces from this territory, General Almond was to pay particular attention to the two principal north-south corridors in his zone, one traced by the Soksa-ri–Pangnim-ni segment of Route 20 at the corps right, the other by a lesser road running south out of P'ungam-ni in the left third of the corps zone.[4]

Responsibility for the remaining ground to the east was once again divided between the ROK III and ROK I Corps. Believing that the South Korean sector needed to be strengthened, par-

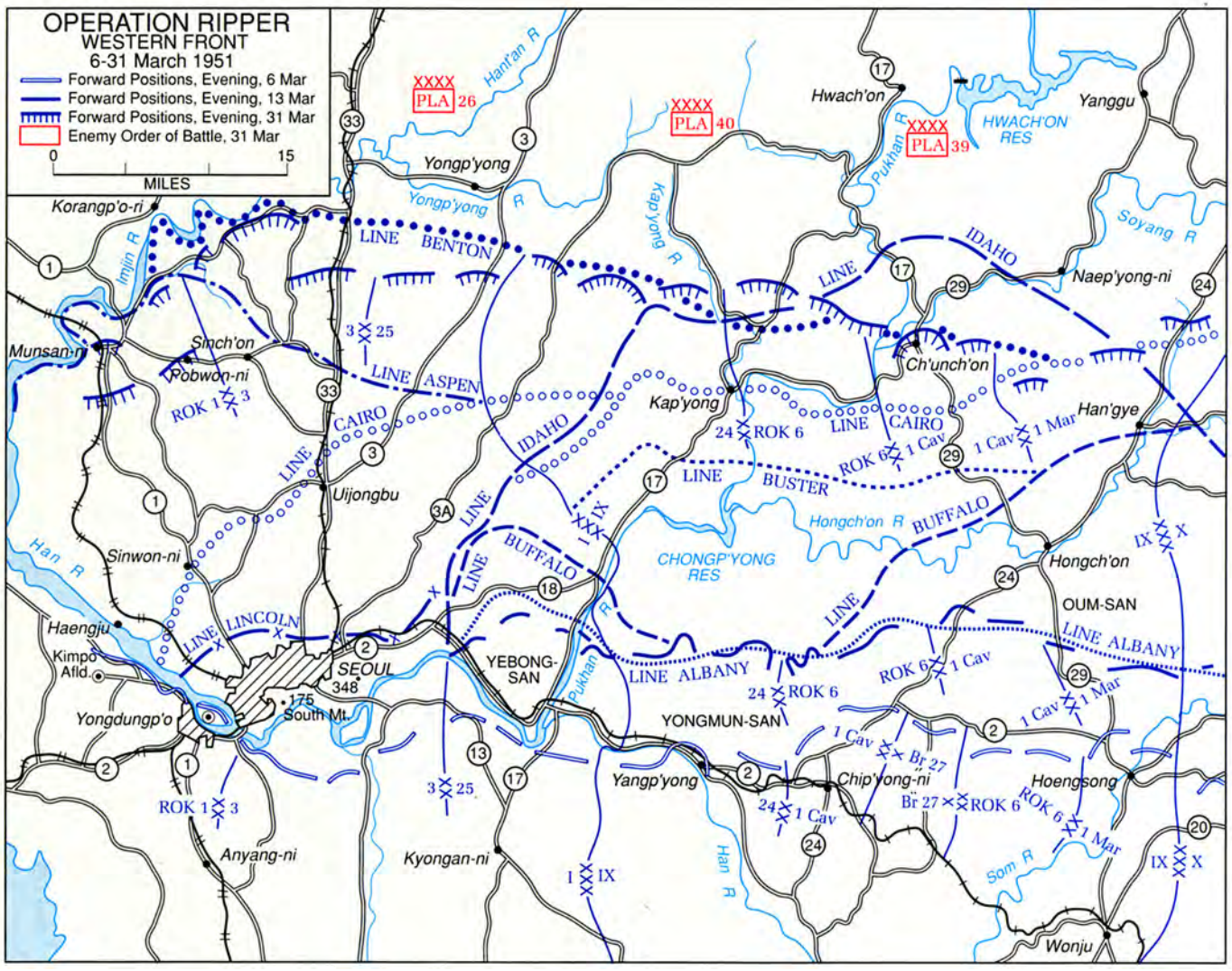
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[1] Rad, GX–3–134 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CGs I, IX, and X Corps, 187th Abn RCT, and C/S ROKA, 1 Mar 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

[2] General Collins, Army chief of staff, preferred not to release General Swing, whom Ridgway had requested to take the IX Corps, from his assignment as commandant of the Army War College. General Hoge, Ridgway's next choice, relinquished command of U.S. Army forces in Trieste to take command of the IX Corps on 5 March. Hoge was noted for a World War II exploit in which forces under his direct command seized the Remagen bridge over the Rhine. See Eighth Army GO 118, 5 Mar 51. See also Ltr, Gen Mark W. Clark to Gen Ridgway, 26 Feb 51, and Ltr, Gen Swing to Gen Ridgway, 28 Feb 51, both in private papers of General Ridgway held by the Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

[3] Rad, GX–3–134 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CGs I, IX, and X Corps, 187th Abn RCT, and C/S ROKA, 1 Mar 51.

[4] Ibid.


OPERATION RIPPER
WESTERN FRONT
6-31 March 1951
Forward Positions, Evening, 6 Mar
Forward Positions, Evening, 13 Mar
Forward Positions, Evening, 31 Mar
Enemy Order of Battle, 31 Mar
0
15
MILES
XXXX PLA 26
XXXX PLA 40
XXXX PLA 39
Hant'an R
Yongp'yong
Yongp'yong R
Kap'yong R
Pukhan R
Hwach'on
HWACH'ON RES
Yanggu
Soyang R
Naep'yong-ni
Korangp'o-ri
Imjin R
LINE BENTON
IDAHO LINE
Munsan-ni
Sinch'on
Pobwon-ni
ROK 1 3
3 25
LINE ASPEN
CAIRO LINE
Uijongbu
Kap'yong
Ch'unch'on
Han'gye
24 ROK 6
1 Cav
1 Mar
LINE BUSTER
Hongch'on R
BUFFALO LINE
CHONGP'YONG RES
Hongch'on
OUM-SAN
LINE ALBANY
Sinwon-ni
Han R
Haengju
LINE LINCOLN
Kimpo Afld
SEOUL
348
South Mt
175
YEBONG-SAN
YONGMUN-SAN
Yongdungp'o
Yangp'yong
Chip'yong-ni
Hoengsong
Br 27
Anyang-ni
Kyongan-ni
Som R
Wonju

MAP 26

ticularly after the Capital Division lost almost a thousand men in the ambush at Soksa-ri on 3 March, General Ridgway had detached the ROK I Corps headquarters and the ROK 3d Division from the X Corps, sending the division to rejoin the ROK III Corps and reestablishing the ROK I Corps with the ROK 9th and Capital Divisions in the coastal zone. The ROK 5th Division, having reorganized after being hurt in the enemy's mid-February offensive, meanwhile rejoined the X Corps.[5]

During the RIPPER advance the two South Korean corps were to secure Route 20. In the coastal area, ROK I Corps forces already were well above this lateral road—in fact, were already on or above line Idaho. Inland, the ROK III Corps would have to move about ten miles north through the higher Taebaek ridges to get onto the Idaho trace some five miles above Route 20.[6]

In the I Corps zone at the west end of the army front, General Milburn was to retain two divisions, the ROK 1st and U.S. 3d, in his western and central positions along the lower bank of the Han to secure the army flank and protect Inch'on, where five hundred to six hundred tons of supplies were being unloaded daily thanks to Task Force 90 and the 2d Engineer Special Brigade. East of Seoul on the corps right, the 25th Division, now commanded by Brig. Gen. J. Sladen Bradley, was to attack across the Han on both sides of its confluence with the southward flowing Pukhan River. Above the Han, General Bradley's division was to clear the high ground bordering the Pukhan to protect the left flank of the IX Corps and to threaten envelopment of enemy forces defending Seoul.[7]

Except in the South Korean corps zone in the east, where the shortest advances were scheduled, the RIPPER attack was to be made through a succession of phase lines. The first of these, line Albany, lay five to twelve miles ahead of the I, IX, and X Corps. This line traced commanding ground that in the IX Corps zone dominated Hongch'on, six miles farther north. The second line, Buffalo, lay ahead of the I and IX Corps only. A 25th Division advance to this line in the I Corps zone would enlarge the envelopment threat to enemy forces defending the Seoul area. In the IX Corps zone, the main objective would be Hongch'on. The last phase line, Cairo, applied only to the IX Corps. Its seizure would give General Hoge the approaches to Ch'unch'on, and Ch'unch'on itself would be Hoge's objective in the final drive to line Idaho.[8]

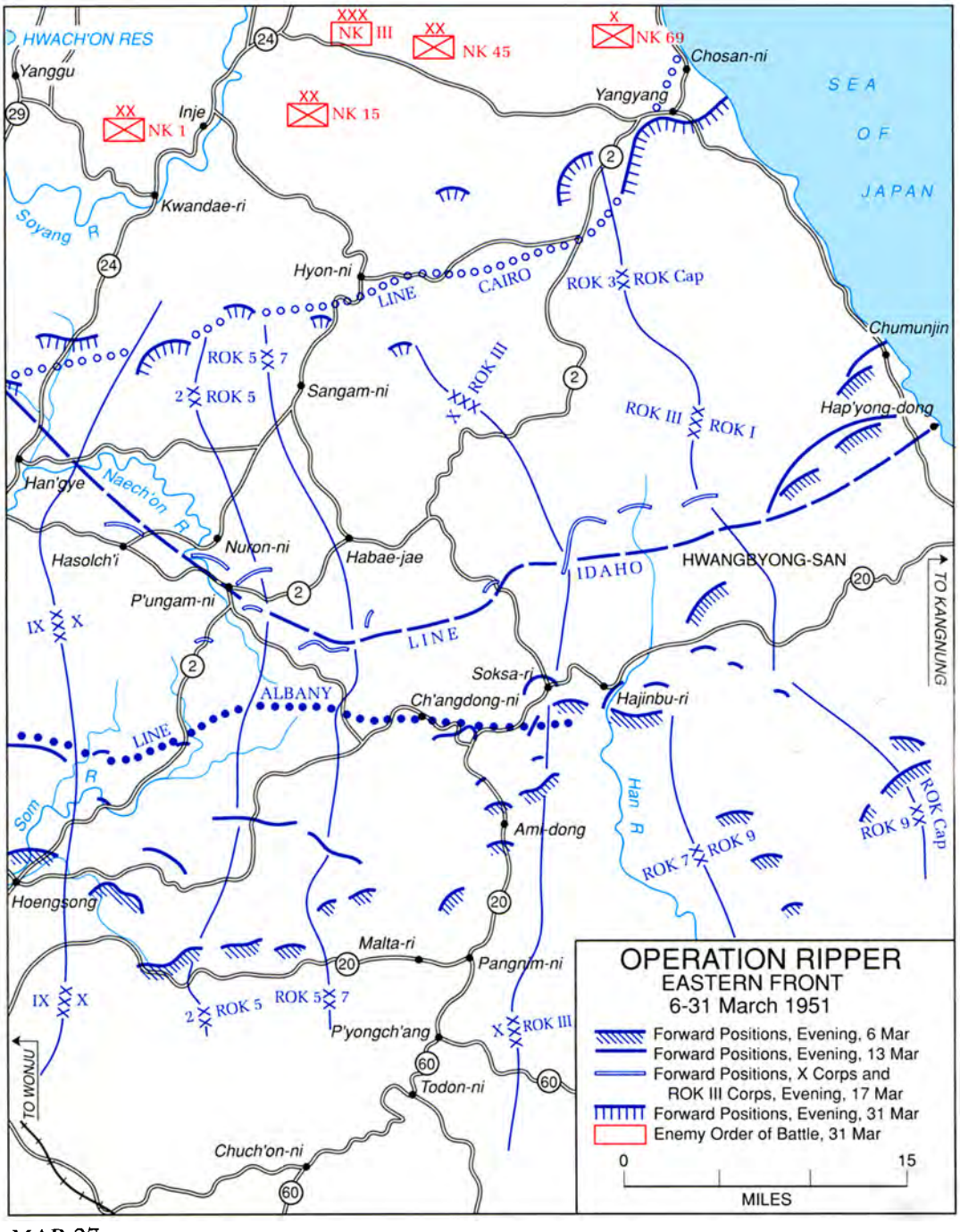
General Ridgway made a strong bid to secure preparations for the advance. He began by restricting access to plans and orders within his command. To forestall a premature press release, he personally briefed newsmen on the RIPPER concept on 6 March, then pressed them not to disclose anything about the operation for forty-eight

[5] Eighth Army G3 Jnls, 2, 3, and 5 Mar 51; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

[6] Rad, GX–3–134 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CGs I, IX, and X Corps, 187th Abn RCT, and C/S ROKA, 1 Mar 51.

[7] Ibid.; Eighth Army CG SS Rpt, Mar 51; 1 Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; Field, *United States Naval Operations, Korea*, pp. 324–26.

[8] Rad, GX–3–134 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CGs I, IX, and X Corps, 187th Abn RCT, and C/S ROKA, 1 Mar 51.


HWACH'ON RES
Yanggu
Inje
Kwandae-ri
Soyang R
Hyon-ni
CAIRO LINE
Sangam-ni
Han'gye
Naech'on R
Hasolch'i
Nukon-ni
Habae-jae
P'ungam-ni
LINE
ALBANY
LINE
Som R
Hoengsong
Malta-ri
P'yongch'ang
Pangnim-ni
Todon-ni
Chuch'on-ni
TO WONJU
Soksa-ri
Ch'angdong-ni
Ami-dong
IDAHO
HWANGBYONG-SAN
Hajinbu-ri
Han R
TO KANGNUNG
Yangyang
Chosan-ni
SEA OF JAPAN
Chumunjin
Hap'yong-dong
NK III
NK 45
NK 69
NK 1
NK 15
ROK 3
ROK Cap
ROK 5
ROK 7
ROK III
ROK I
ROK 9
IX X
OPERATION RIPPER
EASTERN FRONT
6-31 March 1951
Forward Positions, Evening, 6 Mar
Forward Positions, Evening, 13 Mar
Forward Positions, X Corps and ROK III Corps, Evening, 17 Mar
Forward Positions, Evening, 31 Mar
Enemy Order of Battle, 31 Mar
0
15
MILES

MAP 27

hours.[9] Following through on his earlier decision to discourage General MacArthur's publicized visits to Korea lest they alert the enemy to impending operations, he also sent MacArthur a carefully worded message explaining the danger and urging him to postpone coming to Korea until Operation RIPPER was well under way.[10]

MacArthur flew to Korea on the opening day of the RIPPER advance but in line with Ridgway's request timed his arrival at Suwon airfield for late in the morning, several hours after the initial assaults. Returning to the field in mid-afternoon after an inspection of the IX Corps zone, MacArthur opened a press conference with an announcement that UNC operations were progressing satisfactorily. But "there should be no illusions in this matter," he continued. "Assuming no diminution of the enemy's flow of ground forces and materiel to the Korean battle area, a continuation of the existing limitation upon our freedom of counter-offensive action, and no major additions to our organizational strength, the battle lines cannot fail in time to reach a point of theoretical stalemate."[11]

Implicit in his words, which some referred to as MacArthur's "Die for Tie" statement, was an objection to the positions previously taken in Washington that denied MacArthur substantial troop reinforcement and prevented him from carrying the war into China.[12] In his own view, as he would write later, "a great nation which enters upon war and does not see it through to victory will ultimately suffer all the consequences of defeat."[13] Having indicated that under present circumstances he could not lead the United Nation Command to victory, MacArthur, in concluding his Suwon statement, insisted that "vital decisions have yet to be made—decisions far beyond the scope of the authority vested in me as the military commander."[14]

Deliberations toward an important decision were currently under way in Washington, but not in the direction of MacArthur's viewpoint. No one in Washington disputed MacArthur's prediction that a stalemate could develop out of the conditions obtaining. But a military victory, because of the commitments and risks an attempt to achieve it would entail, was no longer considered a practical objective. The preferred course—preferred because it would be consistent with the greater strategy and ongoing preparations against the possibility of world war—was to seek a cease-fire and a negotiated settlement of Korean issues. Such a course of action was under study in the Department of State and Department of Defense. Exactly how to go about achieving the desired ends remained undecided at the opening of Operation RIPPER, but there was general agreement that an attempt to achieve them might best be made after

[9] Judging the enemy's own communications to be very weak, Ridgway was convinced that much of the enemy's intelligence information came from the *Stars and Stripes* and the Armed Forces Radio Service.

[10] Rad, GX–3–134 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CGs I, IX, and X Corps, 187th Abn RCT, and C/S ROKA, 1 Mar 51; Eighth Army CG SS Rpt, Mar 51; Ridgway, *The Korean War*, p. 110.

[11] Eighth Army CG SS Rpt, Mar 51; MacArthur's statement is quoted in *MacArthur Hearings*, pp. 3540–41.

[12] See Rees, *Korea: The Limited War*, p. 189.

[13] MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, p. 386.

[14] *MacArthur Hearings*, pp. 3540–41.



25TH INFANTRY DIVISION TANKS CROSS THE HAN RIVER *in Operation Ripper, 7 March 1951.*

the Eighth Army had driven enemy forces above the 38th parallel.[15]

Concerned that MacArthur's prediction of a stalemate might hurt operations by giving Eighth Army forces the impression that their best efforts would nevertheless be futile, General Ridgway put his own, and somewhat different, view on public record on 12 March. Calling a press conference at his new tactical command post, established on the 10th in Yoju so that it would be more centrally located, he told newsmen that regaining the 38th parallel would be a "tremendous victory" for the Eighth Army. It would mean that the encroachment of communism in Korea had been stopped—exactly what the U.N. Command had set out to accomplish. (In January he had made this same point in his "What Are We Fighting For" statement to his troops.) Conversely, if the Chinese failed to drive the U.N. Command out of Korea, they would have "failed monumentally." In any case, he emphasized, "we didn't set out to conquer China."[16]

[15] See Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, ch. XIX.

[16] Eighth Army CG SS Rpt, Mar 51; Middleton, *The Compact History of the Korean War*, p. 173; Rees, *Korea: The Limited War*, p. 208.

The Advance to Line Albany

The opening phase of Operation RIPPER gave promise that the Eighth Army might reach its final ground objectives almost by enemy default. Employing only a delaying action by small forces, the Chinese and North Korean line units frequently offered stubborn resistance, including local counterattacks, but more frequently opposed approaching Eighth Army forces at long range, then withdrew.[17]

In the I Corps zone, the 25th Division made a model crossing of the Han before daylight on 7 March. Attacking with three regiments abreast following heavy preparatory fires on the northern bank of the river and in company with simulated crossings by other corps forces, the division reached the northern shore almost unopposed. Joined quickly by tanks that forded or were ferried across the river, and helped by good close air support after daybreak, the assault battalions pushed through moderate resistance, much of it in the form of small arms, machine gun, and mortar fire and a profusion of well placed antitank and antipersonnel mines, for first-day gains of one to two miles.[18]

Averaging similar daily gains against opposition that faded after 10 March, General Bradley's three regiments reached line Albany between the 11th and 13th. The 35th Infantry, first to reach the phase line, cleared a narrow zone on the east side of the Pukhan River. On the west side the 24th Infantry and 27th Infantry occupied heights in the Yebong Mountain mass within two to three miles of the Seoul-Ch'unch'on road and on line with the northern outskirts of Seoul to the west.[19]

In the main attack, the IX Corps advanced four divisions abreast. In a wide zone at the corps left the 24th Division attacked through the Yongmun Mountain mass, while in narrower zones in the eastern half of the corps area the 1st Cavalry, ROK 6th, and 1st Marine Divisions moved toward Hongch'on. Advancing steadily against light to moderate resistance, all but the ROK 6th Division, which the cavalrymen and marines on either side gradually pinched out, were on line Albany by dark on 12 March.[20]

Accompanying forces of the 1st Marine Division attacking astride Route 29 above Hoengsong was a recovery team from the 2d Infantry Division detailed to search for the bodies of men and the equipment lost in that area by division forces who had been supporting the X Corps' ROUNDUP operation when the Chinese attacked in mid-February. By 12 March the team recovered more than two hundred fifty bodies, mostly of men who had been members of Support Force 21, and retrieved the five 155-mm. howitzers left behind when the support force withdrew. (The air strikes the support force commander had requested on the abandoned weapons either had not been flown or had not found their targets.) The team also retrieved the six M–5 tractors left behind by the support force artillery, evacuated four of the six tanks that had been lost, and recovered a number of

[17] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

[18] Ibid.; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; 25th Inf Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

[19] 25th Inf Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

[20] IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

damaged trucks that were of value at least for spare parts.[21]

In the X Corps zone, the 2d, ROK 5th, and 7th Divisions advanced abreast, the 2d moving through the P'ungam-ni corridor on the left, the 7th along Route 20 on the right, and the ROK 5th over the ridges in the center. In a well fought delaying action, North Korean forces kept gains short until 11 March, when they began to withdraw above the Albany line. Against the diminishing resistance, the 2d and 7th Divisions each placed a regiment on the phase line on 13 March. At corps center, the ROK 5th Division reached the line on the following day.[22]

Immediately east, the ROK III Corps reached and at some points passed above Route 20 by dark on 13 March. With forces already well above line Idaho in the coastal zone, the ROK I Corps meanwhile made only minor adjustments to consolidate its forward positions. As of the 13th, a regiment of the ROK 9th Division and two regiments of the Capital Division occupied a line reaching northeastward from the Hwangbyong Mountain area to the coast near the town of Chumunjin.[23]

A problem meanwhile had arisen in rear of the ROK I Corps when the North Korean *10th Division*, isolated behind Eighth Army lines since January, opened a bid to return to its own lines. Though much reduced by attempts of the 1st Marine Division until mid-February and the ROK 2d Division thereafter to destroy the enemy unit in the P'ohang-dong–Andong–Yongdok area, the division had maintained a formal organization of a headquarters and three regiments and with a surviving strength of about two thousand had managed by the opening of Operation RIPPER to slip north through the Taebaeks to the Irwol Mountain region, thirty miles northeast of Andong. Easily withstanding further efforts of the ROK 2d Division to eliminate it, the division by 13 March reached the Chungbong Mountain area, about twenty-five miles south of Kangnung. As the North Korean unit approached the ROK I Corps rear, General Kim sent two regiments of the ROK 9th Division and a battalion of the Capital Division south to intercept it. The two forces clashed briefly in the Chungbong heights on the morning of the 13th to open what would become a cat-and-mouse affair lasting ten days.[24]

The Enemy Buildup

During the evening of the 13th General Ridgway ordered the next phase of the RIPPER advance to begin the following morning. On the west, the 25th Division was to advance toward a segment of line Buffalo bulging four miles above the Seoul-Ch'unch'on road in a zone confined to the west side of the Pukhan River. In the main attack, the IX Corps was to make its major effort in the right half of the corps zone, sending the 1st Cavalry and 1st Marine Divisions to clear Hongch'on and then to occupy line Buffalo above town to block Route 29 leading northwest to Ch'unch'on and Route 24 running through the Hongch'on River valley to

[21] 2d Inf Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

[22] X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; 2d Inf Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; 7th Inf Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

[23] Eighth Army G3 Jnls, 7–15 Mar 51.

[24] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; Eighth Army PIRs 236–246, 5–15 Mar 51.

the northeast. Only short advances were required in the western half of the IX Corps zone, by the 24th Division at the left in conjunction with the I Corps advance and by the ROK 6th Division at the right to protect the flank of the forces attacking Hongch'on. To the east, the X Corps and ROK III Corps were to continue toward line Idaho while, on the flank, the ROK I Corps had only to maintain its forward positions in the coastal slopes while other corps forces concentrated on eliminating the North Korean *10th Division.*[25]

Against the continued advance, according to estimates prepared by the army G–2 as the initial RIPPER phase concluded, the Chinese delaying forces backing away from the 25th Division and the four divisions of the IX Corps were expected to join their parent units in defenses in the next good system of high ground to the north located generally on an east-west line through Hongch'on. Presenting something of a barrier to this ground in the IX Corps zone was the Hongch'on River, which flowed into the zone from the northeast to a bend below Hongch'on town, then meandered west to empty into the Pukhan. Colonel Tarkenton expected the North Korean forces in the higher ridges to the east to withdraw to positions on line with those of the Chinese in the IX Corps zone but did not expect the North Koreans defending Seoul and the ground west of the city, all of whom were outside the zone of the RIPPER advance, to abandon their positions along the Han. Tarkenton also believed that enemy forces were now prepared, or nearly so, to make some form of strong counter effort and that they well might open it out of the Hongch'on area when Ridgway's forces arrived in that region.[26] But on this count, as well as in his estimate of enemy defensive plans, the continuation of Operation RIPPER would prove Colonel Tarkenton in error.

The evidence of an enemy buildup collected by the army intelligence staff was nonetheless valid. At the same time, it was incomplete and off the mark in the identification and location of units. To begin with, what the intelligence staff had reported in mid-February as the entry of seven new Chinese armies into Korea was largely the return of the three North Korean corps and nine divisions that had withdrawn into Manchuria for reorganization and retraining the past autumn. Beginning in January, the North Korean *VI Corps*, with the *18th*, *19th*, and *36th Divisions*, crossed the Yalu at Ch'ongsongjin, thirty miles northeast of Sinuiju. Avoiding Route 1 in favor of lesser roads nearby, corps commander Lt. Gen. Choe Yong Jin took his divisions south into Hwanghae Province and assembled them in the Namch'onjom-Yonan area northwest of Seoul. On arriving there in mid-February, General Choe assumed command of the North Korean *23d Brigade* previously stationed in the area to defend the Haeju sector of the Yellow Sea coast.[27]

[25] Rad, GX–3–134 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CGs I, IX, and X Corps, 187th Abn RCT, and C/S ROKA, 1 Mar 51; Rad, GX–3–2401 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 13 Mar 51; Rad, GX–3–2446 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA et al., 13 Mar 51; Rad, GX–3–2480 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 13 Mar 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; IX Corps Opn Dir 27, 12 Mar 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; X Corps OI 134, 13 Mar 51.

[26] Eighth Army PIRs 242–244, 11–13 Mar 51.

[27] Eighth Army G2 Estimate, 16 Feb 51; GHQ, FEC, Order of Battle Information, North Korean Army, 16 Feb 51; Hq, FEC, History of the North Korean Army, 31 Jul 52.

Eighth Army intelligence identified and caught the southward movement of the *VI Corps* by 1 March but remained in the dark, even at midmonth, about the reentry of the North Korean *VII* and *VIII Corps*. Crossing the Yalu at Sinuiju in January, the *VII Corps*, with the *13th*, *32d*, and *37th Divisions*, proceeded across Korea in a drawn out series of independent movements by subordinate units to the Wonsan area, closing there by the end of February. In the same time the *VIII Corps*, with the *42d*, *45th*, and *46th Divisions*, reentered Korea at Manp'ojin and, without the *45th Division*, moved across the peninsula to the Hungnam area. The *45th Division* proceeded to Inje, just above the 38th parallel in eastern Korea, to join the North Korean *III Corps* as a replacement for the *3d Division*, which the *III Corps* had left in the Wonsan area when it moved to the front.[28]

Once in Wonsan, *VII Corps* commander Lt. Gen. Lee Yong Ho assumed command of the *3d Division* and also the *24th Division*, which was defending the coast in that area. Similarly, on arriving in Hungnam with two divisions, Lt. Gen. Kim Chang Dok, commander of the *VIII Corps*, accumulated two other units already in the vicinity, the *41st Division* and *63d Brigade*. Thus, by the beginning of March North Korean reserves in the Hungnam-Wonsan area totaled two corps with eight divisions and a brigade. As late as the middle of the month Ridgway's intelligence staff was aware only of the two divisions and brigade that had been in the region for some time.[29]

Besides the recently arrived *VI Corps*, North Korean reserves in western North Korea included the *IV Corps*, whose location and composition Eighth Army intelligence at mid-March had yet to discover. Operating in northeastern Korea until late December, the headquarters of the *IV Corps* had then moved west to the P'yongyang area. Since that time, under the command of Lt. Gen. Pak Chong Kok and operating with the *4th*, *5th*, and *105th Tank Divisions* and the *26th Brigade*, the corps had had the mission of defending the Yellow Sea coast between Chinnamp'o and Sinanju.[30]

With the return of forces from Manchuria, North Korean reserves by early March altogether numbered four corps, fourteen divisions, and three brigades. These and the units at the front, including the *10th Division* currently attempting to return to its own lines, gave the *North Korean People's Army* an organization of eight corps, twenty-seven divisions, and four brigades. This force was not nearly so strong as its numerous units would indicate. Most divisions were understrength, and many of those recently reconstituted were scarcely battle worthy. Before March was out, in fact, two divisions, the *41st* and *42d*, would be broken up to provide replacements for others. Nevertheless, the army had recovered measurably from its depleted condition in early autumn of 1950.[31]

There was also fresh leadership in the *North Korean People's Army* high

[28] Operation Ripper, Annex "A" (Intelligence), 1 Mar 51; Eighth Army PIR 245, 14 Mar 51; GHQ, FEC, Order of Battle Information, North Korean Army, 16 Feb 51; Hq, FEC, History of the North Korean Army, 31 Jul 52.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] GHQ, FEC, Order of Battle Information, North Korean Army, 16 Feb 51; Hq, FEC, History of the North Korean Army, 31 Jul 52.

command. In a recent change, Lt. Gen. Nam Il replaced General Lee as chief of staff. General Nam, about forty years old, had a background of college and military training in the Soviet Union and World War II service as a company grade officer in the Soviet Army. A close associate of Premier Kim, Nam had a solid political, if not military, foundation for his new post. Nam's headquarters was in P'yongyang, where in December General Lee had reassembled the *General Headquarters* staff from Manchuria and Kanggye.[32]

Front Headquarters, the tactical echelon of *General Headquarters*, was again in operation (apparently in the town of Kumhwa, located in central Korea some thirty miles north of Ch'unch'on). General Kim Chaek, the original commander of this forward headquarters, had died in February. Now in command was Lt. Gen. Kim Ung, who during World War II had served with the Chinese 8th Route Army in north China and more recently had led the North Korean *I Corps* in the main attack during the initial invasion of South Korea. A solid tactician, he was currently the ablest *North Korean People's Army* field commander.[33]

The Chinese forces in Korea also were under new leadership. In either January or February Peng Teh-huai had replaced Lin Piao as commander of the *Chinese People's Volunteers*.[34] In company with the change in command, a surge of fresh Chinese units from



LT. GEN. NAM IL

Manchuria had begun. During the last two weeks of February the *XIX Army Group*, with the *63d*, *64th*, and *65th Armies*, crossed into Korea at Sinuiju, and during the first half of March the group commander, Yang Teh-chih, assembled his forces not far above the 38th parallel northwest of Seoul in the Kumch'on–Kuhwa-ri area between the Yesong and Imjin rivers. Also entering in late February were the *9th Independent Artillery Regiment* and the *11th Artillery Regiment* of the *7th Motorized Artillery Division*.[35]

As these forces entered, the *IX Army Group*, which had been seriously hurt in the Changjin Reservoir engagement and which now had been out of action

[32] Ibid.; *Hq, NKPA (North Korean People's Army)*, Order no. 027, 14 Jan 51, translation in Eighth Army PIR 235, 4 Mar 51.

[33] Hq, FEC, History of the North Korean Army, 31 Jul 52.

[34] Peng meanwhile retained his posts as deputy commander in chief of the *People's Liberation Army* and commander of the *First Field Army*.

[35] George, *The Chinese Communist Army in Action*, p. 7; Eighth Army PIRs 235, 4 Mar 51, and 239, 8 Mar 51; USAFFE Intel Dig, vol. 1, no. 5, 16–28 Feb 53, and no. 26, 16–30 Jun 52.



PENG TEH-HUAI

for two months, was well along in refurbishing its three armies, the *20th*, *26th*, and *27th*. At the time of this group's entry into Korea, each of its armies had been reinforced by a fourth division. The extra divisions had been inactivated, and their troops were being distributed as replacements among the remaining units. By 1 March the *26th Army* had begun to move into an area near the 38th parallel behind the central sector of the front. The Eighth Army intelligence staff quickly picked up the move of the *26th*, but even at mid-March the staff had only a few reports—which it did not accept—that any part of the *XIX Army Group* had entered Korea.[36]

As part of the buildup, four armies of the *XIII Army Group*, all in need of restoration, were replaced at the front during the first half of March. By the 10th, the *26th Army* moved southwest out of its central reserve location to relieve the *38th* and *50th Armies*, which had been opposing the 25th Division and 24th Division. Upon relief, the *38th* withdrew to the Sukch'on area, north of P'yongyang, where it came under the control of *Headquarters, Chinese People's Volunteers*. The *50th* returned to Manchuria, reaching An-tung by the end of the month.[37]

The *39th* and *40th Armies*, which had left the line before the start of the RIPPER operation and had assembled in the Hongch'on area, meanwhile began relieving the *42d* and *66th Armies* in the central sector, completing relief on or about 14 March. On being replaced, the *42d* moved north to Yangdok, midway between P'yongyang and Wonsan, for reorganization and resupply. Like the *38th*, the *42d* also passed to *Headquarters, Chinese People's Volunteers*, control. The *66th* had seen its last day of battle in Korea. En route to Hopei Province, its home base in China, the army paraded through An-tung, Manchuria, on 2 April.[38]

As these frontline changes were made, another complement of fresh Chinese forces began entering Korea. First to enter in March was the independent *47th Army*, commanded by Chang Tien-yun. The army was assigned to the *XIII Army Group* but not given a combat mission. Its divisions, the *139th*, *140th*, and *141st*, were sent to the area above P'yongyang to con-

[36] USAFFE Intel Dig, vol. 1, no. 3, 16–31 Jan 53, and no. 99, 2 Feb 53; Eighth Army PIRs 232, 1 Mar 51, and 245, 14 Mar 51.

[37] USAFFE Intel Dig, no. 99, 2 Feb 53, and no. 115, 17 Feb 53.

[38] Ibid., no. 115, 17 Feb 53.

struct airfields at Sunan, Sunch'on, and Namyang-ni, respectively. Coming into Korea at the same time was the *5th Artillery Division*, which because of its means of transportation was known also as the "Mule Division." This unit, too, was assigned to the *XIII Army Group*.[39]

Following these units into Korea was a far larger force, the *III Army Group*, with the *12th*, *15th*, and *60th Armies*. At mid-March this group was still in the process of entering the peninsula and assembling in the Koksan-Sin'ggye-Ich'on region north of the area occupied by the newly arrived *XIX Army Group*. The final force due to enter Korea in March made up the bulk of the *2d Motorized Artillery Division*. Entering late in the month, the division would join its *29th Regiment* already in Korea.[40]

When all Chinese movements in March were completed, the strength of the *Chinese People's Volunteers* would have risen to four army groups with fourteen armies and forty-two divisions, these supported by four artillery divisions and two separate artillery regiments. As sensed by Eighth Army intelligence, the buildup was in preparation for an offensive. But the offensive would not originate in the Hongch'on area, as Colonel Tarkenton thought possible, nor was it imminent. The movement and positioning of reinforcements from Manchuria would continue through most of March; the remainder of the *IX Army Group* would not be fully ready to move south until the turn of the month; and the refurbishing of other units, both North Korean and Chinese, would require even more time. In line with the doctrine of elastic, or mobile, defense, small forces meanwhile would continue to employ delaying tactics against the RIPPER advance. With some exceptions, the delaying forces would give ground even more easily than they had during the opening phase of the operation as they fell back toward the concentrations of major units above the 38th parallel.

Hongch'on Cleared

In ordering the second phase of RIPPER to begin, General Ridgway allowed for the possibility that the Chinese would set up stout defenses in the ground immediately below Hongch'on and instructed the IX Corps commander to take the town by double envelopment, not by frontal assault. Accordingly, General Hoge directed the 1st Cavalry Division to envelope it on the west and the 1st Marine Division to move around it on the east. Hongch'on actually lay in the Marine zone near the boundary between the two divisions.[41]

As Hoge's forces attacked north on the morning of the 14th, it became steadily clearer that they would meet little resistance in the ground below their objectives. Long range small arms fire and small, scattered groups of Chinese who made no genuine attempt to delay the advance toward Hongch'on were the extent of the opposition the 1st Cavalry and 1st Marine Divisions encountered during the morning. The 24th Division and the ROK 6th Division, which had rejoined the advance in a new zone on the right of the 24th,

[39] Ibid., vol. 1, no. 4, 1–15 Feb 53, and no. 26, 16–30 Jun 52.

[40] Ibid., vol. 1, no. 1, 1–31 Dec 52, and no. 26, 16–30 Jun 52.

[41] Eighth Army CG SS Rpt, Mar 51; IX Corps Opn Dir 27, 12 Mar 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

met no enemy at all in making their short advances in the western half of the corps zone.[42]

Prompted by the easy morning gains, General Hoge recommended to General Ridgway that the 24th and ROK 6th Divisions extend their advances to the lower bank of the Hongch'on River and to the Chongp'yong Reservoir, located within a double bend of the Pukhan just west of the mouth of the Hongch'on. Ridgway approved, and through the afternoon the two divisions continued to advance, still unopposed, within two to four miles of the river line. In continuing the attack on Hongch'on, the 1st Cavalry Division advanced against scant resistance and reached the Hongch'on River west of town late in the afternoon. The 1st Marine Division, moving more slowly in descending the Oum Mountain mass on the eastern approach, advanced within three miles of Hongch'on before organizing perimeters for the night.[43]

On 15 March the 24th Division at the far left of the corps advance moved without opposition to the lower bank of the Chongp'yong Reservoir while the ROK 6th Division in the zone between the 24th and 1st Cavalry Divisions also advanced against no resistance to high ground overlooking the Hongch'on River. The 25th Division at the right of the I Corps zone moved just as easily through the ground west of the Pukhan. By dark on the 15th the 24th Infantry and 27th Infantry reached the Seoul-Ch'unch'on road at the left and center of the division zone while the attached Turkish brigade, having taken over a zone bordering the Pukhan at the far right, moved about two miles above the road adjacent to the newly won positions of the 24th Division.[44]

In the Hongch'on area, the cavalry division stood fast along the Hongch'on River on the 15th to wait for the marines to come up on its right. Strong enemy positions on a ridge due east of Hongch'on stalled the marines in that area, but at the far left of the Marine zone the town itself fell to the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, at noon. A motorized patrol, first to enter, found the town ruined and undefended. On the return trip, following an explosion that damaged a truck, the patrol discovered that Far East Air Forces bombers had liberally sprinkled the eastern half of the town with small bombs set to explode when disturbed.[45] A company of Marine engineers began the uncomfortable task of clearing these explosives while the 1st Battalion passed through and occupied high ground immediately northeast of town.[46]

Seoul Retaken

By the time Hongch'on fell, General Ridgway discerned that the enemy high command had decided to hand over a

[42] IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; 1st Cav Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; 1st Marine Div Hist Diary, Mar 51; 24th Inf Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

[43] IX Corps Comd Rpt, Comd Jnl, Mar 51; Rad, G–3–2599 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CGs I and IX Corps, 14 Mar 51; IX Corps Opn Dir 28, 14 Mar 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 14 Mar 51.

[44] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 15 Mar 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; 24th Inf Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; 25th Inf Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

[45] M83 fragmentation, or "butterfly," bombs, so called because of whirling vanes that controlled their drop and armed them.

[46] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 15 Mar 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; 1st Cav Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; 24th Inf Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; 1st Marine Div Hist Diary, Mar 51; Montross, Kuokka, and Hicks, *Marine Operations in Korea*, vol. IV, p. 88.

far bigger prize, Seoul. The first sign appeared on 12 March when aerial observers flying over the enemy's Han River positions between Seoul and the 25th Division's bridgehead saw a large number of troops moving northwest out of that area. Patrols from the 3d Division, which held positions along the Han opposite, crossed the river on the night of the 12th and found shoreline positions vacant. On the following night 3d Division patrols moved more than a half mile above the Han without making contact.[47]

Patrols from both the 3d Division and ROK 1st Division crossed the Han during the afternoon of 14 March. One from the 3d Division discovered that enemy forces had vacated an important defensive position on Hill 348, the peak of a prominent north-south ridge three miles east of Seoul. Nearer the city, another moved as far north as the Seoul-Ch'unch'on road without contact; a third found that Hill 175, one of the lower peaks of South Mountain hugging Seoul at its southeast edge, also was vacant. Five patrols from the ROK 1st Division entered Seoul itself. One moved all the way through the western portion of the city to the gate on Route 1 while another reached the capitol building near city center and raised the ROK flag from the dome. None of the patrols received fire or sighted enemy troops.[48]

In continuing to search the city on the 15th, the South Koreans discovered only a few North Korean deserters who had been away from their units too long to provide information of value. Outside Seoul, a patrol from the Belgian battalion, recently attached to the 3d Division, checked the ground along the eastern edge of the city without making contact; two companies of ROK troops moved unopposed through the ground just west of the city; and still farther west, a South Korean patrol crossed the Han and moved more than five miles north before running into enemy fire.[49] Aerial observers saw no enemy activity immediately above the northern limits of Seoul but observed extensive defensive preparations and troops disposed in depth east and west of Route 3 beginning at a point five miles to the north, roughly halfway between Seoul and Uijongbu.[50]

Assured that the North Koreans had withdrawn from Seoul and adjacent ground, General Ridgway late on the 15th instructed General Milburn to occupy the nearest commanding ground above the capital city. The general line to be occupied, which Milburn later designated Lincoln, arched across heights two miles to the west and north of Seoul, then angled northeast across the ridge holding Hill 348 to join line Buffalo in the 25th Division's zone. Ridgway left it to Milburn to decide the strength of the forces who would cross the river but restricted their forward movement, once they were on line Lincoln, to patrolling to the north and northwest to regain contact. The restriction on further advances applied to the 25th Division as well. The principal objective at the moment, Ridgway explained to Milburn, was not to attack

[47] 3d Inf Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

[48] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 14 Mar 51; I Corps G3 Jnl, 14 Mar 51; 3d Inf Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

[49] The Belgian battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. A. Crahay, arrived in Korea on 31 January 1951.

[50] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 15 Mar 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; I Corps PIR 74, 15 Mar 51; 3d Inf Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

the enemy but simply to follow his withdrawal.[51]

Assigning the segment of line Lincoln encompassing Seoul to the ROK 1st Division and the shorter portion east of the city to the 3d Division, General Milburn instructed General Paik to occupy his sector with a regiment, General Soule to hold his with a battalion reinforced by not more than two platoons of tanks. Paik was to send combat patrols in search of enemy forces to the northwest while Soule sent armored combat patrols to regain contact to the north. Meanwhile, as bridges were put across the river, one in each division zone, Paik could place a second regiment on line Lincoln and Soule could increase his bridgehead force to a full regiment.[52]

As expected, there was no opposition when the two division commanders sent forces across the Han on the morning of the 16th. By early afternoon the ROK 15th Regiment moved through Seoul into position on the far side of the city, and the 2d Battalion of the 65th Infantry occupied the Hill 348 area. The capital city, as it changed hands for the fourth time, was a shambles. Bombing, shelling, and fires since the Eighth Army had withdrawn in January had taken a large toll of buildings and had heavily damaged transportation, communications, and utilities systems. Two months of work would be required to produce even a minimum supply of power and water, and local food supplies were insufficient even for the estimated remaining two hundred thousand of the city's original population of 1.5 million. Soon after Seoul was reoccupied, therefore, a concerted but not entirely successful effort began via the press, radio, and police lines to prevent former residents from returning to the city while it was made livable again and while local government was restored under the guidance of civil assistance teams and ROK officials. Pusan meanwhile remained the temporary seat of national government.[53]

This time there was no ceremony dramatizing the reoccupation of the capital city as there had been at the climax of the Inch'on landing operation the past September. General MacArthur visited Korea on 17 March but elected not to enter Seoul and limited his inspection to the 1st Marine Division as the IX Corps prepared to move forward toward Ch'unch'on.[54]

Ch'unch'on Captured

On the morning of 16 March the marines held up the day before by strong enemy positions east of Hongch'on discovered that the occupants had withdrawn during the night. They encountered only light resistance as they continued toward line Buffalo north and northeast of Hongch'on. In the western half of the IX Corps zone, patrols from the 24th Division and ROK 6th Division searching above the Chongp'yong Reservoir and Hongch'on River encountered almost no opposition. Immediately west of Hongch'on, however, the 1st Cavalry Division since

[51] Rad, GX (TAC) 105 KCG, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps, 15 Mar 51; Eighth Army CG SS Rpt, Mar 51; I Corps Opn Dir 48, 15 Mar 51.

[52] I Corps Opn Dir 48, 15 Mar 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

[53] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 16 Mar 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; 3d Inf Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

[54] Eighth Army CG SS Rpt, Mar 51.



SEOUL RESIDENTS REENTER THE CITY SOON AFTER ITS RECAPTURE

reaching the Hongch'on River on 14 March had run into heavy fire and numerous, if small, enemy groups while putting two battalions into position just above the river and sending patrols to investigate farther north. This resistance and aerial observation of prepared positions indicated that the Chinese planned to offer a strong delaying action in the ground bordering Route 29 between Hongch'on and Ch'unch'on.[55]

To assist the advance above Hongch'on, General Ridgway on the 16th authorized General Hoge to move all of his divisions forward. The intention was that advances by the two divisions in the western half of the corps zone, in particular by the ROK 6th Division in its zone adjacent to the 1st Cavalry Division, would threaten the flank of the Chinese in front of the cavalrymen. Accordingly, Hoge ordered his two divisions in the west and the 1st Cavalry Division to advance five to six miles beyond their current river positions to line Buster, which was almost even with the line Buffalo objectives of the 1st Marine Division on the corps right.[56]

While the 24th Division completed

[55] IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; 1st Marine Div Hist Diary, Mar 51; 24th Inf Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; 1st Cav Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

[56] Rad, GX–3–2925 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG IX Corps, 16 Mar 51; IX Corps Opn Dir 29, 16 Mar 51.

preparations for crossing the Pukhan at the far left, Hoge's other divisions attacked toward lines Buster and Buffalo on 17 March. Much as anticipated, the marines on the right and the South Koreans on the left met negligible resistance while the 1st Cavalry Division in the center received heavy fire and several sharp counterattacks in a daylong fight for dominating heights just above the Hongch'on River. But on the 18th, with all four divisions moving forward, the resistance faded out, and it became clear that the Chinese were withdrawing rapidly. Advancing easily against minor rearguard action, Hoge's forces were on or near the Buster-Buffalo line by day's end on 19 March. The highlight of the advance on the 19th occurred in the zone of the ROK 6th Division after a patrol in the van of the 2d Battalion, 2d Regiment, discovered a Chinese battalion assembling in a small valley three miles above the Hongch'on River. Maj. Lee Hong Sun, commander of the 2d Battalion, swiftly deployed forces on three sides of the enemy unit and attacked. Lee's forces killed 231 Chinese, captured 2, and took a large quantity of weapons without suffering a casualty.[57]

On 18 March, as the rapid Chinese withdrawal became evident, General Ridgway ordered the IX Corps to continue its attack and take Ch'unch'on. General Hoge opened the move by instructing his divisions on the 19th to proceed to the next RIPPER phase line, Cairo, four to six miles above their Buster-Buffalo objectives. Once on line Cairo, the 1st Cavalry Division would be on the southern lip of the basin in which Ch'unch'on was located and within five miles of the town itself. Ridgway meanwhile alerted the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team for operations in the Ch'unch'on area. The landing plan, code-named HAWK, called for the 187th with the 2d and 4th Ranger Companies attached to drop north of the town on the morning of 22 March and block enemy movements out of the Ch'unch'on basin. IX Corps forces coming from the south were to link up with the paratroopers within twenty-four hours.[58]

Easy progress by Hoge's divisions on 20 and 21 March and the continuing rapid withdrawal of Chinese forces made it evident that the projected airborne operation would not be profitable. Ridgway canceled it on the morning of the 21st as the 1st Cavalry Division came up on line Cairo without opposition. Moving ahead of the main body of the division, an armored task force meanwhile entered the Ch'unch'on basin and at 1330 on the 21st entered the town itself. It was empty of both enemy troops and supplies. The task force made contact only after moving ten miles northeast of Ch'unch'on over Route 29 in the Soyang River valley and then located only a few troops who scattered when the force opened fire.[59]

[57] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 19 Mar 51; Eighth Army POR 751, 19 Mar 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; 1st Cav Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; 24th Inf Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; 1st Marine Div Hist Diary, Mar 51; Ridgway, *The Korean War*, p. 112.

[58] Rad, GX–3–3360 KGOO, Eighth Army to CG IX Corps et al., 18 Mar 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; Rads, GX–3–3469 KGOP and GX–3–3474 KGOP, CG Eighth Army to CG 187th Abn RCT et al., 19 Mar 51; Rad, GX–3–3682 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG 187th Abn RCT et al., 20 Mar 51.

[59] Eighth Army CG SS Rpt, Mar 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; 1st Cav Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

During this search to the northeast a second task force from the cavalry division reached Ch'unch'on in midafternoon, just in time to greet General Ridgway, who, after observing operations from a light plane overhead, landed on one of the town's longer streets. As a precaution against an enemy attempt to retake the town during the night, Ridgway before leaving instructed both task forces to return to the cavalry division's line Cairo positions by dark. The precaution was unnecessary. Ch'unch'on remained vacant until the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, set up a patrol base in the town on the following day.[60]

On the Eastern Front

With the capture of Ch'unch'on, all major ground objectives of Operation RIPPER were in Eighth Army hands. To the east, the X Corps and ROK III Corps had reached line Idaho by 17 March. North Korean forces had offered stiff resistance to the attack on only one day, the 15th, and then only in the X Corps area. Prisoners taken during the advance indicated that the *V, II,* and *III Corps* were withdrawing above the 38th parallel to reorganize and prepare for offensive operations. Searching to confirm this information, General Ridgway on 18 March ordered all three corps on the eastern front to reconnoiter deep beyond the parallel in the area between the Hwach'on Reservoir, located almost due north of Ch'unch'on, and the east coast.[61]

As Ridgway's forces in the east consolidated positions along line Idaho and sent patrols north, the problem of the North Korean *10th Division* remained. On 20 March Ridgway pressed the ROK Army chief of staff and the KMAG chief to eliminate the enemy unit.[62] But in the difficult Taebaek terrain, the retreating division, although it lost heavily to air and ground attacks, separated into small groups and managed to find ways northwest through the mountains. After a flurry of small engagements while infiltrating the line Idaho fronts of the ROK III Corps and ROK I Corps, the remnants of the division, less than a thousand men, reached their own lines on 23 March. In the days following, the reduced division moved to Ch'ongju, deep in northwestern Korea, and began reorganizing under the control of the North Korean *IV Corps* as a mechanized infantry division. Still later, while continuing to reorganize and retrain, the unit was assigned to defend a sector of the west coast.[63] It would not again see frontline duty.

[60] 1st Cav Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; Eighth Army CG SS Rpt, Mar 51; Ridgway, *The Korean War,* pp. 114–15. In *The Korean War,* Ridgway erroneously dates the entry into Ch'unch'on as 19 March.

[61] Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, Sum, Mar 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnls, 14–17 Mar 51; X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; 2d Inf Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; 7th Inf Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; Rad, GX–3–3266 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA and CG X Corps, 18 Mar 51.

[62] Coincidentally, a psychological warfare leaflet currently being used to urge all guerrillas in South Korea to give up a hopeless fight echoed Ridgway's sentiments. Translated, the message warned, "The mouse has gnawed at the tiger's tail long enough." See Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 24 Mar 51.

[63] Eighth Army PIRs 245–254, 14–23 Mar 51; Eighth Army CG SS Rpt, Mar 51; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; Hq, FEC, History of the North Korean Army, 31 Jul 52.

The Courageous Concept

The inability of South Korean forces to eliminate the North Korean *10th Division* reflected the total result of Operation RIPPER to date. For although the Eighth Army had taken its principal territorial objectives, it had had far less success in destroying enemy forces and materiel. Through the period 1–15 March, which included most of the harder fighting, known enemy dead totaled 7,151; as the Chinese and North Koreans accelerated their withdrawal after the 15th, that figure had not increased to any great extent.[64] Ch'unch'on, the suspected enemy supply center, had been bare when entered; although numerous caches of materiel had been captured elsewhere, these had been relatively small. In sum, the enemy high command so far had succeeded in keeping the bulk of frontline forces and supplies out of range of the RIPPER advance.[65]

As Ch'unch'on fell, one area in which there appeared to be an opportunity to destroy an enemy force of some size was in the west above the I Corps. According to patrol results and intelligence sources, the North Korean *I Corps* and the Chinese *26th Army* occupied that area, generally along and above a line through Uijongbu. Appearing most vulnerable were the three divisions of the *I Corps* in the region west of Uijongbu with the lower stretch of the Imjin River at their backs. Any withdrawal by these forces would require primarily the use of Route 1 and its crossing over the Imjin near the town of Munsan-ni; thus, if this withdrawal route could be blocked in the vicinity of its Imjin crossing, the North Koreans below the river would find it extremely difficult to escape attacks from the south. With this in mind, General Ridgway enlarged Operation RIPPER with plans for an airborne landing at Munsan-ni by the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team in concert with overland attacks by the I Corps. He called the supplemental squeeze play Operation COURAGEOUS.[66]

[64] Ltr, Maj Gen Leven C. Allen, Eighth Army Chief of Staff, to Maj Gen Doyle O. Hickey, UNC Acting Chief of Staff, 19 Mar 51.

[65] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

[66] Eighth Army PIRs 247–251, 16–20 Mar 51; I Corps PIR 80, 21 Mar 51; I Corps G3 Jnl, 20 Mar 51; Eighth Army CG SS Rpt, Mar 51; Rad, GX–3–4040 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 22 Mar 51; Ridgway, *The Korean War*, p. 115.

CHAPTER XVIII

Advance to the Parallel

Operation Courageous

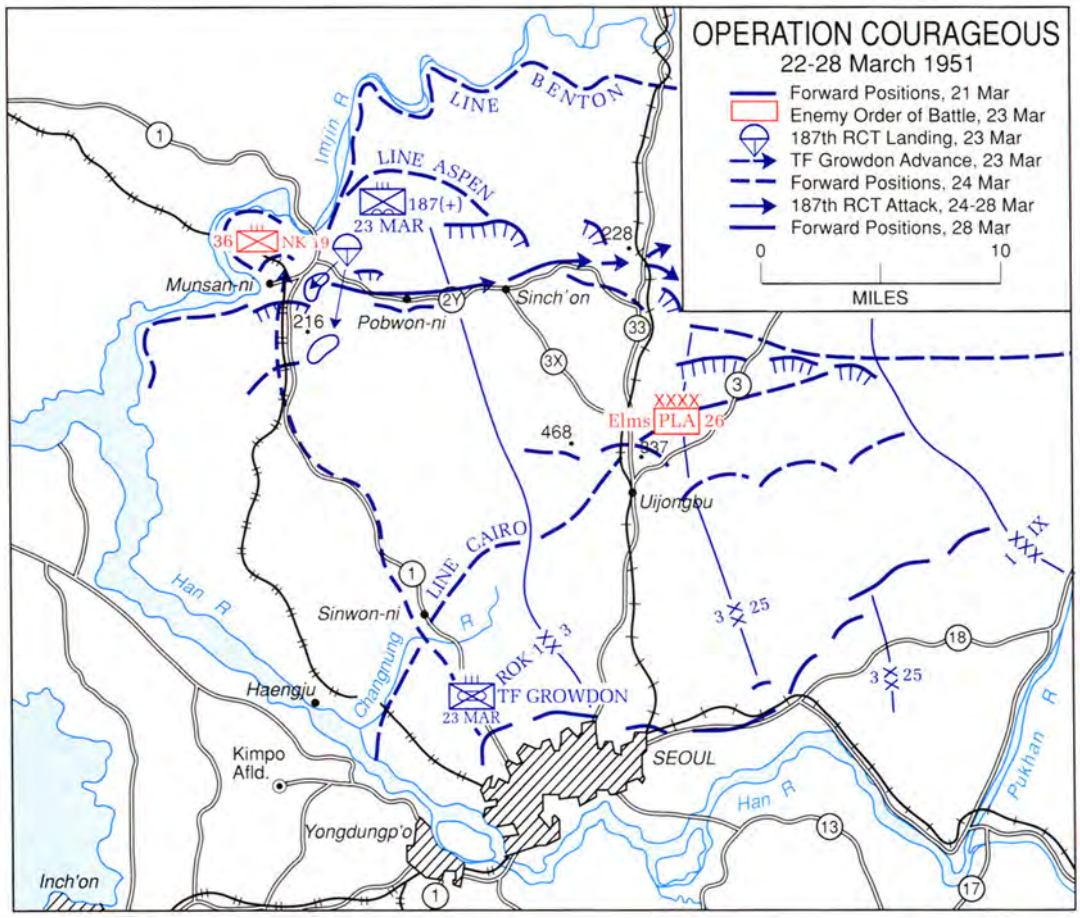
As a first step in the attempt to block and attack the North Korean *I Corps*, Ridgway on 21 March ordered his own I Corps to move forward to line Cairo, which he extended southwestward across General Milburn's zone through Uijongbu to the vicinity of Haengju on the Han. *(Map 28)* At points generally along this line six to ten miles north of line Lincoln Milburn's patrols had made some contact with the North Korean *I Corps* west of Uijongbu and the Chinese *26th Army* to the east. Milburn was to occupy line Cairo on 22 March, a day ahead of the airborne landing at Munsan-ni, and wait for Ridgway's further order to continue north.[1]

Requiring Milburn to stand along line Cairo unless instructed to proceed stemmed from Ridgway's not yet having given the final green light to the airborne landing as of the 21st. Operation TOMAHAWK, as the landing was called, would take place only if Ridgway received assurances that weather conditions on 23 March would favor a parachute drop and that ground troops could link up with the airborne force within twenty-four hours. If these assurances were forthcoming, the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team, with the 2d and 4th Ranger Companies attached, was to drop in the Munsan-ni area on the morning of the 23d and block Route 1. Milburn was to establish physical contact with and assume control of the airborne force once it was on the ground. At the same time, he was to open a general corps advance toward line Aspen, which traced the lower bank of the Imjin River west and north of Munsan-ni, then sloped eastward across the corps zone to cut Routes 33 and 3 eight miles north of Uijongbu. Once on Aspen, Milburn was to expect Ridgway's order to continue to line Benton, the final COURAGEOUS objective line, some ten miles farther north. Reaching Benton would carry the I Corps virtually to the 38th parallel except in the west where the final line fell off to the southwest along the Imjin.[2]

Because the I Corps otherwise would have an open east flank when it moved to line Benton, Ridgway extended the line southeastward into the IX Corps zone across the front of the 24th Division and about halfway across the front of the ROK 6th Division to a juncture with line Cairo. When Ridgway ordered the I Corps to Benton, General Hoge was to send his western forces to the

[1] Rad, GX–3–3813 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 21 Mar 51.

[2] Rads, GX–3–3900 KGOO, GX–3–3908 KGOO, and GX–3–4040 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., first two 21 Mar and last 22 Mar 51; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; Eighth Army CG SS Rpt, Mar 51.



MAP 28

line to protect the I Corps flank. Meanwhile, in concert with Milburn's drive to lines Cairo and Aspen, Hoge was to complete the occupation of his sector of line Cairo. Elsewhere along the army front, the X Corps and the ROK III and I Corps remained under Ridgway's order of 18 March to reconnoiter the area between the Hwach'on Reservoir and the east coast. As yet, neither Almond's patrols nor those of the South Korean corps had moved that deeply into enemy territory.[3]

The three divisions of the I Corps started toward line Cairo at 0800 on 22 March. The ROK 1st Division, advancing astride Route 1 in the west, overcame very light resistance and had

[3] Rads, GX–3–3813 KGOO, GX–3–4040 KGOO, and GX–3–4149 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., first one 21 Mar and last two, 22 Mar 51.



PRACTICE JUMP BY MEMBERS OF THE 187TH REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM. *Aircraft are C-119s.*

troops on the phase line by noon. The 3d Division astride Route 3 in the center and the 25th Division on the right also met sporadic opposition but moved slowly and ended the day considerably short of the line.[4]

General Milburn meanwhile assembled an armored task force in Seoul for a drive up Route 1 to make the initial contact with the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team if and after it dropped on Munsan-ni. Building the force around the 6th Medium Tank Battalion borrowed from the 24th Division of the IX Corps, he added the 2d Battalion, 7th Infantry, and all but one battery of the 58th Armored Field Artillery Battalion from the 3d Division; from corps troops he supplied a battery of the 999th Armored Field Artillery Battalion and Company A, 14th Engineer Combat Battalion. He also included two bridge-laying Churchill tanks from the 29th British Brigade, recently attached to the I Corps. Lt. Col. John S. Growdon, commander of the 6th Medium Tank Battalion, was to lead the task force.[5]

[4] I Corps Opn Dir 50, 21 Mar 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

[5] I Corps Opn Dir 51, 22 Mar 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; Eighth Army Study, Task Force Growdon, in CMH.

Ridgway made the final decision on the airborne operation late in the afternoon of the 22d during a conference at Eighth Army main headquarters in Taegu. General Partridge, the Fifth Air Force commander, assured him that the weather would be satisfactory on the 23d; Col. Gilman C. Mudgett, the new Eighth Army G–3, predicted not only that contact with the airborne unit would be made within a day's time, as Ridgway required, but that the entire I Corps should be able to advance rapidly.[6] Given these reports, Ridgway ordered the airborne landing to take place at 0900 on the following day.[7]

On hearing the final word on the Munsan-ni drop, General Milburn directed Task Force Growdon to pass through the ROK 1st Division on line Cairo early on 23 March and proceed via Route 1 to reach the airborne troops. His three divisions meanwhile were to resume their advance with the objective of reaching line Aspen. The ROK 1st Division, which would be following Task Force Growdon, was to relieve the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team upon reaching Munsan-ni, and the airborne unit then was to prepare to move south and revert to Eighth Army reserve.[8]

Task Force Growdon, completely motorized, passed through the ROK 1st Division shortly after 0700. No enemy forces opposed the armored column as it moved ahead of the South Koreans, but within minutes the third tank in column hit a mine while bypassing a destroyed bridge at the small Changnung River. The task force was held up while engineers removed a dozen other mines from the bypass. Proceeding slowly from that point with a mine detector team leading the way afoot, Colonel Growdon's column moved only a mile to the village of Sinwon-ni before encountering more mines. As the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team began landing at Munsan-ni at 0900, Growdon's task force was at a halt some fifteen miles to the south.[9]

C–46s and C–119s of the 315th Air Division had begun lifting the airborne troops from the Taegu airfield shortly after 0700, all heading initially for a rendezvous point over the Yellow Sea west of the objective area.[10] The second serial of aircraft, with the 1st Battalion of the 187th aboard, was in flight only briefly before engine trouble in the lead plane forced the pilot to return to Taegu for a replacement aircraft. The combat team landed before the new lead plane, whose passengers included the 1st Battalion commander, could reach Munsan-ni. The drop, as a result, did not come off entirely as planned.[11]

General Bowen, commander of the 187th, had designated two drop zones, one about a mile northeast of Munsan-

[6] Colonel Mudgett replaced Dabney, now a brigadier general, on 21 March 1951.

[7] Eighth Army CG SS Rpt, Mar 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 21 Mar 51; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; Rad, GX–3–4097 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 22 Mar 51.

[8] Rad, GX–3–4040 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 22 Mar 51; Rad, CIACT 3–30, CG I Corps to CO 6th Med Tk Bn, 23 Mar 51; I Corps Opn Dir 52, 23 Mar 51.

[9] I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; Eighth Army Study, Task Force Growdon.

[10] The provisional Combat Cargo Command had been discontinued and the 315th Air Division activated to replace it on 25 January 1951. Brig. Gen. John P. Henebry had replaced General Tunner as commander of the 315th on 8 February 1951.

[11] Eighth Army Study, Operation Tomahawk, in CMH; 187th Abn RCT Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, pp. 353–55.

ni, another about three miles southeast of town. The 1st Battalion was to land in the lower zone, the remainder of the combat team in the one to the north.[12] As planned, the 3d Battalion with the 4th Ranger Company attached jumped first, Bowen having given it the mission of securing the northern drop zone. Bowen's plan went awry when the leaderless second serial of planes mistakenly followed the first and dropped the 1st Battalion also in the northern zone. The 2d Battalion with the 2d Ranger Company attached followed not long after, then the 674th Airborne Field Artillery Battalion, and at 1000 the artillery heavy drop.[13]

In the brief interval between the drops of the 1st and 2d Battalions, General Ridgway arrived by L–19, landing on a road between Munsan-ni and the northern drop zone. En route, he had flown over Task Force Growdon then held up at Sinwon-ni, a fact he passed to General Bowen. Airborne again shortly after 1000, Ridgway saw a single stick of paratroops jump from a plane over the lower drop zone. The replacement plane carrying the 1st Battalion commander and party had finally reached Munsan-ni, and its passengers had jumped in the correct zone not knowing that they would be the only troops in the area.[14]

To the north, resistance in and immediately around the drop zone was minor and sporadic, amounting to a few small groups of North Koreans and a meager amount of fire from mortars located somewhere to the north. Overcrowding caused by the 1st Battalion's misdirected drop complicated the 3d Battalion's assembly, but units managed to sort themselves out and secure the borders of the drop zone. An unexpected annoyance was created by civilians who appeared in the drop zone and began carrying away parachutes. Shots fired over their heads ended the attempted theft. Against moderate but scattered opposition the 2d Battalion proceeded to occupy heights northeast of the drop zone, and under the command of its executive officer the 1st Battalion, less Company B, moved into the ground to the north and northwest, clearing Munsan-ni itself in the process.[15]

Company B went on a rescue mission to the southern drop zone after learning that the command group of the 1st Battalion had come under fire from enemy forces on Hill 216 overlooking the drop zone from the northwest. Company B forced the enemy group off the hill, allowing its survivors to withdraw to the southwest, and reached the drop zone by 1500. The rescue force and the battalion command group arrived at the regimental position to the north about two hours later. By that time Bowen's forces had secured all assigned objectives.[16]

Battle casualties among the airborne troops were light, totaling nineteen. Jump casualties were higher—eighty-four—but almost half of these returned to duty immediately after treatment.

[12] Accompanying the 187th to provide additional medical support was a para-surgical team from the Indian 60th Field Ambulance and Surgical Company.

[13] 187th Abn RCT Opn O 2, 22 Mar 51; 187th Abn RCT Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; Eighth Army Study, Operation Tomahawk.

[14] 187th Abn RCT Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; Eighth Army CG SS Rpt, Mar 51; Eighth Army Study, Operation Tomahawk.

[15] 187th Abn RCT Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; Eighth Army Study, Operation Tomahawk; I Corps POR 576, 23 Mar 51.

[16] Eighth Army Study, Operation Tomahawk.

Enemy casualties included 136 dead counted on the field and 149 taken captive. Estimated enemy losses raised the total considerably higher. Prisoner interrogation indicated that the enemy forces who had been in the objective area were from the *36th Regiment* of the North Korean *19th Division* and had numbered between three hundred and five hundred. Most of the remainder of the North Korean *I Corps* apparently had withdrawn above the Imjin well before the airborne landing.[17]

The point of Task Force Growdon reached Munsan-ni at 1830 on the 23d, but the remainder of the extended column took several hours longer. The force encountered no enemy positions along Route 1 but was kept to an intermittent crawl by having to lift or explode over a hundred fifty live mines, some of them booby-trapped, and almost as many dummy mines, including a five-mile stretch of buried C-ration and beer cans. Casualties were few, but four tanks were disabled by mines. As the last of these tanks hit a mine a mile below Munsan-ni, the explosion attracted enemy artillery fire that damaged two more. The tail of the task force finally arrived at the airborne position at 0700 on 24 March.[18]

General Milburn's orders to the 187th for operations on the 24th called only for patrolling. Having been given control of Task Force Growdon by Milburn, General Bowen built his principal patrols around Growdon's tanks and sent them to investigate ferry sites on the Imjin and to check Route 2Y, an earthen road running east from Munsan-ni, as far as the village of Sinch'on, ten miles away. One patrol made contact while checking an Imjin ferry site and ford ten miles northeast of Munsan-ni. Six enemy were killed and twenty-two captured. The patrol suffered no casualties, but a tank had to be destroyed after it bogged down at a stream crossing while approaching the Imjin. A few rounds of artillery fire meanwhile fell in the northern drop zone but caused no casualties.[19]

The ROK 1st Division in the meantime had advanced steadily toward Munsan-ni without enemy contact. Early on the 24th Task Force Boone, a division armored column consisting of Company C, 64th Tank Battalion (on loan to General Paik from the 3d Division), Paik's tank destroyer battalion (organized as an infantry unit), and two of his engineer platoons, stepped ahead of the division and reached the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team at midmorning. By day's end the remainder of the division occupied a line extending from positions athwart Route 1 about three miles below Munsan-ni northeastward to Pobwon-ni, a village on lateral Route 2Y six miles east of Munsan-ni area. General Paik relieved General Bowen of responsibility for the Munsan-ni area at 1700 and placed Task Force Boone in position just above the town.[20]

The lack of resistance to the wider sweep of the ROK 1st Division's advance confirmed that the bid to block

[17] Rad, GX (TAC) 124 KCG, CG Eighth Army to CINCFE, 23 Mar 51; Eighth Army Study, Operation Tomahawk.

[18] I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; Eighth Army Study, Task Force Growdon.

[19] I Corps Opn Dir 52, 23 Mar 51; Eighth Army Study, Operation Tomahawk; ibid., Task Force Growdon.

[20] I Corps POR 576, 23 Mar 51; Eighth Army G3 Consolidated Opn Rpt, 24 Mar 51; Rad, CIACT 3–35, CG I Corps to CG 1st ROK Div, 24 Mar 51; I Corps Comd, Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

and attack the North Korean *I Corps* had been futile. To the east, that the Chinese *26th Army* still had forces deployed to delay the advance of the 3d and 25th Divisions had become equally clear. On the I Corps right, the 25th Division on 23 and 24 March had run into a large number of minefields and small but well entrenched enemy groups employing small arms, machine gun, and mortar fire. At nightfall on the 24th General Bradley's forces held positions almost due west of Uijongbu in the 3d Division's zone at corps center.[21]

Somewhat unexpectedly, the 3d Division had come up against unusually strong Chinese positions. On 23 March General Soule's forces had occupied the Uijongbu area with little difficulty. First to enter the town itself was Task Force Hawkins, built around the bulk of the 64th Tank Battalion and two platoons of tanks from each of the 15th and 65th Infantry Regiments. Reaching Uijongbu about 0900 and finding it undefended, the task force reconnoitered north several miles on Route 33 before returning to the division position. Mines disabled two tanks, but otherwise the task force made no contact.[22]

Though it thus appeared that the 3d Division could continue to move forward with relative ease, General Soule's forces came under heavy fire when they resumed their attack on the morning of the 24th. The Chinese had organized strong positions in the Hill 468 mass rising three miles northwest of Uijongbu and the 337 mass about a mile north and slightly east of town. From these positions they were in fair condition to block advance on the Route 33 axis to the north and over Route 3 leading out of Uijongbu to the northeast. On the division's right, the 15th Infantry eventually managed to clear Hill 337 on the 24th, but the 65th Infantry on the left failed in an all-day attempt to force the Chinese from the 468 mass.[23]

General Milburn viewed the situation at corps center as an opportunity to trap and destroy the Chinese holding up the 3d Division. After General Soule's forces encountered the strong enemy positions on the morning of the 24th, he ordered General Bowen to pull in his patrols and prepare the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team for an eastward attack on the Route 2Y$_{I}$ axis. The objective was high ground abutting Route 33 about ten miles north of Uijongbu, thus just above the trace of line Aspen, whence Bowen was to prevent the Chinese in front of the 3d Division from withdrawing over Route 33. The 3d Division was to continue its northward attack in the meantime and eventually drive the Chinese against Bowen's position.[24]

General Bowen started east at 1800, intending to march as far as Sinch'on during the night and open his attack the following morning. From Task Force Growdon, Company C was the only unit of the 6th Tank Battalion able to move at 1800; all other companies of the battalion had too little fuel after patrolling and were to catch up with Bowen's column after being resupplied from Seoul. The Growdon force now

[21] I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; 25th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

[22] I Corps G3 Jnl, 23 Mar 51; 3d Div G3 Jnl, 23 Mar 51; 3d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

[23] 3d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

[24] Rad, CIACT 3–37, CG I Corps to CG 1st ROK Div et al., 24 Mar 51; 187th Abn RCT S3 Jnl, 24 Mar 51, and Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.



3D INFANTRY DIVISION TROOPS MOVE NORTH *in the Uijongbu area, 23 March 1951.*

also was short the 2d Battalion, 7th Infantry, which had been sent back to the 3d Division.[25]

A force shaped around the tanks of Company C led the way toward Sinch'on. But after seven miles, as Bowen's column moved through a system of ridges, landslides in defiles twice trapped the leading tanks, and in the second instance no bypass could be found. As engineers tried to open the road, rain began to fall and became steadily heavier. With the rain making a poor road even worse, Bowen ordered the tanks back to Munsan-ni. After the engineers had cleared the road sufficiently, his remaining forces proceeded to Sinch'on, arriving about 0600 on the 25th.[26]

A half hour later Bowen ordered the 2d Battalion, with the 3d Battalion following in support, to seize Hill 228 rising on the west side of Route 33. Running into small arms, machine gun, and mortar fire from enemy positions on several nearer heights and hampered by a continuing driving rain, the two battalions at day's end were some two miles short of Hill 228, and Route 33 remained available to the Chinese in

[25] 187th Abn RCT S3 Jnl, 24 Mar 51, and Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; Eighth Army Study, Task Force Growdon.

[26] 187th Abn RCT Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; Eighth Army Study, Task Force Growdon.

front of the 3d Division if they chose to withdraw over it.[27]

Withdrawal seemed to be the Chinese intention. The 3d Division met only light resistance when it resumed its attack from the south on the 25th and advanced two miles beyond the hill masses where strong Chinese positions had delayed it the day before. The tank company of the 65th Infantry meanwhile moved ahead on Route 3X, a secondary road angling northwest off Route 33 to Sinch'on, in an attempt to contact the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team. Mines along the road disabled four tanks and kept the company from reaching its destination, but it encountered no enemy positions. The withdrawal of the Chinese delaying forces was confirmed on the 26th when the 3d Division and the 25th Division as well moved forward against little or no opposition.[28]

To the north, the Chinese continued to oppose the efforts of the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team to capture Hill 228. Using Route 33 and a lesser road to the west, two tank columns from the 3d Division joined Bowen's forces during the afternoon of the 26th, but, even with armored support, it was 0900 the following day before the 187th captured Hill 228.[29] Using the remainder of the 27th for reorganization and resupply, General Bowen attacked the heights on the east side of Route 33 early on 28 March and occupied them after an all-day battle to eliminate stiff enemy resistance.[30]

The 15th and 65th Infantry Regiments of the 3d Division meanwhile reached the airborne forces, the 1st Battalion of the 15th Infantry making first contact late in the afternoon of the 27th. Despite General Milburn's hopes for the operation, the two regiments drove no enemy forces into the guns of the airborne unit. Either the Chinese resisting the eastward attack of the 187th had kept Route 33 open long enough for the forces withdrawing before the 3d Division to pass north, or the withdrawing enemy units had used another road, perhaps Route 3. Moving through spotty resistance, the 25th Division on the right had kept pace with the 3d Division, and by nightfall on 28 March both were on or above line Aspen.[31]

Ripper Concluded

Late on 26 March, as it became obvious that the Chinese were backing away from the 3d and 25th Divisions, General Ridgway had ordered the I and IX Corps to continue to line Benton. As originally conceived, the IX Corps advance to Benton was limited to General Hoge's western forces and was intended simply to protect the I Corps' right flank. But Ridgway had since modified his plan of operations, widening the advance to include the entire IX Corps and all other forces to the east.[32]

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[27] 187th Abn RCT S3 Jnl, 25 Mar 51; Eighth Army Study, Operation Tomahawk.

[28] Eighth Army G3 Consol Opn Rpt, 25 Mar 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; 3d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

[29] On the 26th General Soule reported to General Ridgway that one of his tanks had knocked out a T34. This piece was the first enemy armor destroyed by ground action since Ridgway had taken command of the Eighth Army. The T34 may have belonged to the *17th Mechanized Division* of the North Korean *I Corps*. See Eighth Army CG SS Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

[30] 187th Abn RCT Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; 3d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

[31] 3d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; 25th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

[32] Rad, GX–3–4877 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CGs I and IX Corps, 26 Mar 51; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51.

On 23 March he had lengthened line Benton eastward through the 1st Cavalry Division's patrol base at Ch'unch'on and as far as the 1st Marine Division's zone on the IX Corps right, where it joined the last few miles of line Cairo. On the following day he had extended line Cairo from its original terminus in the Marine zone northeastward across the remainder of the army front to the town of Chosan-ni on the east coast.[33] The final objective line of the RIPPER operation thus had become a combination of the Benton and Cairo lines following the upstream trace of the Imjin virtually to the 38th parallel in the west, hanging slack a few miles below the parallel for almost all of its remaining length to the east, then rising to an east coast anchor some eight mile above the parallel. *(See Maps 26 and 27.)*

Ridgway's forces achieved the adjusted line by the end of March, encountering no more than the sporadic delaying action that had characterized the opposition to Operation RIPPER from the outset. Thus, since 7 March Eighth Army forces had made impressive territorial gains, recapturing the South Korean capital and moving between twenty-five and thirty miles north to reach—or all but reach—the 38th parallel. Estimates of enemy killed and wounded during the month were high, and some forty-eight hundred Chinese and North Koreans had been captured. Nevertheless, the results in terms of enemy troops and supplies destroyed were considerably less than anticipated. The clear fact was that the enemy high command had been and still was marshaling its main forces beyond the reach of the RIPPER operation. Equally obvious was that only advances above the 38th parallel could attack these main forces.[34]

The Parallel Question

Earlier, as General Ridgway was about to open Operation COURAGEOUS, the gains he already had registered in his KILLER and RIPPER advances had influenced a decision in Washington by which operations above the parallel assumed new importance as a political question. The decision centered on how and when to approach the desired cease-fire. Notwithstanding the building evidence of enemy offensive preparations, officials of the Departments of State and Defense believed that Ridgway's recent successes might have convinced the Chinese and North Koreans that they could not win a military victory and, if this was the case, that they might agree to negotiate an end to hostilities. On the advice of these officials, President Truman planned to make a public statement suggesting the United Nations' willingness to end the fighting. The statement was carefully worded to avoid a threatening tone and so to encourage a favorable reply. Truman intended to deliver the appeal as soon as his statement had been approved by officials of all nations that had contributed forces to the U.N. Command.[35]

The timing of the presidential announcement was tied also to the fact that Ridgway's forces were fast ap-

[33] Rad, GX–3–4228 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 23 Mar 51; Rad, GX (TAC) 128 KCG, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA et al., 24 Mar 51.

[34] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; Eighth Army G3 and G2 SS Rpts, Mar 51.

[35] Collins, *War in Peacetime*, p. 266; Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope*, p. 440; Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, pp. 517–18; Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, pp. 357–58.

proaching the 38th parallel. The consensus in Washington was that the Chinese and North Koreans would be more inclined to agree to a cease-fire under conditions restoring the *status quo ante bellum*, that is, if the fighting could be ended in the vicinity of the parallel where it had begun. Therefore, while there was no intention to forbid all ground action above the parallel, there was some question in the mind of Secretary of State Acheson and among many members of the United Nations whether the Eighth Army should make a general advance into North Korea.[36]

The Joint Chiefs of Staff notified General MacArthur of the president's plan in a message radioed from Washington on 20 March. They informed him of the prevalent feeling in the United Nations that the U.N. Command should make no major advance above the 38th parallel before the presidential appeal was delivered and the reactions to it determined. They also asked for his recommendations on how much freedom of ground action UNC forces should have in the vicinity of the parallel during the diplomatic effort to provide for their security and to allow them to maintain contact with the enemy.[37]

MacArthur, of course, had been pressing Washington for decisions favoring a military, not a diplomatic, solution to the war. Shortly before he received the Joint Chiefs' message he again had expressed his views in a letter to Republican Congressman Joseph W. Martin of Massachusetts, the minority leader in the House of Representatives.[38] The congressman earlier had written MacArthur asking for comment on Martin's thesis that Nationalist Chinese forces "might be employed in the opening of a second Asiatic front to relieve the pressure on our forces in Korea." MacArthur replied that his own view followed "the conventional pattern of meeting force with maximum counter-force," that Martin's suggestion on the use of Chiang Kai-shek's forces was in consonance with this pattern, and that there was "no substitute for victory."[39]

Although he had been denied the decisions that in his judgment favored a military solution, MacArthur nevertheless wanted no further restrictions placed on the operations of his command. In so advising the Joint Chiefs on 21 March, he pointed out, as he had some time earlier, that under current conditions any appreciable UNC effort to clear North Korea already was out of the question.[40]

While awaiting a response, MacArthur informed General Ridgway of the new development on 22 March. Although MacArthur expected that the response from Washington would be a new directive for ground operations, possibly one forbidding an entry into North Korea in strength, he intended in the meantime to allow the Eighth Army to advance north of the parallel as far as logistics could support major

[36] Collins, *War in Peacetime*, pp. 263–66; Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p. 517; Rees, *Korea: The Limited War*, p. 208.

[37] Rad, JCS 86276, JCS to CINCFE, 20 Mar 51.

[38] The Tokyo dateline of MacArthur's letter was 20 March. Since Tokyo time is fourteen hours ahead of Washington time, MacArthur presumably wrote his letter before the Joint Chiefs of Staff prepared their message of the same date.

[39] Both letters are quoted in MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, pp. 385–86.

[40] Rad, C 58203, CINCUNC to DA for JCS, 21 Mar 51.

operations. Ridgway otherwise was to be restricted only by having to obtain MacArthur's specific authorization before moving above the parallel in force.[41]

In acknowledging these conditions Ridgway notified MacArthur that he currently was developing plans for an advance that would carry Eighth Army forces ten to twenty miles above the parallel to a general line following the upstream trace of the Yesong River as far as Sibyon-ni in the west, falling off gently southeastward to the Hwach'on Reservoir, then running almost due east to the coast. As in past and current operations, the objective would be the destruction of enemy troops and materiel. MacArthur approved Ridgway's concept but also scheduled a visit to Korea for 24 March, when he would have an opportunity to discuss the plans in more detail.[42]

Before leaving Tokyo on the 24th, MacArthur issued a communique in which he offered to confer with his enemy counterpart on arranging a cease-fire. He specified that he was making the offer "within the area of my authority as the military commander" and that he would be in search of "any military means" for achieving the desired result. He thus kept the bid itself within the military sphere.[43] But in leading up to his offer MacArthur belittled China's military power, noting in particular that Chinese forces could not win in Korea, and made statements that could be, and were, interpreted as threatening that the United Nations would decide to attack China if hostilities continued. These remarks prompted other governments to ask about a possible shift in U.S. policy, and in President Truman's judgment they so contradicted the tone of his own planned statement that he decided not to issue it for fear of creating more international confusion.[44]

MacArthur's announcement thoroughly angered the president. It was, he wrote a few days later, "not just a public disagreement over policy, but deliberate, premeditated sabotage of US and UN policy."[45] Moreover, MacArthur had not cleared his communique with Washington as the president's directive of December 1950 required for all releases touching on national policy. Truman considered MacArthur's violation of the directive as "open defiance of my orders as President and as Commander in Chief."[46] His immediate act was to order the Joint Chiefs of Staff to send MacArthur a reminder of the December directive. Privately, he decided that MacArthur should be relieved.[47]

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[41] Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, pp. 358–60; Rad, C 58292, MacArthur for Ridgway, 22 Mar 51.

[42] Rad, G–3–4122 KCG, CG Eighth Army to CINCFE, 22 Mar 51; Rad, MacArthur to Ridgway, 23 Mar 51; Eighth Army CG SS Rpt, Mar 51.

[43] To this extent, MacArthur's action was in accord with earlier advice a Department of State official gave the Department of Defense shortly after the Inch'on landing: "A cease-fire should be a purely military matter and . . . the Commanding General of the unified command . . . is the appropriate representative to negotiate any armistice or cease-fire agreement." See Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, p. 359.

[44] MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, pp. 387–88; Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope*, pp. 440–42.

[45] Ltr, Truman to George M. Elsey, 16 Apr 51, quoted in D. Clayton James, *The Years of MacArthur*, vol. III, *Triumph and Disaster, 1945–1964* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1985), p. 588.

[46] Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope*, pp. 441–42.

[47] Ibid., pp. 442–43. When asked some years later why he did not relieve MacArthur at the time, Truman replied that he wanted a "better example of his insubordination, and I wanted it to be one . . . that everybody would recognize for exactly what it was, and I knew that, MacArthur being the kind of man he was, I wouldn't have long to wait." See Merle Miller, *Plain Speaking* (New York: Berkley Publishing Corp., 1973), pp. 302–03.

Included in the reminder sent by the Joint Chiefs on 24 March (received in Tokyo on the 25th) were orders that MacArthur report to them for instructions should his counterpart respond to his offer and "request an armistice in the field." No such response was expected, however, and since Truman had canceled his own cease-fire initiative, operations in strength above the 38th parallel again had become a tactical question for General MacArthur and General Ridgway to answer. MacArthur, in fact, publicly revealed his answer before he really knew that the diplomatic effort to achieve a cease-fire had been canceled. Upon his return to Tokyo late on 24 March following his conference with Ridgway and a visit to the front, he announced that he had directed the Eighth Army to cross the parallel "if and when its security makes it tactically advisable."[48] More specifically than that, of course, MacArthur had approved Ridgway's concept of a general advance as deep as twenty miles into North Korea.

The Rugged and Dauntless Concept

In advance of issuing orders for attacks above the 38th parallel, General Ridgway assembled corps and division commanders at his Yoju headquarters on 27 March to discuss courses of action that were now open to them or that they might be obliged to follow. The possibility of Soviet intervention again had been raised, he told them. According to a reputable foreign source, the USSR planned to launch a large scale offensive in Korea near the end of April employing Soviet regulars of Mongolian extraction under the guise of volunteers. Ridgway doubted the accuracy of the report, but as a matter of prudence, since the Eighth Army might be ordered out of Korea in the event of Soviet intervention, he intended to pass the evacuation plan outlined by the Eighth Army staff in January to corps commanders for further development. Lest Eighth Army forces start "looking over the shoulder," no word of the course of action or preparations for it was to go beyond those working on the plan.[49]

Alluding to past and recent proposals of cease-fire negotiations, Ridgway also advised that future governmental decisions might compel the Eighth Army to adopt a static defense. Because of its inherent rigidity, such a stance would require strong leadership and imaginative tactical thinking, he warned, to stand off a numerically stronger enemy that might not be similarly inhibited in the choice of tactics.

The Eighth Army meanwhile would continue to move forward and in the next advance would cross the 38th parallel. Ridgway now agreed with General MacArthur's earlier prediction that a stalemate ultimately would develop on the battlefront, but just how far the Eighth Army would drive into North Korea before this occurred, he informed the assembled commanders, could not be accurately assessed at the moment.[50]

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[48] Collins, *War in Peacetime*, pp. 270–71; Ridgway, *The Korean War*, p. 116; copy of MacArthur's 24 March statement with Ridgway papers in CMH.

[49] Discussion of the conference is based on MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, pp. 405, 407–10; Ridgway, *The Korean War*, pp. 121–23, 157.

[50] The conference had a tragic postscript when the light plane returning General Kim, commander of



GENERAL MACARTHUR AND GENERAL RIDGWAY *meet on the east coast, 3 April 1951.*

Ridgway had revised his concept for advancing above the parallel since meeting with MacArthur on 24 March. He originally had intended to direct a strong attack northwestward across the Imjin, expecting that in moving as far as the Yesong River the attack force would find the elusive North Korean *I Corps*. His intelligence staff later discovered that the bulk of the North Korean corps had withdrawn behind the Yesong and also warned that the attack force would be vulnerable to envelopment by a fresh Chinese unit located off the right flank of the advance. (The unit was the *XIX Army Group*, which intelligence had not yet fully identified.) Ridgway, as a result, elected to limit operations northwest of the Imjin to reconnaissance and combat patrols.[51]

He planned now to point his main attack toward the centrally located road and rail complex marked out by the towns of P'yonggang in the north and Ch'orwon and Kumhwa in the south.

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the ROK I Corps, to Kangnung crashed in the Taebaeks, killing the general and his pilot. General Paik, the excellent leader of the ROK 1st Division, became the new commander of the ROK I Corps early in April, and Brig. Gen. Kang Moon Bong took command of the 1st Division.

[51] Rad, GX–3–5348 KGOP, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 29 Mar 51; Ridgway, *The Korean War*, pp. 120–21; Eighth Army PIR 254, 23 Mar 51, and PIR 259, 28 Mar 51.

This complex, eventually named the Iron Triangle by newsmen searching for a dramatic term, lay twenty to thirty miles above the 38th parallel in the diagonal corridor dividing the Taebaek Mountains into northern and southern ranges and containing the major road and rail links between the port of Wonsan in the northeast and Seoul in the southwest. Other routes emanating from the triangle of towns connected with P'yongyang to the northwest and with the western and eastern halves of the present front. A unique center of communications, the complex was of obvious importance to the ability of the enemy high command to move troops and supplies within the forward areas and to coordinate operations laterally.

Ridgway's first concern was to occupy ground that could serve as a base both for continuing the advance toward the complex and, in view of the enemy's evident offensive preparations, for developing a defensive position. The base selected, line Kansas, traced the lower bank of the Imjin in the west. From the Imjin eastward as far as the Hwach'on Reservoir the line lay two to six miles above the 38th parallel across the approaches to the Iron Triangle. Following the lower shoreline of the reservoir, it then turned slightly north to a depth of ten miles above the parallel before falling off southeastward to the Yangyang area on the coast. In the advance to line Kansas, designated Operation RUGGED, the I and IX Corps were to seize the segment of the line between the Imjin and the western edge of the Hwach'on Reservoir. To the east, the X Corps was to occupy the portion tracing the reservoir shore and reaching Route 24 in the Soyang River valley, and the ROK III and I Corps were to take the section between Route 24 and Yangyang.[52]

In anticipation of enemy offensive operations, Ridgway planned to pull substantial forces off the line immediately after reaching Kansas and prepare them for counterattacks. The IX Corps was to release the 1st Cavalry Division. Under army control, the division was to assemble at Kyongan-ni, below the Han southeast of Seoul, and prepare to meet enemy attacks aimed at the capital city via Route 1 from the northwest, over Routes 33 and 3 from the north, or through the Pukhan River valley from the northeast. In the X Corps zone, the bulk of the 2d Division was to assemble at Hongch'on ready to counter an attack following the Route 29 axis, and a division yet to be selected from one of the two ROK corps in the east was to assemble at Yuch'on-ni on Route 20 and prepare to operate against enemy attacks in either corps sector. The 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team, which on 29 March left the I Corps zone for Taegu, meanwhile was to be ready to return north to reinforce operations wherever needed.[53]

While these forces established themselves in reserve, Ridgway planned to launch Operation DAUNTLESS, a limited advance toward the Iron Triangle by the I and IX Corps. With the objective only of menacing the triangle, not of investing it, the two corps were to attack in succession to lines Utah and Wyoming. They would create, in

[52] Rad, GX-3-5348 KGOP, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 29 Mar 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, Apr 51.

[53] Rad, GX-3-5348 KGOP, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 29 Mar 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 29 Mar 51.

effect, a broad salient bulging above line Kansas between the Imjin and Hwach'on Reservoir and reaching prominent heights commanding the Ch'orwon-Kumhwa base of the communications complex. If struck by strong enemy attacks during or after the advance, the two corps were to return to the Kansas line.[54]

To maintain, and in some areas regain, contact with enemy forces, Ridgway allowed each corps to start toward line Kansas as it completed preparations. The RUGGED advance, as a result, staggered to a full start between 2 and 5 April. When General MacArthur made his customary appearance on the 3d, this time in the ROK I Corps zone on the east coast, Ridgway brought him up to date on plans. MacArthur agreed with the RUGGED and DAUNTLESS concept, urging in particular that Ridgway make a strong effort to hold the Kansas line. At the same time, MacArthur believed that the two operations would move the battlefront to that "point of theoretical stalemate" he had predicted in early March. He intended to limit offensive operations, once Ridgway's forces reached their Kansas-Wyoming objectives, to reconnaissance and combat patrols, none larger than a battalion.[55]

[54] Rad, GX–4–805 KGOP, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 3 Apr 51.

[55] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 2 and 3 Apr 51; Rad, GX–4–979 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA et al., 4 Apr 51; Eighth Army CG SS Rpt, Apr 51; MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, pp. 419–20; Ridgway, *The Korean War*, p. 121; Rad, C 59397, CINCFE to DA, 5 Apr 51.

CHAPTER XIX

Operation RUGGED

The Enemy Situation

Whether the expected enemy offensive would occur before all RUGGED and DAUNTLESS objectives could be taken was difficult for the Eighth Army intelligence staff to estimate. Some evidence came from recently taken prisoners who gave dates between 1 and 15 April for the start of the offensive. From an involved analysis of enemy logistical requirements and observed southbound traffic, intelligence officers concluded that the enemy high command had completed the necessary supply buildup despite the Far East Air Forces' long-term and continuing interdiction of North Korea's transportation system. The attacks had destroyed important bridges and, in particular, had interrupted the enemy's use of the rail system. But even after Task Force 77 joined and intensified the air campaign early in March, the enemy had been able to make rapid, if crude, repairs; to develop alternate, if roundabout, routes; and to combine trains and trucks to shuttle supplies through the damaged rail and road networks. Moreover, Task Force 77 was about to be pulled out of northeastern Korea to go to the Formosa Strait.

Since the turn of the year, intelligence reports of *People's Liberation Army* troop and shipping concentrations in mainland China ports had indicated a possible invasion of Taiwan when weather turned favorable in the spring. In a show of force aimed at discouraging such an operation, Seventh Fleet commander Admiral Martin would take Task Force 77 south on 8 April to conduct air parades over Taiwan and along a course three miles off the mainland coast. No invasion would take place. Whether the naval air demonstration discouraged the Chinese was unclear; what was clear was that by the time Task Force 77 returned to Korea and resumed its interdictory attacks on 16 April, much of the earlier damage to the enemy's eastern rail net had been repaired.[1]

In contrast to the evidence of the enemy's logistical readiness and the opening dates reported by captives, air observers and agents had reported enemy forces to be developing and in some areas occupying fortified positions along and immediately above the 38th parallel. On the basis of these reports the Eighth Army G–2 sensed that the enemy offensive was not imminent. "The pattern of enemy activity," Colonel Tarkenton observed at the start of the RUGGED operation, "continues to reflect a defensive attitude with overtones of preparation for an offensive."[2]

[1] Eighth Army PIR 258, 27 Mar 51, and PIR 264, 2 Apr 51; Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, pp. 289–93; Field, *United States Naval Operations, Korea*, pp. 343–44; Cagle and Manson, *The Sea War in Korea*, p. 236.

[2] Eighth Army PIR 266, 4 Apr 51.



THE A-FRAME

He considered it possible that enemy forces, if only as a "mark time" measure, next would make a major defensive effort from the positions being organized in the vicinity of the parallel.[3]

Tarkenton was right. The enemy high command was not ready to open the offensive. The North Korean *III* and *V Corps*, the latter scheduled to take part, had withdrawn from the eastern front only during the last days of Operation RIPPER and were still refurbishing. The remainder of the Chinese *IX Army Group*, whose *20th* and *27th Armies* were to participate in the main attack, had just started south from the Hamhung region toward the Iron Triangle. Now on line to oppose the I and IX Corps in the area between the Imjin River and Hwach'on Reservoir were reduced forces of the Chinese *26th, 40th*, and *39th Armies*, west to east. Ahead of the X, ROK III, and ROK I Corps from the reservoir to the east coast was only the North Korean *III Corps* employing parts of the *1st, 15th*, and *45th* Divisions and the *69th Brigade*.[4] These forces, contrary to indications that they might conduct a strong defense, would put up only a delaying action against the RUGGED advance, offering islands of stubborn resistance but otherwise fading to the rear after briefly engaging assault units or without resisting at all.

Impeding the advance more consistently than enemy delaying forces would be the usual logistical problems created by mountains and inadequate roads, although the difficulties would be partially relieved by South Korean carrying parties from the new Civil Transport Corps. Still being organized, the corps eventually would include eighty-two carrier companies manned by almost twenty thousand porters, some from refugee camps but most from the ROK National Guard.[5] Using an A-frame, a wooden backpack common in Korea, each porter on a daily average could carry a fifty-pound load ten miles. By 1 April the Eighth Army transportation officer, who exercised operational control of the corps, had deployed sixty-five companies, each with

[3] Ibid. 261, 30 Mar 51.

[4] Hq, FEC, History of the North Korean Army, 31 Jul 52; Hq, USAFFE, Intel Dig, no. 99, 2 Feb 53.

[5] ROK reserves originally were known as the National (or Korean) Youth Corps, then as the National Guard, and later as the V Reserve Corps. Under cadres of regulars, the reserves operated ROK Army induction stations and, armed to some extent from ROK sources, took on internal security missions against guerrillas. President Rhee tried several times without success to coax the United States into arming the reserve units. They exceeded the ROK military establishment that the United States planned to support.

two hundred forty porters, to assist the RUGGED advance.[6]

The Advance to Line Kansas

In organizing the RUGGED operation, General Ridgway had widened the I Corps zone eastward to pass control of the 24th Division, which had been operating on the IX Corps left, to General Milburn. *(Map 29)* While Milburn's forces along the Imjin stood fast, the 25th and 24th Divisions in the eastern half of the I Corps zone attacked north on either side of Route 3 on the morning of 3 April. East of the road, the 24th Division moved astride the Yongp'yong River valley, the 5th Infantry on the left advancing into the Kwanum Mountain mass abutting Route 3, the 21st Infantry striking for Kungmang Mountain just inside the right corps boundary. West of Route 3, the 27th Infantry and 35th Infantry of the 25th Division advanced toward high ground rising between a lateral stretch of the Yongp'yong River and the Hant'an River farther north.[7]

Pushing scattered *26th Army* forces out of position by fire and occasionally by assault, and turning back a few light counterattacks, the 25th Division took the heights overlooking the Hant'an River on 5 April. Resistance to the 24th Division was desultory except at the far right where the 2d Battalion, 21st Infantry, stalled on the western slopes of Kungmang Mountain on 4 April under fire from a strong *40th Army* force dug in on the crest behind barbed wire and antipersonnel mines. The battalion finally cleared the position after air strikes and artillery fire had softened it on the morning of the 5th. The 5th Infantry occupied the Kwanum Mountain mass that same day; slowed by the Kungmang battle, the 21st Infantry reached line Kansas on the 6th.[8]

The adjoining British 27th Brigade following the Kap'yong River valley on the IX Corps left was stopped by Chinese fire from Kungmang Mountain until the 21st Infantry reduced that position; then the British marched unopposed to line Kansas on 6 April. Flushing scattered Chinese out of the IX Corps central zone, the ROK 6th Division reached its Kansas objectives the same day. On the corps right, where the 1st Cavalry Division advanced astride the Pukhan River, the attached 7th Marine Regiment moved easily up the west side of the river, but the 7th and 8th Regiments attacking through cut-up, virtually roadless ground east of the Pukhan were slowed by strong delaying forces of the *39th Army*. On 6 April the two cavalry regiments were still some three miles short of their line Kansas objectives adjacent to the Hwach'on Reservoir.[9]

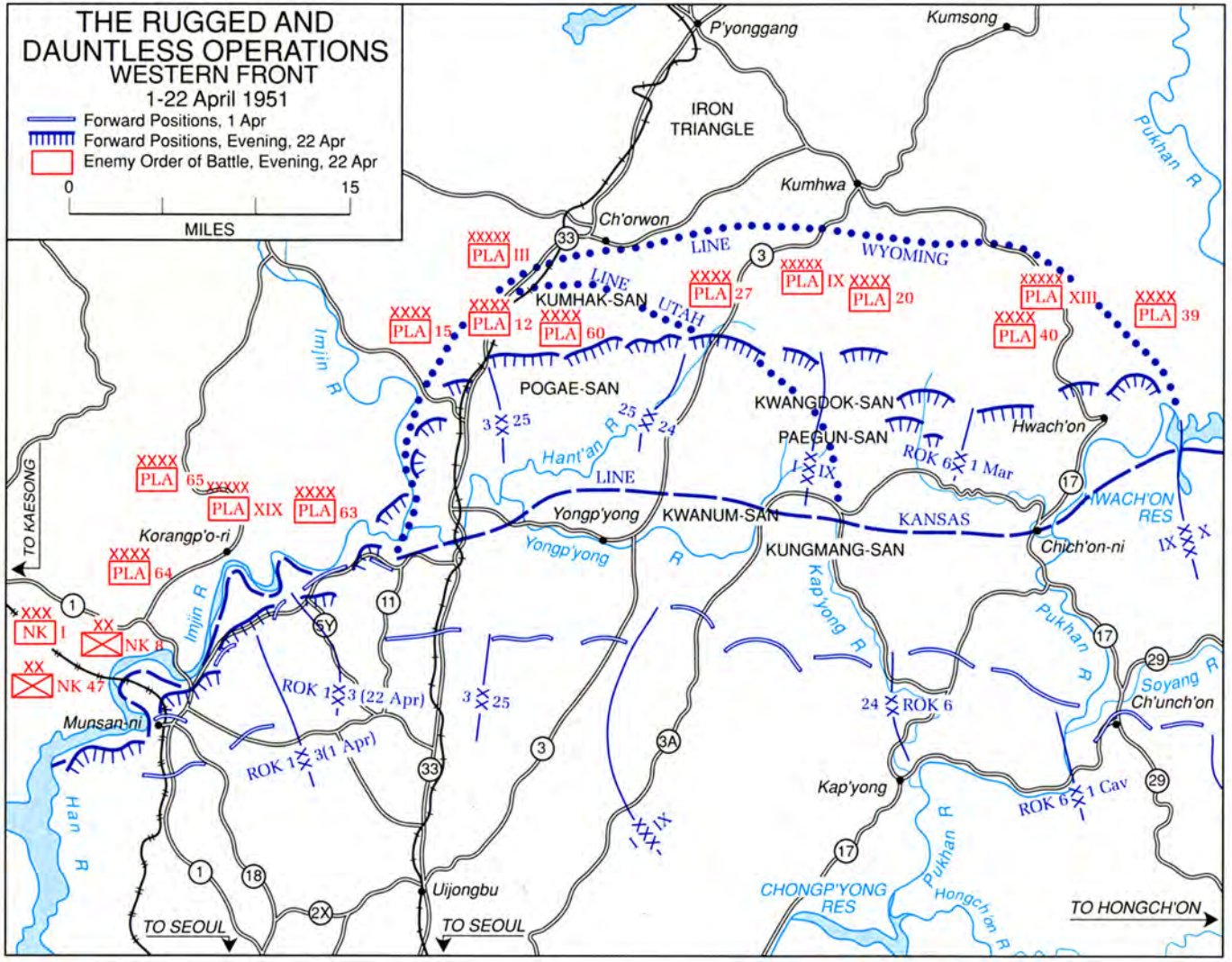
General Ridgway suspected that the stiff resistance to the 1st Cavalry Division was related to enemy plans to obstruct IX Corps movement by releasing the reservoir's water through the Hwach'on Dam and flooding the Pukhan. The water was far from its maximum level, but air observers recently

[6] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Mar 51; Eighth Army, "Logistical Problems and Their Solutions"; Eighth Army CG SS Rpt, Mar 51.

[7] Rad, GX–3–5348 KGOP, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 29 Mar 51; 24th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; 25th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51.

[8] 25th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; 24th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; 24th Div G3 Jnl, 4–6 Apr 51.

[9] IX Corps Opn O 15, 30 Mar 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; 1st Cav Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51.


THE RUGGED AND DAUNTLESS OPERATIONS
WESTERN FRONT
1-22 April 1951
Forward Positions, 1 Apr
Forward Positions, Evening, 22 Apr
Enemy Order of Battle, Evening, 22 Apr
0
15
MILES
P'yonggang
Kumsong
IRON TRIANGLE
Pukhan R
Kumhwa
Ch'orwon
LINE
WYOMING
KUMHAK-SAN
UTAH
Imjin R
POGAE-SAN
KWANGDOK-SAN
PAEGUN-SAN
Hwach'on
Hant'an R
LINE
ROK 6
1 Mar
HWACH'ON RES
TO KAESONG
Korangp'o-ri
Yongp'yong
KWANUM-SAN
KANSAS
KUNGMANG-SAN
Chich'on-ni
Yongp'yong R
Kap'yong R
Pukhan R
Soyang R
Ch'unch'on
Munsan-ni
ROK 1
3 (22 Apr)
ROK 1
3 (1 Apr)
24 ROK 6
Kap'yong
ROK 6
1 Cav
Han R
Ijongbu
CHONGP'YONG RES
Hongch'on R
TO SEOUL
TO SEOUL
TO HONGCH'ON

MAP 29



DIRECTING ARTILLERY FIRE *on Chinese positions near the 38th parallel.*

had noted that the dam's eighteen sluice gates were closed. The Chinese were intent on keeping the cavalrymen away from the reservoir to give the water time to rise before releasing it.[10]

Earlier, near the beginning of Operation RIPPER, Ridgway had thought to prevent enemy forces from so using the reservoir by bombing the dam, releasing the water, and waiting for the Pukhan to recede before starting forward. His engineer, Col. Paschal N. Strong, had advised him at the time that the structure probably could not be demolished by conventional bombing and that the enemy also lacked the means of destruction. The most the enemy could do, according to Strong, would be to destroy or open the sluice gates and produce a minor flood. Given this appraisal, Ridgway had let the matter drop and did not include the dam when drawing objective lines for the RUGGED and DAUNTLESS operations.[11]

As the RUGGED advance got under way, the IX Corps engineer contradicted Strong's appraisal. He calculated that simultaneously opening all sluice gates and penstocks when the reservoir was full would raise the Pukhan ten to

[10] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 6 Apr 51; IX Corps Engr Sec, Study of Hwachon Dam, 4 Apr 51.

[11] Rad, GX (TAC) 58 KCG, CG Eighth Army to Eighth Army Engr, 28 Feb 51; Rad, G2–3871 KEN, CG Eighth Army Main to CG Eighth Army TAC, 28 Feb 51; Rad, GX (TAC) 75 KCG, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps and CG IX Corps, 6 Mar 51.

twelve feet in the vicinity of line Kansas and would flood much of the Ch'unch'on basin. Although the flooding would not be disastrous, it would temporarily disrupt lateral movement in the corps zone and north-south traffic on Route 17, the IX Corps' main supply route; moreover, this harassment could be repeated as long as the dam remained in enemy hands. Ridgway, in light of these prospects, adjusted his plans to include the dam as an objective.[12]

The dam stood at the northwest corner of the reservoir, its spillway slanting north into a deep, narrow gorge through which the Pukhan at that point coursed north and then turned west and south to form a horseshoe-shaped loop. *(Map 30)* The structure abutted on two narrow-ridge peninsulas, one protruding south into the reservoir on the east, the other located in the loop of the Pukhan on the west. The western peninsula, which offered the only overland approach to the dam, jutted beyond line Kansas at the right of the IX Corps; the dam itself rested above Kansas at the X Corps left. Ridgway shifted the boundary between the two corps eastward to put both approach and objective in the IX Corps zone and instructed General Hoge to seize the dam. With the reservoir level well below maximum, Ridgway attached no urgency to the seizure; he adjusted line Wyoming to include the dam, making it an objective not of the RUGGED advance but of the DAUNTLESS operation to follow.[13] As a DAUNTLESS objective, the dam's capture would fall to the 1st Marine Division, scheduled to relieve the 1st Cavalry Division after the latter reached line Kansas.

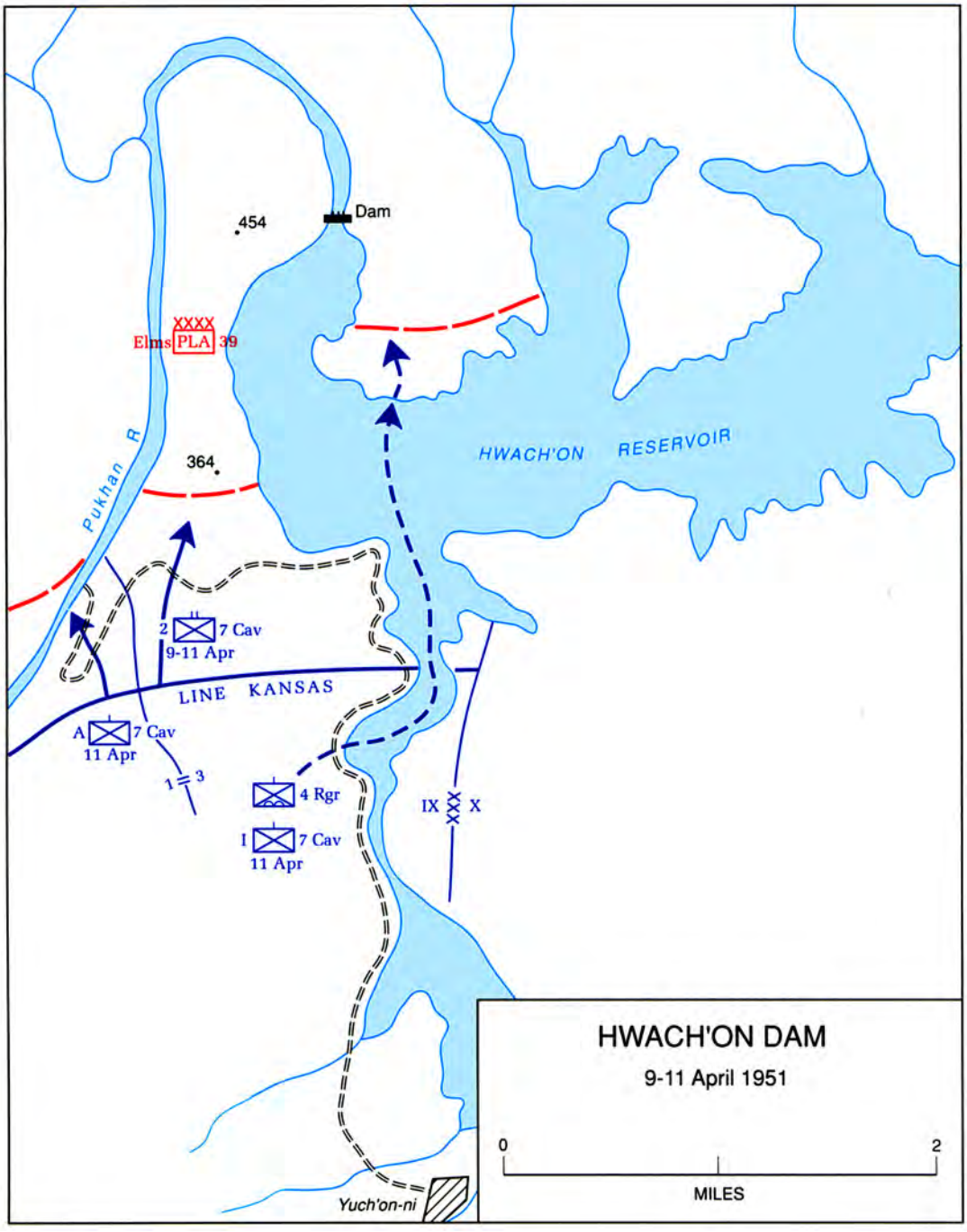
General Hoge elected a different course after the 4th Ranger Company, recently released from the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team, joined the IX Corps on 7 April. He considered the specially trained company the ideal unit to put the dam gates out of commission. Hoge visualized a raid in which the Rangers would sneak to the dam along the reservoir side of the western peninsula, immobilize the gate machinery with all gates closed, and withdraw—all within two to four hours. Attaching the company to the 1st Cavalry Division, he instructed General Palmer to use the Rangers against the dam before the division left line Kansas but did not specifically direct or limit the operation to a Ranger raid.[14]

Unaware of Hoge's concept of a hit-and-run attack, General Palmer assigned the mission to Colonel Harris' 7th Cavalry, then struggling through the rough ground directly below the dam, and instructed Harris to immobilize the sluice gates and occupy the dam area. Harris assigned the mission to his 2d Battalion, then in reserve, and on 8 April assembled the battalion with the 4th Ranger Company attached close to the front almost due south of the peninsular approach to the dam. He left detailed planning for later on the assumption that success in achieving the Kansas line, and thus the dam opera-

[12] IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; IX Corps Engr Sec, Study of Hwachon Dam, 4 Apr 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 6 Apr 51.

[13] Rad, GX–4–1372 KGOP, CG Eighth Army to CG IX Corps et al., 6 Apr 51.

[14] Interv, Blumenson with Gen Hoge, 15 Apr 51; Palmer, MS review comments, 1985. All interviews cited in this section are inclosures to Study, 1st Lt. Martin Blumenson, CO, 3d Historical Detachment, "Hwachon Dam," copy in CMH.


454
Dam
XXXX
Elms PLA 39
364
Pukhan R
HWACH'ON RESERVOIR
2 7 Cav
9-11 Apr
LINE KANSAS
A 7 Cav
11 Apr
1 3
4 Rgr
I 7 Cav
11 Apr
IX XXX X
Yuch'on-ni
HWACH'ON DAM
9-11 April 1951
0
2
MILES

MAP 30

tion, was some days away. Increasing resistance on 7 and 8 April did portend a slow advance to the line. In an attempt to accelerate the attack, General Palmer late on the 8th ordered his two assaults regiments to deploy in greater strength the following morning. Obliged to commit the 2d Battalion, Colonel Harris, with the dam operation in mind, gave the battalion line Kansas objectives that would carry it within a mile of the base of the ridge leading to the dam.[15]

Although the reservoir was only half full, Chinese troops and Korean employees of the dam power plant began opening sluice gates at midnight on the 8th. With the power plant not in operation, they were able to open only four gates fully and raise six slightly. The released water cost no casualties or supplies since General Hoge earlier had warned his forces away from the Pukhan bottomland, but the flow gradually raised the river as much as seven feet, forcing the removal of floating bridges above and below Ch'unch'on and destroying another far downstream before it could be swung into the bank.[16]

The only Chinese below the Pukhan on the morning of the 9th occupied the ridge leading to the dam. Elsewhere, those who had opposed the advance of the 7th and 8th Regiments had withdrawn behind the river during the night to avoid being trapped below the flood. The two regiments were able to reach line Kansas well before noon. Eager to shut down the dam, General Hoge ordered General Palmer to open the operation immediately. Since Hoge also set the 10th as the date the marines would relieve the cavalry division, Palmer instructed Colonel Harris to try to complete the operation by day's end.[17]

Lt. Col. John W. Callaway, the 2d Battalion commander, opened a hastily planned attack early in the afternoon. He opened the attack with inevitably reduced fire support since the severely convoluted ground for a distance of seven miles below the dam prevented tank and artillery movements. The single road serving the 7th Cavalry—actually no more than a narrow mountain track—branched off Route 29 in the adjoining zone of the 2d Division to the east, entered the 7th's area near the southwest corner of the reservoir, ran north along the reservoir shore to a point beyond line Kansas, then turned west through a small valley at the base of the ridge leading to the dam. Rock outcroppings so confined the track at points that jeeps could barely negotiate it. With the division artillery positions as far north as the terrain allowed, Callaway's objectives were beyond the range of the 105-mm. howitzers. After the Chinese opened the sluice gates, division artillerymen managed to get one 155-mm. howitzer into a position from which it could reach the dam at maximum range. While the howitzer might discourage the Chinese from further work on the dam, its fire at extreme range

[15] Intervs, Blumenson with Col William A. Harris, CO, 7th Cav, 18 Apr 51, and Maj James H. Webel, S3, 7th Cav, 16 Apr 51; 1st Cav Div G3 Jnl, 8 Apr 51; Palmer, MS review comments, 1985.

[16] Intervs, Blumenson with Capt Arnold Frank, CO, Engineer Tech Intel Team, IX Corps, 15 Apr 51, and Capt George Mintz, Engr Intel Officer, IX Corps, 11 Apr 51.

[17] 1st Cav Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; ibid. G3 Jnl, 9 Apr 51; Intervs, Blumenson with Hoge, 15 Apr 51, Webel, 16 Apr 51, and Frank, 15 Apr 51.

could not effectively support Callaway's attack.[18]

The 2d Battalion advanced with Company F leading the attack to clear the ridge as far as Hill 454, which overlooked the dam. When Company F moved up the ridge, Company E, the battalion reserve, was to occupy Hill 364 at the ridge's southern end. Once Company F occupied Hill 454, the 4th Ranger Company was to move to the dam following the edge of the reservoir, close and immobilize the gates, and occupy high ground on the peninsula east of the dam. Meanwhile, to assist resupply and the displacement of the battalion's heavy weapons, Company G began to clear a segment of the regimental supply road running north along the reservoir and west through the valley at the foot of the approach ridge. After crossing the valley road, Company F stalled under mortar, small arms, and machine gun fire from Hill 364 and from mutually supporting bunkers on heights above the Pukhan to the northwest. A single air strike called down by Colonel Callaway did little to dampen the fire. Though ample cover prevented heavy casualties, Company F remained pinned until dark, then was able to withdraw south of the valley.[19]

Although the 1st Cavalry Division was due to leave the line on the 10th, General Hoge and General Palmer wanted another attack made on the dam. Hoge continued to visualize a raid; Palmer was certain that Callaway's battalion could have reached the dam on the 9th if more daylight had been available. Accordingly, while the remainder of the division began to move out of the corps zone on the morning of the 10th, the 7th Cavalry remained on line while the 2d Battalion made a second attempt. Believing that the Chinese did not hold the ridge in strength and perhaps had withdrawn as other delaying forces had done in other instances after a single engagement, Colonel Callaway did not change tactics. The narrowness and steep sides of the ridge in any case allowed little room for any other formation or maneuver. Again his lead company, this time Company G, was pinned down by fire from the north and northwest after crossing the road at the base of the ridge. Still without normal artillery support and now denied air support because of mist and low-hanging clouds, Callaway was unable to quiet the fire and continue north.[20]

General Palmer and Colonel Harris had expected that the 7th Cavalry, regardless of the outcome of Callaway's second attack, would be relieved by marines immediately afterward. Harris, in fact, had allowed his 3d Battalion to start assembling for the move to the rear. General Hoge, however, viewed Callaway's two attempts as halfhearted and ordered a "bona fide" effort against the dam before the 7th left the line.[21]

[18] 7th Cav POR 296, 9 Apr 51; Intervs, Blumenson with Lt Col John W. Callaway, CO, 2d Bn, 7th Cav, 17 Apr 51, Maj Russell J. Wilson, CO, 8th Engr Combat Bn, 18 Apr 51, Maj Paul Gray, S3, IX Corps Arty, 15 Apr 51, and Capt William W. Cover, Asst S3, IX Corps Arty, 14 Apr 51; Palmer, MS review comments, 1985.

[19] Intervs, Blumenson with Callaway, 17 Apr 51, Capt Dorsey B. Anderson, CO, 4th Rgr Co, 13 Apr 51, and Webel, 16 Apr 51.

[20] Intervs, Blumenson with Hoge, 15 Apr 51, Harris, 18 Apr 51, Callaway, 17 Apr 51, Lt Col John Carlson, G3, 1st Cav Div, 18 Apr 51, and Maj Dayton F. Caple, Asst G4, 1st Cav Div, 18 Apr 51; 1st Cav Div POR 297, 10 Apr 51; 7th Cav POR 299, 10 Apr 51; Ltr, Col John W. Callaway to Maj Gen William A. Harris, 16 Oct 78, copy in CMH.

[21] Intervs, Blumenson with Hoge, 15 Apr 51, Harris, 18 Apr 51, Webel, 16 Apr 51, Capt John R. Flynn, S3,

In ordering a third attempt to be made on the morning of the 11th, General Palmer authorized Colonel Harris to commit his entire regiment if he thought it necessary. Harris planned to launch a stronger effort in the belief that the Chinese defense of the dam consisted of mutually supporting positions in the heights immediately northwest of the Pukhan and on the two peninsulas on which the dam abutted and that reaching the dam required simultaneous attacks in all three areas. But he believed that he had neither sufficient supplies, particularly ammunition, nor the time to accumulate them for a full regimental advance. He planned to send a company of the 1st Battalion in a diversionary attack northwest of the Pukhan, to recommit the 2d Battalion on the western peninsula, and before dawn to dispatch the 4th Ranger Company reinforced with heavy weapons from Company M across the reservoir to attack up the eastern peninsula. He placed the 3d Battalion on call to reinforce the Rangers or pass through the 2d Battalion and occupy the dam site, whichever proved the necessary or better course. Two 8-inch batteries of the 17th Field Artillery Battalion and a 155-mm. battery of the 1st Marine Division's 4th Field Artillery Battalion were now within range of Harris' objectives, but worsening weather—a mix of rain, sleet, snow, and fog—eliminated air support.[22]

Colonel Harris had considered a reservoir crossing operation on the 9th, alerting the 4th Ranger Company to that possibility and setting staff members to getting twenty assault boats from the division's 8th Engineer Combat Battalion. The engineers earlier had acquired amphibious equipment in anticipation of crossing operations at the Pukhan, but before Harris' request reached them they had returned part of the equipment to Ch'unch'on depots and turned the rest over to the marines relieving the division on the 10th. Attempts to retrieve equipment and transport it to the reservoir over the poor supply road produced just nine boats and four motors by the time set for the Rangers' crossing. Unable to obtain boat operators and mechanics in time for the operation, Colonel Harris hastily recruited from his own regiment men who had had some experience with motorboats.[23]

The Ranger company commander, Capt. Dorsey B. Anderson, embarked two platoons, artillery and mortar observers, and a machine gun section in the first lift. Concealed by darkness and paddling the boats to maintain silence, the first-wave forces reached the eastern peninsula undetected but were stopped by small arms and machine gun fire when they moved onto high ground above the landing point after daylight. Enemy fire striking the following waves of Rangers as they crossed the reservoir in daylight grew heavy enough to force part of the last lift to return to the south shore. Even with the bulk of the company available, Captain Anderson was unable to advance and by midmorning used most of his

2d Bn, 7th Cav, 17 Apr 51, and Capt Thomas J. Kennedy, CO, Co I, 7th Cav, et al., 16 Apr 51.

[22] Intervs, Blumenson with Harris, 18 Apr 51, Lt Col Charles H. Hallden, CO, 3d Bn, 7th Cav, 16 Apr 51, Gray, 15 Apr 51, and Cover, 14 Apr 51.

[23] Intervs, Blumenson with Harris, 18 Apr 51, Webel, 16 Apr 51, Wilson, 18 Apr 51, Anderson, 13 Apr 51, 1st Lt John S. Warren, Exec O, 4th Rgr Co, 13 Apr 51, and Hallden, 16 Apr 51.

ammunition in beating off counterattacks. Chinese troops meanwhile began moving across the dam from the western peninsula to reinforce those holding up the Rangers.[24]

As Anderson's attack bogged down, Colonel Harris ordered the 3d Battalion to the eastern peninsula. Company I, which had assembled near the Rangers' embarkation point during the night, started across the reservoir about 1100. Forced by a shortage of boats to cross in increments, slowed to a paddling pace when most of the few outboard motors failed, and harassed by enemy fire, the company was not on the peninsula until midafternoon, and only one platoon by that time had joined the Rangers. Elsewhere, the diversionary attack across the Pukhan ended in its reconnaissance stage when intense fire from the northwest blocked all early morning attempts by a Company A patrol to search the still-swollen river for crossing sites. The 2d Battalion again lost momentum when its lead company, now Company E, stalled at the base of the western ridge under heavy fire from pillboxes above. All attempts to destroy the enemy fortifications with artillery fire failed. With the regiment stopped at every point, General Palmer, while Company I was crossing the reservoir to join the Rangers, authorized Colonel Harris to call off the attack. But Harris, though he no longer expected to occupy the dam area, deferred ending operations out of hope that by reinforcing the attack on the eastern peninsula he might be able to send Anderson's company in a raid to immobilize the dam's sluice gates.[25]

Following Company I's drawn-out reservoir crossing, however, Harris realized that the shortage of boats and motors would prevent the remainder of the 3d Battalion from reaching the peninsula before dark. Fearful of losing the Rangers and Company I to a Chinese night attack, he ordered them to withdraw. The Chinese made no attempt to follow the Rangers and Company I platoon as they withdrew piecemeal from their high ground positions to join the remainder of Company I on the beach. Bothered only by sporadic enemy fire, the two companies waited for darkness before shuttling forces to the south shore of the reservoir. Completing the return trip after midnight, they moved on to join the remainder of the regiment, which Harris had pulled back to line Kansas after ordering the evacuation of the eastern peninsula.[26]

As Harris began pulling his forces off the peninsula, General Hoge decided to forego any further separate action against the dam and authorized the relief of the 7th Cavalry by the 1st Korean Marine Corps Regiment on 12 April. Hoge attributed the 7th Cavalry's failure to reach the dam principally to the loss of surprise. Sharing the cause were hasty planning; shortages of equipment, particularly amphibious gear; and lack of normal direct support artillery fire. Certainly the canal-

[24] Intervs, Blumenson with Anderson, 13 Apr 51, Warren, 13 Apr 51, and Webel, 16 Apr 51.

[25] Intervs, Blumenson with Capt Carl W. Kueffer, S3, 1st Bn, 7th Cav, 17 Apr 51, Callaway, 17 Apr 51, Harris, 18 Apr 51, and Hallden, 16 Apr 51; Ltr, Maj Gen John G. Hill, Jr., to Maj Gen William A. Harris, 31 Aug 78, copy in CMH. General Hill commanded Company E in this operation.

[26] Intervs, Blumenson with Harris, 18 Apr 51, and Webel, 16 Apr 51.

ized terrain and the strength and fortified position of the defending forces also contributed. In any case, since General Ridgway meanwhile had ordered the opening of Operation DAUNTLESS, Hoge elected to wait until then, when the dam would be an objective of a full IX Corps advance to line Wyoming. The decision would not prove a great gamble. Although the Chinese had closed some of the sluice gates late on 10 April, they would not attempt to flood the Pukhan during the course of the DAUNTLESS operation.[27]

General Ridgway set an opening date for the DAUNTLESS advance late on 9 April after all but the X and ROK III Corps had reached line Kansas. *(Map 31)* While those two corps continued what had proved a battle more with terrain than with North Koreans, I and IX Corps forces were to start toward the Iron Triangle on the 11th. Utah, the initial objective line, arched eleven miles above Kansas between the Imjin River and the eastern slopes of Kungmang Mountain, its trace resting on the prominent Kumhak, Kwangdok, and Paegun mountain masses. The opening phase thus would be primarily a I Corps operation involving attacks by the 3d, 25th, and 24th Divisions while requiring only a short advance by the British 27th Brigade at the left of the IX Corps.[28]

Change of Command

The opening of the DAUNTLESS advance on the 11th coincided with a three-way change of command set in motion a week earlier when Congressman Martin, believing he "owed it to the American people to tell them the information I had from a great and reliable source," rose in the House and read the 20 March letter in which General MacArthur had reiterated, if mildly, some of his contrary opinions on how the war should be prosecuted.[29] President Truman regarded the letter as one more instance of MacArthur's willful insubordination, and he reacted immediately. Between 6 and 9 April he met in closed sessions with Secretary of Defense Marshall, Secretary of State Acheson, General Bradley, and special assistant Averell Harriman to hear their views on what action should be taken against MacArthur. Truman had already decided that MacArthur should be relieved but wanted the record to show that he had acted upon the advice and with the support of his chief civilian and military aides. Only after receiving their unanimous recommendation of MacArthur's relief did he inform them of his prior decision. At the same time, he accepted the recommendations of Secretary Marshall and General Bradley that General Ridgway succeed MacArthur and that Lt. Gen. James A. Van Fleet, currently commanding the Second Army, take over the Eighth.[30]

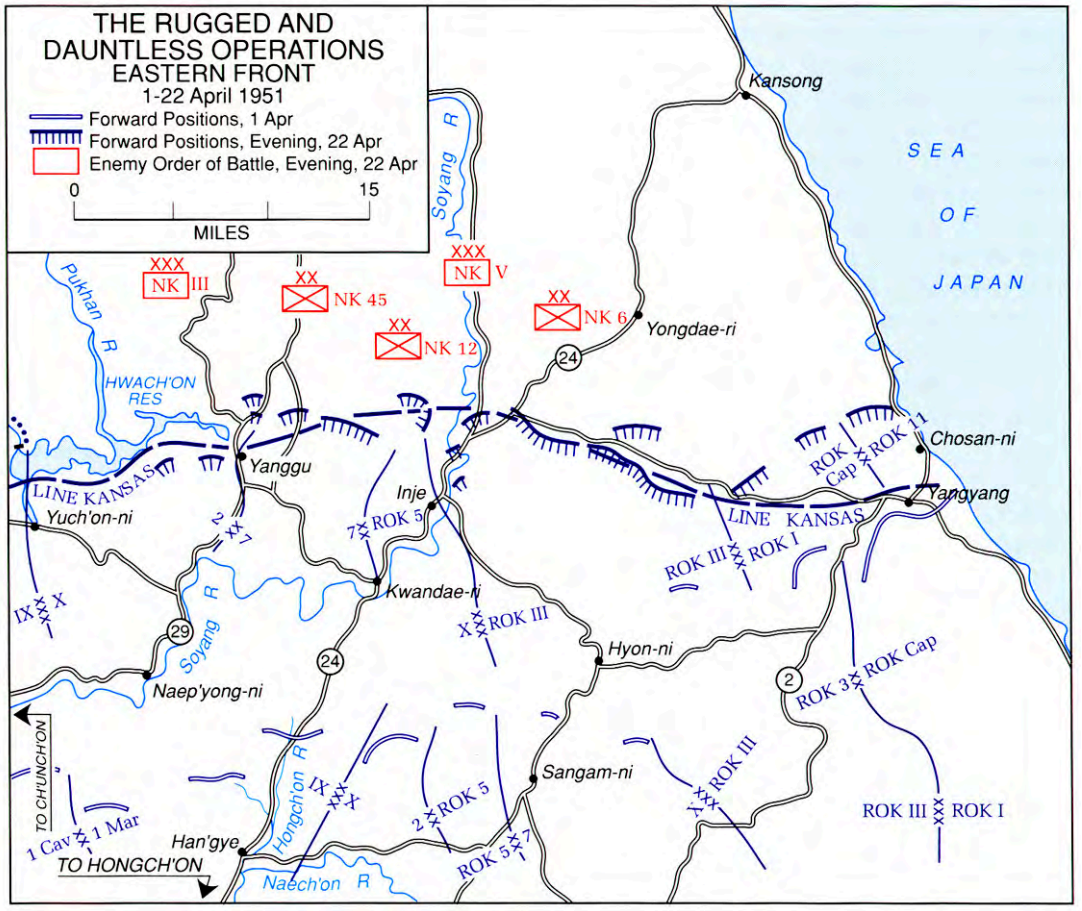
Plans completed by the president and his advisers on 10 April called for MacArthur to be relieved summarily and for the dismissal to be presented to the

[27] Interv, Blumenson with Hoge, 15 Apr 51; Rad, GX–4–1978 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 9 Apr 51; Palmer, MS review comments, 1985.

[28] Rads, GX–4–805 KGOP, and GX–4–1978 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 3 and 9 Apr 51, respectively; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51.

[29] Quoted in Trumball Higgins, *Korea and the Fall of MacArthur* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 115.

[30] Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope*, pp. 445–47; Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, pp. 374–76; Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, pp. 521–22; Collins, *War in Peacetime*, pp. 284–85.



MAP 31

public as a *fait accompli*. Behind both measures apparently was a desire to avoid taking the action amid outcries against the relief of a popular war hero, especially in the Congress where the Republican Party had gained considerable strength in the recent midterm election and where MacArthur had a dedicated following. The dismissal order was to be delivered to MacArthur by Secretary of the Army Frank Pace, Jr., who had arrived in Japan on 9 April for a routine tour of the theater and at the moment was in Korea.[31] To prevent any embarrassments that might result from a premature disclosure of MacArthur's relief, the dismissal order and Ridgway's reassignment order were to be sent in diplomatic code by Secretary Acheson to Ambassador Muccio at

[31] There have been other interpretations of Pace's purpose. In *With MacArthur in Japan* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1965), William J. Sebald, political adviser to MacArthur for the occupation, writes that he assumed Pace's visit was connected with the

the embassy in Pusan. Muccio was to pass the orders directly to Secretary Pace. Accompanying instructions from Secretary Marshall would direct Pace to return to Tokyo, arrange to meet MacArthur at 1000 on 12 April (2000 on 11 April, Washington time) at the general's American Embassy residence, and deliver the relief order personally and privately. Pace also was to arrange a simultaneous delivery of Ridgway's reassignment order by a Department of the Army staff member, Lt. Gen. John E. Hull, who was traveling with Pace.[32]

The careful plans for delivering the orders were upset almost immediately. Secretary Acheson dispatched the directives via commercial cable late in the afternoon of the 10th but at midnight was still waiting for Ambassador Muccio's signal of receipt. Unknown to Acheson or the cable company at the time, a power failure in Pusan had interrupted transmission of the orders. A Chicago newspaperman meanwhile asked Pentagon officials to confirm a tip from Japan, apparently from his paper's Tokyo bureau, that an important resignation was forthcoming. Either word of the impending command change had leaked, or, as General Bradley surmised, earlier press speculation and the White House meetings had led to "jumping at conclusions."[33]

When Bradley warned the president late in the evening of the 10th that the Chicago paper might print the story in its next edition, Truman instructed him to issue new orders immediately, in the clear and via the military communications system, one to General MacArthur relieving him, another to Secretary Pace in Korea so that General Ridgway could be informed of his new post.[34] Truman also directed his press secretary, Joseph Short, to call a new conference at the White House at 0100 on 11 April to announce the command changes.[35]

As intended, Short's press conference virtually coincided with the arrival of the relief order in the message center of MacArthur's headquarters shortly before 1500 on 11 April, Japan time. But a half hour or more before the order was delivered to MacArthur at his residence, where he was entertaining lunch guests, he learned of his dismissal through an aide who had heard the news broadcast by a Tokyo radio station. Although accidental, the public disclosure in advance of official notice added an element of rudeness to the procedure of relief, which MacArthur viewed in all its aspects as a callous dis-

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Martin incident. The Welsh writer, Rees, in his *Korea: The Limited War*, states flatly that Pace was sent to Tokyo to prevent further provocations by MacArthur while his dismissal was being organized. In a 1975 interview conducted under the auspices of the U.S. Army Military History Research Collection, Pace himself stated that his Far East tour originally was a "routine inspection trip to Japan and Korea." He did add that shortly after reaching Tokyo he received a cable from Secretary Marshall instructing him to "proceed to Korea where you will wait until you hear from me," but he made clear that he went to Korea unaware of MacArthur's coming relief.

[32] Testimony of Secretary Marshall, *MacArthur Hearings*, pp. 348, 422; Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, pp. 522–23; Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, p. 376.

[33] Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p. 523; Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, p. 377; Quotation is from Testimony of General Bradley, *MacArthur Hearings*, p. 747.

[34] As Truman recalled some years later, Bradley warned him that if MacArthur learned of his relief before he received the official notice, he probably would resign. The prospect infuriated the president. MacArthur was not "going to resign on me," Truman responded, *"I want him fired."* See Miller, *Plain Speaking*, p. 305.

[35] Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope*, pp. 449–50; Rees, *Korea: The Limited War*, p. 218.

regard for ordinary decencies. Truman had ordered MacArthur to pass authority to Ridgway "effective at once."[36] MacArthur thus directed General Hickey, the acting chief of staff, to assume command in Ridgway's behalf until Ridgway could take over personally.[37]

Word of the command changes took somewhat longer to reach General Ridgway and Secretary Pace, who on the morning of the 11th had gone to the I Corps front for a daylong tour of units involved in the DAUNTLESS operation. The second notice of Ridgway's elevation in command, sent by General Bradley over Secretary Marshall's signature, was relayed to Secretary Pace from Eighth Army headquarters late in the afternoon while he and Ridgway were visiting the headquarters of the 5th Regimental Combat Team, 24th Division. Late in the evening, after Ridgway and Pace returned from the front to Ridgway's Yoju command post, Pace received a call from the embassy in Pusan, which had finally received Secretary Acheson's cable. Ridgway and Pace flew to Pusan on the morning of the 12th to obtain any further information Ambassador Muccio could provide, then went on to Tokyo. There Ridgway and MacArthur, in the only conference they would have on the change of command, spent the late afternoon discussing the range of Ridgway's new responsibilities. Ridgway elected not to take command in person immediately but to return to Korea and direct Eighth Army operations until General Van Fleet, scheduled to arrive on 14 April, could take charge.[38]

In winding up affairs on 13 April, Ridgway put final touches to plans developed during his term of command for rotating Army troops.[39] Under the rules established, officers and enlisted men alike would be eligible to return to the United States after serving six months in Korea with a division or other separate combat unit, a full year at higher levels of command or with separate service units, or a constructive year, such as three months with a combat unit and six months with a service unit. An eligible soldier could leave Korea, however, only after his replacement joined his unit. Over seventy thousand troops already were eligible under the length of service criteria. This backlog and troops earning eligibility later were to return to the United States in monthly quotas established on the basis of expected replacements. Since replacements currently exceeded casualty losses by more than 50 percent, Ridgway wanted the rotation process—the "Big R," as the troops would call it—begun before the month was out. The first quota of troops would leave Korea on 22 April.[40]

Ridgway rounded out his last full day in Korea by calling a conference at Yoju to canvass corps commanders for recent evidence of enemy offensive preparations and to discuss a plan completed

[36] Rad, JCS 88180, Bradley (Personal) for MacArthur, 11 Apr 51.

[37] Collins, *War in Peacetime*, p. 285; Testimony of General Bradley, p. 1097, and Testimony of General MacArthur, pp. 26, 155, in *MacArthur Hearings*; MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, p. 395.

[38] USAMHRC Senior Officer Debriefing Program, Interv, Lt Col J. Lapsey Smith with Mr. Frank Pace, Jr., 1975; Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p. 523; Eighth Army CG SS Rpt, 12 Apr 51; Ridgway, *Soldier*, p. 223.

[39] The Air Force and Marine Corps already had begun to rotate troops. The Navy rotated ships.

[40] Eighth Army G1 SS Rpt, Mar 51; Mono, 1st Lt. Charles G. Cleaver, *"Personnel Problems in the Korean Campaign,"* pp. 93ff., copy in CMH.

by his staff the previous day that was to govern withdrawals if enemy attacks forced the Eighth Army back from line Kansas. Three defense lines were established, these patterned much after lines B and C and the Seoul bridgehead occupied during the enemy New Year's offensive. Delta, the first line to the south, stretched coast to coast, centering on and running almost due east and west from Ch'unch'on. Nevada, the deepest line, also ran coast to coast, following the lower bank of the Han in the west, then sloping northeastward to the Yangyang area. For a defense of Seoul, which if successful would obviate a withdrawal to the Nevada line in the west, line Golden looped above the capital from a point on the Han six miles west of the city to a juncture with line Nevada near the town of Yongp'yong to the east.[41]

The officers meeting with Ridgway could offer little new information about the enemy's readiness to attack. Although the I Corps in pushing toward line Utah and the X and ROK III Corps in continuing toward line Kansas had encountered stiffening opposition over the past two days, the assault forces had discovered no indication that the enemy offensive was imminent other than the filling of tank traps previously dug along axes of Eighth Army advance. In the absence of other evidence, Ridgway and the assembled corps commanders agreed that enemy forces had no intention of attacking in the immediate future.[42]

General Van Fleet arrived in Korea at midday on 14 April. Earlier, in notifying General Ridgway of his successor in Korea, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had authorized him to employ Van Fleet in some other capacity if, because of the expected enemy offensive, Ridgway wanted to retain direct control of the Eighth Army temporarily. Ridgway did not postpone Van Fleet's assumption of command, but in turning over the Eighth Army officially at 1700 on the 14th he instructed Van Fleet to inform him before sending forces above line Utah and reserved the right to approve any Eighth Army move in strength beyond the Wyoming line. Ridgway planned to incorporate the requirement for prior approval of operations above line Wyoming in a fuller letter of instructions after he established himself in Tokyo. He planned also to issue letters to General Stratemeyer and Admiral Joy that would formally place limits on air and naval operations.[43]

Ridgway arrived in Japan during the evening of the 14th. General Hickey and William J. Sebald, Department of State political adviser for the occupation of Japan, met Ridgway at Haneda Airport and accompanied him to quarters in Tokyo's Imperial Hotel. Ridgway considered it a point of courtesy to avoid UNC headquarters until General MacArthur left for the United States. Sebald was present primarily to help General Ridgway prepare a statement concerning U.S. policy on the occupation and on the negotiations toward

[41] Eighth Army CG SS Rpt, 13 Apr 51; Rad, GX–4–2554 KGOP, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 12 Apr 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 12 Apr 51.

[42] Eighth Army CG SS Rpt, 13 Apr 51; MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, pp. 423–24.

[43] Eighth Army CG SS Rpt, 14 Apr 51; Rad, JCS 88374, JCS to CINCFE, 12 Apr 51; Rad, GX–4–3070 KDC, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps, 14 Apr 51 (announces change of command); Rad, CX 60388, CINCFE to EUSAK, 19 Apr 51 (confirms oral instructions issued 14 Apr 51); Ridgway, *The Korean War*, pp. 162–65.

a U.S.–Japan peace treaty which had opened in January. Apprehensive that the Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida and his cabinet would resign as a gesture of responsibility for MacArthur's relief, Sebald had met with the prime minister late on the 11th to discourage such a step and to assure him that the change of command presaged no alteration of policy. Yoshida had told Sebald that there would be no resignation. Nevertheless, at the direction of President Truman, the U.S. representative in the treaty negotiation, John Foster Dulles, was currently en route to Tokyo to deliver the president's personal guarantee of no policy change. Ridgway's statement to the same effect was delivered to the press, Japanese and foreign, late on the 14th.[44]

Ridgway met with his staff for the first time on 16 April after attending early morning departure ceremonies for General MacArthur. Ridgway's first order appointed General Hickey Far East Command and U.N. Command chief of staff, the post Hickey had filled on an acting basis since September when General Almond, the officially designated chief of staff, had taken the X Corps into Inch'on. Ridgway felt "much personal pleasure" in rectifying what he regarded as a marked, if unintentional, slight to General Hickey. As Ridgway wrote later, "General MacArthur's ways were not mine."[45]

Before the month was out Ridgway issued instructions that defined, and confined, the latitude within which his ground, air, and naval commanders could operate. Written directives to General Stratemeyer and Admiral Joy in the main only assigned over Ridgway's signature the missions previously undertaken by UNC air and naval forces. Similarly, Van Fleet's instructions were largely the guidelines under which Ridgway himself had operated: the general mission was to repel aggression against South Korea; Van Fleet could operate north of the 38th parallel but not above the combined trace of the Kansas and Wyoming lines without Ridgway's approval; operations were to aim not simply at gaining ground but at inflicting maximum personnel and materiel losses on enemy forces without incurring high casualties or risking the integrity of major units. Van Fleet also was to assume that he would receive no major reinforcements and that he might be ordered to hold a defensive line indefinitely, or to withdraw, or even to take his forces out of Korea.[46]

Although Ridgway did not alter previous missions in any material way by these instructions, he did formally attach a rein to each principal subordinate. He tightened the reins in a memorandum accompanying the directives. In marked contrast to General MacArthur's views on how the war should be conducted, Ridgway, aiming primarily at Stratemeyer and Joy since their forces were inherently more mobile than those of Van Fleet, demanded that his commanders avoid taking any action that might widen the war.[47]

[44] Eighth Army CG SS Rpt, 14 Apr 51; Ridgway, *The Korean War*, p. 161; Sebald, *With MacArthur in Japan*, pp. 228–31; Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, pp. 523–24; Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope*, p. 449.

[45] Sebald, *With MacArthur in Japan*, p. 236; Ridgway, *The Korean War*, pp. 159, 163, 169–70; Interv, Appleman with Hickey, 10 Oct 51.

[46] Ridgway, *The Korean War*, pp. 166–68, 267–68.

[47] Ibid., pp. 165–66.

CHAPTER XX

Toward the Iron Triangle

In leading the Eighth Army according to the uncommon prescriptions of his instructions from General Ridgway, General Van Fleet would culminate a long career already noted for unusual episodes. Graduating from West Point in 1915 with the class "the stars fell on," he initially matched the rise of classmates such as Dwight D. Eisenhower and Omar N. Bradley, commanding a machine gun battalion as a very young major during World War I and becoming a colonel in command of the 8th Infantry, 4th Division, by the time of American entry into World War II. A hiatus then developed when Army Chief of Staff Gen. George C. Marshall, who mistook Van Fleet for a similarly named intemperate officer who had served under Marshall years earlier, disapproved his promotion to brigadier general. Ironically, Van Fleet was a teetotaler.[1]

Rectification came with remarkable swiftness after Van Fleet led the 8th Infantry ashore at Normandy on 6 June 1944. Within five months he rose from colonel to major general and within nine months from regimental to corps command. General Eisenhower later rated his battle record as the best of any regimental, division, or corps commander in the European theater. Van Fleet received his third star early in 1948 along with an unprecedented assignment as head of a joint U.S. military advisory and planning group in Greece, where he received wide acclaim as he guided Greek government forces to victory over a Communist-supported insurgency. After thirty-six years of service and at age fifty-nine, he would receive the additional star of a full general in Korea at the end of July 1951.[2]

From Normandy to Korea, Van Fleet's career had benefited from the attention of the current Army chief of staff. As commander of the VII Corps during World War II General Collins instigated Van Fleet's initial rise into general officer ranks, as deputy chief of staff in 1948 he nominated Van Fleet for the post in Greece, and it was Collins who originally recommended Van Fleet as Ridgway's successor. "Van," in Collins' estimation, "was cast in the same mold as Ridgway as a fighting man," and "could take over the Eighth Army without a falter in its high morale and aggressive spirit."[3]

Van Fleet showed some variation in "mold" when asked during his first press conference on 22 April to explain the goal of Eighth Army operations under his direction. Notwithstanding

[1] Biog of Gen Van Fleet, prepared by Office of Pub Info, DOD, 12 Mar 53, in CMH; *Time*, vol. LVII, no. 20, 14 May 1951, pp. 29–31; Collins, *War in Peacetime*, pp. 294–95.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Collins, *War in Peacetime*, p. 295.

his rather explicit instructions from Ridgway, he replied that he did not know. The answer, he said, would have to come from higher authority. But if he had yet to attune himself to the conditions and requirements of the war as Ridgway saw them, from the start he otherwise would compare closely with his predecessor in attitude and tactics as commander of the Eighth Army.[4] It was perhaps a reflection of his experience in Greece that Van Fleet, in his initial inspection of the front, went first to the ROK Army zone in the east.[5] In December President Rhee had requested American weapons and equipment to place more South Koreans under arms, an appeal that had generated interest in Washington. But General MacArthur had twice recommended disapproval, most recently on 6 April, largely on grounds that the ROK Army's past poor performances raised doubt that anything would be gained by increasing its size. The need to improve the quality of the ROK Army was one reason General Collins had recommended Van Fleet for the ground command in Korea. One of Van Fleet's bigger projects, and successes, in Greece had been to build its army into an effective organization.[6]



GENERAL VAN FLEET

The Enemy's Conspicuous Absence 11–20 April

There was little activity in the South Korean Army zone when Van Fleet reached Kangnung on 16 April for a conference with ROK Defense Minister Sign Sung Mo; General Chung; General Farrell, the KMAG chief; and General Paik, the former commander of the ROK 1st Division now in command of the ROK I Corps. Since occupying positions around Yangyang above line Kansas on the 10th, the ROK I Corps had had no contact on its front, and on the 11th a company from the 29th Regiment, 9th Division, had patrolled some fifteen miles north of Yangyang without encountering enemy forces. *(See Map 31.)* (The *69th Brigade*, the corps' longtime, if weak, opponent, had been taken off the line and disbanded, and the North Korean *2d Division*, now

[4] Eighth Army CG Jnl, 22 Apr 51; Rees, *Korea: The Limited War*, p. 255; Middleton, *The Compact History of the Korean War*, p. 188.

[5] Earlier, at General Ridgway's urging, General Chung, the ROK Army chief of staff, had established a forward command post at Hajinbu-ri. Thereafter the two ROK corps zones in the east were considered as the ROK Army zone.

[6] Rad, W99238, DA (G3) to CINCFE, 20 Dec 50; Rad, C 52879, CINCFE to DA for JCS, 6 Jan 51; Sawyer, *Military Advisors in Korea*, p. 169; Collins, *War in Peacetime*, p. 315.

responsible for the coastal area, had yet to deploy forces in contact.) Currently moving to join the corps for seasoning— small as that prospect was at the time—was the ROK 11th Division, green to combat except for antiguerrilla operations conducted in southwestern Korea since October.[7] In the narrow ROK III Corps zone high in the Taebaeks, the ROK 3d Division, despite having to be resupplied entirely by air and carrying parties in the virtually roadless mountains, had beaten back detachments of the North Korean *45th Division* to reach line Kansas on the 14th, and its patrols since then had encountered few enemy forces above the line.[8] The scant opposition to the South Koreans, and especially the ROK III Corps' want of a good supply road, would prompt one of Van Fleet's first operations orders.

Next to the west, the three divisions of the X Corps were just beginning to consolidate positions along the Kansas line on 16 April. Since the 10th, after it became obvious that North Korean *1st Division* forces opposite the corps left were withdrawing hastily eastward from the ground below the Hwach'on Reservoir, the 23d Infantry of the 2d Division had swung east along the lower shore in pursuit. Abandoned ammunition, food supplies, and a fully stocked aid station evidenced the enemy's haste. Ahead of the pursuing forces, the bulk of the enemy division's *1st Regiment* (also known as the *14th Regiment*) crossed the reservoir at a narrow point three miles northwest of Yanggu, using boats and rafts that were burned after the crossing; the remainder moved to Yanggu and then north around the eastern end of the reservoir. Leading forces of the 23d Infantry entered Yanggu and reached line Kansas on the 15th.[9]

The hard spots of North Korean resistance encountered just above the Soyang River by the 7th Division at X Corps center and the ROK 5th Division at the right had begun to dissolve on 13 April. The 5th Division cleared North Korean *45th Division* forces out of their defenses around Inje on the 15th, and after artillery pounded the ridges north of town during the night, dawn attacks carried the South Koreans to line Kansas with negligible contact. The 17th Infantry, advancing on the 7th Division's left through decreasing opposition from North Korean *15th Division* forces, found Route 29 leading into Yanggu obstructed by booby-trapped fallen trees and cleverly placed wooden box mines but gained line Kansas and made contact with the 2d Division in Yanggu on the 15th and 16th. On the division's right, the 32d Infantry pushed through brief but sharp resistance to reach the line early on 17 April.[10]

Beginning on the 17th, X Corps patrols ranging above line Kansas found progressively fewer enemy forces. Gen-

[7] The 11th's rear area mission was taken over by the ROK 8th Division, now rebuilt after being shattered in February.

[8] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Eighth Army CG Jnl, 16 Apr 51; Hq, FEC, History of the North Korean Army, 31 Jul 52.

[9] Rads, X 18473, and X 18493, CG X Corps to CG Eighth Army, 14 and 15 Apr 51, respectively; 2d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; the North Korean *1st Regiment's* withdrawal is described in 1st Marine Div Hist Diary, Apr 51.

[10] See following Rads from CG X Corps to CG Eighth Army: X 18473, 14 Apr 51, X 18484 and X 18493, 15 Apr 51, and X 18505 and X 18513, 17 Apr 51; 7th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51.

eral Almond attempted to follow the North Korean withdrawal by establishing forward patrol bases in all division zones, whence strong patrols were to advance farther north each day in search of enemy positions. As of 20 April the patrolling had reached a depth of about two miles without meeting significant resistance.[11]

On the opposite side of the Hwach'on Reservoir, IX Corps patrols sent forward of line Kansas by the ROK 6th and 1st Marine Divisions began to bring back reports of Chinese withdrawal when forces engaged in Operation DAUNTLESS to the west drew closer to line Utah. *(See Map 29.)* By 17 April the 1st Korean Marine Corps Regiment, which had replaced the 7th Cavalry after the latter's unsuccessful effort to capture the Hwach'on Dam, established outposts near the dam on the ridge inside the Pukhan loop and on heights above the Pukhan to the west. On the 18th a Marine patrol crossing the Pukhan four miles west of the dam found Hwach'on town on Route 17 unoccupied except for eleven Chinese, whom the patrol took captive. Intelligence officers appraised the voluntary withdrawal ahead of the two IX Corps divisions as a realignment of forces with those dropping back in the DAUNTLESS sector but did not overlook the possibility that the Chinese were coaxing the IX Corps into a vulnerable deployment. A recently captured document, dated 17 March, extolled the virtues and explained the purpose of "roving defensive warfare," defined as defense through movement without regard for the loss or gain of ground which could "conserve our own power, deplete the enemy's strength, and secure for us more favorable conditions for future victory."[12] (This scheme of defense had a pronounced similarity to the tactical concepts General Ridgway set for the Eighth Army in February.)

As General Van Fleet completed an east-to-west tour of the front on 17 April, the first phase of Operation DAUNTLESS was a virtual success. On the east flank of the advance, the British 27th Brigade of the IX Corps had cleared minor *40th Army* forces from Paegun Mountain above the headwaters of the Kap'yong River to reach line Utah the day before. The 19th Regiment of the ROK 6th Division was currently relieving the brigade, which, except for the New Zealand artillery assigned to stay forward in support of the South Koreans, was withdrawing into corps reserve near Kap'yong town. The relief in part was in preparation for the second DAUNTLESS phase in which the IX Corps would make a full advance with the ROK 6th and 1st Marine Divisions. While in reserve, the British brigade also was to begin rotating units under a British policy calling for annual replacement. The 1st Battalion, The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, was to be replaced on 23 April by the 1st Battalion, King's Own Scottish Borders; on the 25th, brigade headquarters itself was to leave the line and be replaced by a new staff and commander from Hong Kong. The brigade at that time would become the 28th British Commonwealth Brigade under

[11] Ibid.: X 18513, 17 Apr 51, X 18523, 18 Apr 51, X 18535, 19 Apr 51, and X 18650, 20 Apr 51.

[12] IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; 1st Marine Div Hist Diary, Apr 51; 1st Marine Div POR 23, 16 Apr 51; Montross, Kuokka, and Hicks, *The East-Central Front*, p. 102.

the command of Brigadier George Taylor.[13]

On the west flank of the DAUNTLESS attack, at approximately I Corps center, the 65th Infantry of the 3d Division, reinforced by the Philippine 10th Battalion Combat Team and two companies of the 64th Tank Battalion, had easily defeated *26th Army* detachments in a narrow zone between the Imjin River and Route 33 to reach line Utah on 14 April. In the right half of the corps zone, delaying forces of the *26th* and *40th Armies* had been more reluctant to give way before the 25th and 24th Divisions advancing toward Ch'orwon and Kumhwa. The 25th Division spent four days crossing the Hant'an River and getting a foothold in the Pogae-san heights, a series of steep north-south ridges between Routes 33 and 3, and needed two days more to cover half the ten-mile distance between the Kansas and Utah lines. East of Route 3, the 24th Division attacking through the Kwangdok-san ridges shouldering the Yongp'yong River gained scarcely a mile in three days. But by 17 April resistance weakened in both division zones. On that date a company of the 6th Tank Battalion, 24th Division, moved up Route 3 within seven miles of Kumhwa without contact. On the following day, in the 25th Division zone, a battalion of the 35th Infantry, two companies of the 89th Tank Battalion, and an artillery battery moved through the upper Hant'an River valley within five miles of Ch'orwon before receiving fire. Impeded by rugged ground, heavy rains, and somewhat stiffer resistance beginning on 19 April, the two divisions were on line Utah on the 20th except at the left of the 25th Division where enemy delaying forces held up the attached Turkish brigade along Route 33.[14]

Stretched by the DAUNTLESS gains of the 65th Infantry, the western I Corps front by 20 April lay along thirty miles of the meandering Imjin, from its mouth northeastward to a point on Route 33 ten miles below Ch'orwon. At the left, the ROK 1st Division sat astride Route 1 with its tank destroyer battalion (still organized and fighting as an infantry unit) and 11th and 12th Regiments stretched out from the mouth of the Imjin to the river's Korangp'o-ri bend fifteen miles upstream. The 3d Division occupied the Korangp'o-ri–Route 33 sector with the attached British 29th Brigade adjacent to the South Korean division and the 65th Infantry on the ground taken during its recent advance. It was a gaping front, manned for the most part in a series of separated battalion strongpoints.[15]

As the Imjin River front had developed to its present width since the beginning of the month, the two divisions manning it had patrolled extensively above the river. The patrols encountered thinly disposed forces of the North Korean *8th Division* along the far bank, most of them ahead of the ROK 1st Division, until the 10th, when they discovered that the North Koreans had vacated their positions. South Korean

[13] IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Wood, *Strange Battleground*, p. 79.

[14] I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; 3d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; 25th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; 25th Div G3 Jnl, 10–20 Apr 51; 24th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; 24th Div G3 Jnl, 11–20 Apr 51; Rad, CICCG 4–4, CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army, 11 Apr 51.

[15] I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; 3d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51.

patrols later moved along Route 1 as far as Kaesong, the ancient capital of Korea some twelve miles above the Imjin, without making contact. The *8th Division* appeared to have joined the remainder of the North Korean *I Corps* west of the Yesong River.[16]

Other ROK 1st Division and British 29th Brigade patrols ranging up to five miles above the Imjin after 10 April began to encounter a sprinkling of Chinese, mostly across the ten-mile British front between Korangp'o-ri and a near ninety-degree bend in the river where its flow changes from southeast to southwest and where it receives the water of the westward-flowing Hant'an. Although intelligence agents had in the meantime identified the *XIX Army Group* in the general Kumch'on–Kuhwa-ri area and had discovered the neighboring *III Army Group* (but misidentified it as the *XVIII Army Group*), the minor engagements within five miles of the river were the first indication that any of these forces had displaced forward. Five captives taken at scattered locations between 11 and 14 April all belonged to the *561st Regiment, 187th Division*, from the *63d Army* of the *XIX Army Group*. One prisoner stated at interrogation that the *561st* had a defensive mission pending the arrival of reinforcements. The light contact and wide dispersion of a single regiment did suggest a screen, but as South Korean and British patrols continued to probe the thin enemy positions through 20 April, no evidence appeared of Chinese forces massing behind them.[17]

Perhaps the most dramatic—certainly the most visible—evidence of enemy activity to appear as Eighth Army forces closed on the Kansas and Utah lines were billows of smoke rising at numerous points ahead of them. By mid-April, belts of smoke up to ten miles deep lay before much of the I, IX, and X Corps fronts.[18] Air observers confirmed that enemy troops, some in groups of fifty to five hundred, were setting fire to grasslands and brush. Some observers reported that smoke generators also were being used. Fires doused by rain showers were rekindled. Maritime air that frequently stagnated over the battlefront, added sea haze and moisture to the smoke and produced smog. On a number of days—varying from sector to sector—rain, haze, fog, smog, and particularly smoke hampered ground and air observation, the delivery of air strikes, and the adjustment of artillery fire.[19]

Though the smoke was intended to shield daylight troop movements, there

[16] I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Rad, CICCG 4–3, CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army, 10 Apr 51; Eighth Army PIRs 263–279, 1–17 Apr 51.

[17] I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Eighth Army PIRs 273–282, 11–20 Apr 51; the following Rads from CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army: CICCG 4–4, 11 Apr 51, CICCG 4–5, 12 Apr 51, CICCG 4–6, 13 Apr 51, CICCG 4–7, 14 Apr 51, CICCG 4–8, 15 Apr 51, CICCG 4–9, 16 Apr 51, CICCG 4–11, 18 Apr 51, and CICCG 4–13, 20 Apr 51.

[18] The smoke, first noticed about 9 April, apparently was not mentioned on the 13th when General Ridgway, just before transferring to Tokyo, canvassed corps commanders for recent evidence of enemy offensive preparations.

[19] Of seventy close support sorties dispatched on one day, all but fourteen had to be aborted because of smoke in the target areas. Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Eighth Army G2 SS Rpt, Sum, Apr 51; Tech Rpt, *Weather Effect on Army Operations: Weather in the Korean Conflict*, vol. II, p. XII–1; Rad, CICCG 4–8, CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army, 15 Apr 51; Rad, IXCCG 56, CG IX Corps to CG Eighth Army, 16 Apr 51; Rads, X 18493, X 18505, and X 18523, CG X Corps to CG Eighth Army, 16, 17, and 18 Apr 51, respectively; Eighth Army PIR 285, 23 Apr 51.

was not much evidence that enemy forces were moving toward the front. During the last three days of the advance to line Utah the 65th Infantry captured a member of the *181st Division*, part of the *60th Army* of the *III Army Group*. Two captives taken by the 24th and 25th Divisions were from different regiments of the *81st Division*, which belonged to the *27th Army* of the *IX Army Group*. One of the latter told his captors that his unit would be committed to offensive operations after the *27th Army* finished relieving the *26th*. By 20 April these three prisoners and the sprinkling of Chinese discovered above the Imjin were the only indications that fresh forces might have moved forward under the smoke.[20]

To give some order of probability to the opening of the expected enemy offensive, Eighth Army G–2 Tarkenton advised General Van Fleet on 18 April that a "survey of all sources," while failing to indicate conclusively any specific date or period for the initial attack, pointed to 20 April through 1 May. Tarkenton considered the latter date especially significant since it was the "most important day of the year to International Communism." Having learned that two fresh army groups (the *XIX* and *III*) were in the general Kumch'on-Koksan-Ich'on area, he believed the "greatest enemy potential" for a major attack to be from the north and northwest across the Imjin. As of the 20th, however, I Corps patrols had seen no signs of offensive preparations in this sector, nor had any evidence that the enemy was about to attack appeared elsewhere. Incoming reports to Van Fleet from corps commanders and Colonel Tarkenton's own daily intelligence summaries all described enemy forces as maintaining a "defensive attitude."[21]

Since all units were on or near their Utah and Kansas objectives, and since there was no clear sign that the impending enemy offensive would start immediately, Van Fleet elected to open the second phase of DAUNTLESS. In notifying General Ridgway that the I and IX Corps would move toward line Wyoming on 21 April, Van Fleet also proposed that the X, ROK III, and ROK I Corps attack to secure the segment of Route 24 running northeast ahead of the ROK III and I Corps to a junction with the coastal highway near the town of Kansong, twenty-three miles above Yangyang. This move would give the two South Korean corps a supply route in the higher Taebaeks, needed in particular by the ROK III Corps. To secure the road, Van Fleet wanted to hinge an advance at the eastern end of the Hwach'on Reservoir and swing the forces between the reservoir and the coast northwestward to line Alabama seven to fourteen miles above Route 24. Ridgway approved a sweep that would achieve the same end but with a substantially shorter eastern arc. Van Fleet set the 24th as the opening date.[22]

[20] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Eighth Army PIRs 280–282, 18–20 Apr 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Rad, CICCG 4–12, CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army, 19 Apr 51.

[21] Eighth Army PIRs 276–282, 14–20 Apr 51; Rad, CICCG 4–7, CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army, 14 Apr 51; Rad, X 18473, CG X Corps to CG Eighth Army, 14 Apr 51; Rad, CICCG 4–8, CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army, 15 Apr 51; Rad, X 18484, CG X Corps to CG Eighth Army, 15 Apr 51; Rad, CICCG 4–9, CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army, 16 Apr 51; Rad, IXCCG 56, CG IX Corps to CG Eighth Army, 16 Apr 51; Rads, CICCG 4–10, CICCG 4–11, CICCG 4–12, and CICCG 4–13, CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army, 17, 18, 19, and 20 Apr 51, respectively.

[22] Rad, GX–4–3900 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG

One Day's Notice

The I Corps' final DAUNTLESS objectives lay in the zones of the 25th and 24th Divisions stretching north of line Utah to Ch'orwon and Kumhwa at the base of the Iron Triangle. Ahead of the ROK 6th Division and 1st Marine Division in the IX Corps zone, line Wyoming curved southeast from the Kumhwa area to the Hwach'on Reservoir. On the 21st the two IX Corps divisions moved two to five miles above line Kansas against almost no opposition. Immediately west, the 24th Division did not test the opposition below Kumhwa but deliberately stood fast in the Kwangdok-san ridges to allow the neighboring ROK 6th Division to come abreast. In the Pogae-san heights, the 25th Division attacked toward Ch'orwon but made no substantial progress after receiving increasing artillery fire during the day and becoming involved in hard fights right at the Utah line, especially in the zone of the Turkish brigade along Route 33.[23]

Neither corps developed evidence of enemy offensive preparations during the day. The absence of opposition in the IX Corps zone only confirmed the recent patrol reports of withdrawal. Below the Iron Triangle, the resistance that began to stiffen on 19 April had been expected to grow progressively heavier as I Corps forces moved above the Utah line. On the Imjin front, daylight patrols working above the river again found only a scattering of Chinese. General Milburn concluded in an evening wrap-up report to General Van Fleet that the "enemy attitude remains defensive." [24]

The only appreciable change in enemy activity on the 21st occurred east of the Hwach'on Reservoir in the X Corps zone. North and northeast of Yanggu, 2d and 7th Division patrols, after several days of nearly fruitless searches, located several groups of six hundred to a thousand North Koreans immediately above the corps front. These groups suggested, as General Almond reported to Van Fleet, that a relief or reinforcement of enemy units was taking place.[25]

Summing up the day's findings late on the 21st, the Eighth Army G–2 reported that his information still was not firm enough to "indicate the nearness" of the impending enemy offensive with any degree of certainty. A worrisome fact, as he earlier had pointed out to General Van Fleet, was that a lack of offensive signs did not necessarily mean that the opening of the offensive was distant. In preparing past attacks, Chinese forces had successfully concealed their locations until they moved into forward assembly areas immediately before they attacked.[26]

I Corps and CG IX Corps, 19 Apr 51; Rad, G–4–3901 KCG, CG Eighth Army to CINCFE, 19 Apr 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 19 Apr 51; Rad, GX–4–3847 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA et al., 19 Apr 51; Rad, C 60648, CINCFE to CG Eighth Army, 21 Apr 51; Rad, GX–4–4497 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA et al., 22 Apr 51; Rad, GX–4–4520 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA and CG X Corps, 22 Apr 51.

[23] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Rad, IXCCG 63, CG IX Corps to CG Eighth Army, 21 Apr 51; 1st Marine Div Hist Diary, Apr 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Rad, CICCG 4–14, CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army, 21 Apr 51; 24th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; 25th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51.

[24] IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Rad, CICCG 4–14, CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army, 21 Apr 51.

[25] Rad, X 18863, CG X Corps to CG Eighth Army, 22 Apr 51.

[26] Eighth Army PIR 283, 21 Apr 51.

The first indication that the enemy would repeat this pattern appeared during the night when I Corps patrols reconnoitering above the Imjin ran into Chinese positions that were stronger and nearer the river than those encountered during past searches. There was no question that the *XIX Army Group* was setting out a covering force.[27]

More evidence appeared on the 22d as the I and IX Corps continued their DAUNTLESS advance toward line Wyoming. The progress of the attack resembled that on the previous day, IX Corps forces making easy moves of two to three miles, the two I Corps divisions being limited to shorter gains by heavier resistance. On the east flank of the advance, the Hwach'on Dam, defended so stoutly by *39th Army* forces only a few days earlier, fell to the 1st Korean Marine Corps Regiment without a fight. But a Chinese captive taken elsewhere in the 1st Marine Division zone during the afternoon told interrogators that an attack would be opened before the day was out. In midafternoon the ROK 6th Division captured several members of the Chinese *60th Division*, and, immediately west, the 24th Division took captives from the *59th Division*. These two divisions belonged to the fresh *20th Army*. The full *IX Army Group* had reached the front. In the 25th Division zone on the west flank of the advance, six Chinese who blundered into the hands of the Turkish brigade along Route 33 during the afternoon were members of a survey party from the *2d Motorized Artillery Division*. The division's guns, according to the officer in charge, were being positioned to support an attack scheduled to start after dark.[28]

For the scheduled advance to line Alabama east of the Hwach'on Reservoir, the X Corps–ROK III Corps boundary was to be shifted four miles west at noon on 23 April to give the ROK III Corps, which had been operating with only the ROK 3d Division on line, a two-division front. The III Corps reserve division, the ROK 7th, began occupying the added frontage on the 22d, its 5th Regiment relieving the 36th Regiment of the ROK 5th Division and the X Corps right early in the evening. On the 23d the incoming division's 3d Regiment was to move into a two-mile gap directly above Inje between the 5th Regiment and the 35th Regiment, now the right flank unit of the 5th Division. The latter's 36th Regiment meanwhile assembled three miles below its former position in preparation for moving west into the redrawn 5th Division zone the following day as the remainder of the ROK 7th Division came into its new area.[29]

A similar shifting of North Korean forces above the X and ROK III Corps was indicated when the ROK 5th Division, previously in contact with the *45th* Division of the North Korean *III Corps* above Inje, captured a member of the *12th Division,* North Korean *V Corps.* Farther east, the ROK 3d Division, which had had almost no contact since reach-

[27] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51.

[28] Montross, Kuokka, and Hicks, *The East-Central Front,* p. 103; Ltr, Lt Col Willard Pearson (Sr Advisor to ROK 6th Div) to Chief, KMAG, 2 May 51, sub: 6th ROK Div; Eighth Army PIR 284, 22 Apr 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Barth, *Tropic Lightning and Taro Leaf in Korea,* pp. 78–79.

[29] Rad, GX–4–3847 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA et al., 19 Apr 51; X Corps OI 156, 21 Apr 51; X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, Entry 2355, and Briefing Notes for CG, 22 Apr 51.

ing line Kansas, received hard local attacks that drove in its outposts and pressed its main line before easing in the evening of the 22d. Thus the North Korean *III Corps* could be shifting west toward the reservoir and the North Korean *V Corps* returning to the line from a point above Inje eastward.[30]

Aerial reconnaissance after daybreak on the 22d reported a general forward displacment of enemy formations from rear assemblies northwest of the I Corps and north of both the I and IX Corps, also extensive troop movements, both north and south, on the roads above Yanggu and Inje east of the Hwach'on Reservoir. Though air strikes punished the moving troops bodies, air observers reported the southward march of enemy groups with increasing frequency during the day. On the basis of the sightings west of the Hwach'on Reservoir, it appeared that the enemy forces approaching the I Corps would mass evenly across the corps front while those moving toward the IX Corps would concentrate on the front of the ROK 6th Division.[31]

Civilians entering I Corps lines from the northwest confirmed the enemy approach from that direction, and through the day British 29th Brigade forces along the Imjin observed enemy patrols investigating the north bank of the river for crossing sites. The 3d Division meanwhile found evidence that the *III Army Group* was included in the forward displacement when a patrol operating north along Route 33 above the division's right flank picked up a member of the *34th Division*, which belonged to the group's *12th Army*.[32]

At 1700, 25th Division air observers reported a long column of trucks, some towing artillery pieces, moving down Route 33 toward the Turks. Aircraft and artillery attacked the trucks until they dispersed off the road into wooded areas. By 1800 enemy foot troops were seen on Route 33 marching south in close column and just before dark were observed occupying foxholes along the sides of the road. Ten batteries of artillery kept the road and the suspected enemy artillery positions under fire.[33]

Immediately east, artillery pilots spotted enemey columns nearing 24th Division lines late in the afternoon and brought them under fire as they came within range. The approaching forces simply accepted casualties as they massed above the center of the division front. At 1900 the division commander, General Bryan, notified I Corps headquarters that he expected to be attacked in about two hours. "I think this is what we have been waiting for," he added.[34] It was. Bryan's prediction of attack on the 24th Division proved correct almost to the exact minute. The initial assault of the enemy spring offensive opened an hour earlier, however—almost as if signaled by the rise of a full moon—in the adjacent sector of the ROK 6th Division.

[30] Rad, X 18676, CG X Corps to CG Eighth Army, 22 Apr 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entries 230810 and 230817, 22 Apr 51; ibid., Sum and Entry 1000, 23 Apr 51; X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51.

[31] I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Rad, X 18676, CG X Corps to CG Eighth Army, 22 Apr 51; Eighth Army PIR 284, 22 Apr 51.

[32] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Brigadier C.N. Barclay, *The First Commonwealth Division* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden Limited, 1954), pp. 60–61; Lieutenant General Albert Crahay, *Les Belges En Coree, 1951–1955* (Brussels: Imprimerie Medicale et Scientifique [S.A.], 1967), p. 75; Captain Anthony Farrar-Hockley, *The Edge of the Sword* (London: Frederick Muller, Ltd., 1954), p. 17; 3d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Eighth Army PIR 284, 22 Apr 51.

[33] Barth, *Tropic Lightning and Taro Leaf*, p 79.

[34] I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51.

CHAPTER XXI

The Chinese Spring Offensive
The Opening

The Enemy Plan

The Air Plan

According to information accumulated by UNC intelligence, the enemy high command during the course of the New Year's offensive had decided to use the *People's Air Force* in support of future ground operations.[1] In addition to more MIG–15s, the Chinese acquired enough Ilyushin (IL–10) ground-attack planes by March to equip at least two air regiments, and they held a special air-ground training conference in Mukden. The air commander, Liu Ya-lou, meanwhile had worked to develop Korean airfields on which to base supporting aircraft. He began this project at the turn of the year after his superiors forbade him to mount massed air attacks on UNC troops and installations from Manchurian fields for fear of concerted retaliation.[2] To get the Korean air bases he needed, Liu had planned to establish air superiority over northwestern Korea and then to repair and improve air facilities in the protected region. Since the MIG–15s and IL–10s were short range aircraft, he also planned to restore forward airfields near the 38th parallel through which to stage them.[3]

Liu was handed control of the air between the Yalu and Ch'ongch'on rivers in January, when the Fifth Air Force demolished its forward fields at Kimpo and Suwon during the New Year's offensive and redeployed all jet fighters to Japan. Even by staging through other fields in southern Korea, the jets' range was too short to hold air superiority in the far northwest. Only in the first week of March was the Suwon field sufficiently repaired to allow jets to stage through it and reenter MIG Alley, and only at the end of the month could the Fifth Air Force compete with Liu's forces on near even terms.

[1] In assessing their New Year's offensive, the Chinese reportedly attributed its failure largely to the absence or air support. With strong air support, a Chinese special aviation group concluded, "we could have driven the enemy into the sea." See Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, p. 265.

[2] General Ridgway received authority for precisely such retaliation in late April. The Joint Chiefs of Staff told him: "he might now use United States forces within his command to conduct high altitude reconnaissance of enemy air bases in Manchuria and on the Shantung Peninsula, and further, that if United Nations forces in Korea were subjected to major enemy air attacks from outside Korea, he could at his discretion, and without the necessity of securing prior approval of the JCS, or higher authority, attack enemy air bases in the areas mentioned above." See MS, Ridgway, The Korean War, Issues and Policies, p. 163.

[3] The information in this subsection is based on Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, pp. 265–78.

Enemy troops and civilian labor forces meanwhile began rehabilitating airfield runways and constructing revetments for aircraft. Under the MIG umbrella in the northwest they improved fields at Sinuiju, Uiju, and Sinanju. Outside the MIG cover they worked on a cluster of fields in and around P'yongyang, the fields at Wonsan and Yonp'o on the east coast, and four forward fields on the Hwanghae peninsula below P'yongyang.

Far East Air Forces reconnaissance discovered Liu's work in February. Bomber Command prepared plans for attacks on the fields, but Brig. Gen. James E. Briggs (who had replaced General O'Donnell in January) believed the fields could not be destroyed once and for all because of the large repair crews available to the enemy high command. He elected to withhold B–29 strikes until the fields were about to become operational. He intended to bomb the fields out of action at that time and to keep them neutralized with attacks just heavy enough and frequent enough to offset repairs. Aerial photographs showed the fields almost ready to receive aircraft near mid-April, and Briggs delivered repeated attacks between the 17th and 23d, concentrating on the forward fields and those in and around P'yongyang. The strikes stymied Liu's plans and preparations. At least there would be no air support during the spring offensive.

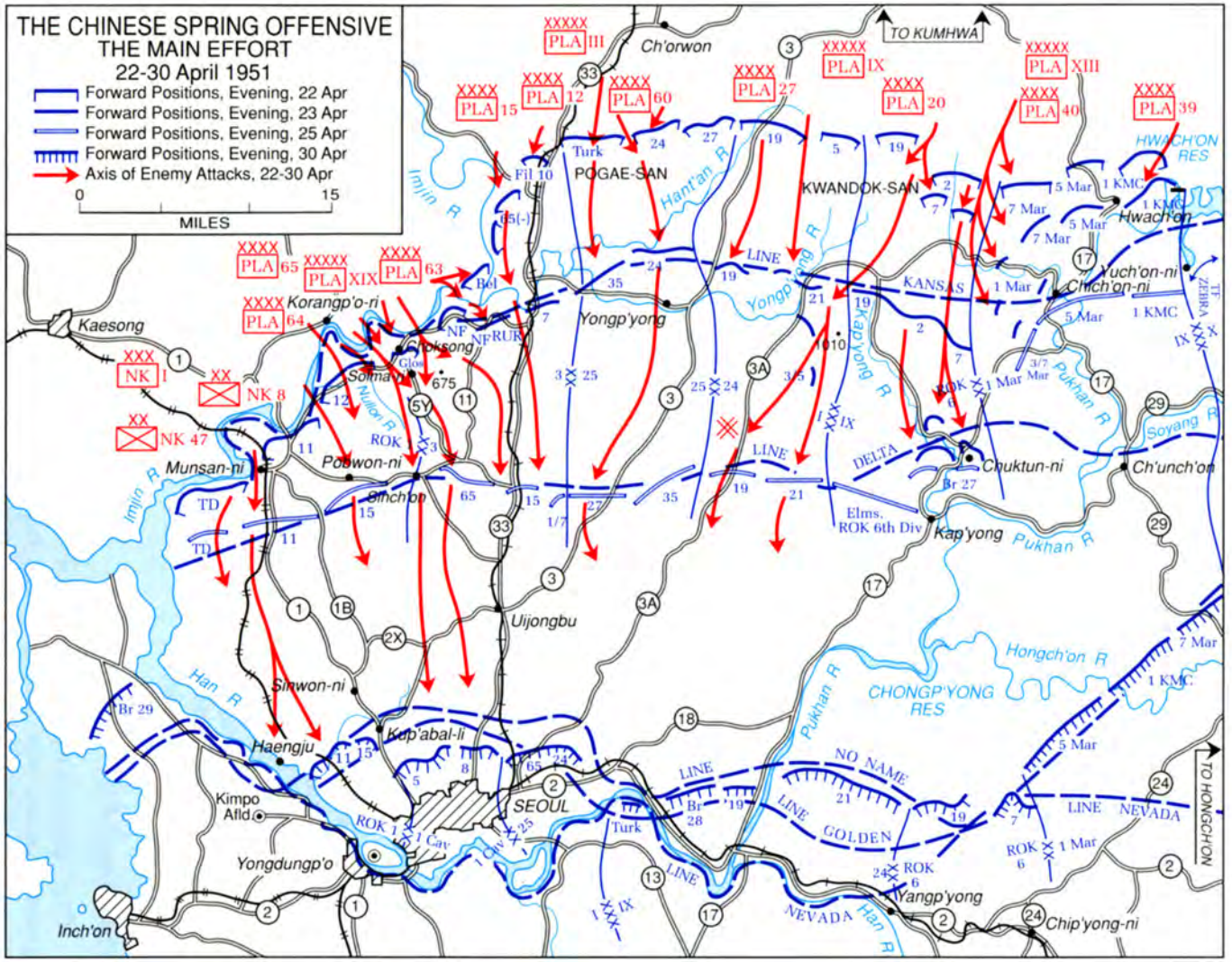
The Ground Plan

The immediate objective of the ground attack was Seoul, whose capture Peng Teh-huai reportedly promised to Mao Tse-tung as a May Day gift. Peng planned to converge on the city, employing principally his fresh *III*, *IX* and *XIX Army Groups*, a force of about two hundred seventy thousand men. From above the Imjin on the west wing of the main effort, the *XIX Army Group* was to attack southeast toward Seoul, crossing the river on a twelve-mile front centered on the Korangp'o-ri bend and advancing on the capital through a narrowing zone between Routes 1 and 33. *(Map 32)* The group commander, Yang Teh-chih, planned to cross the Imjin with two armies, the *64th* between Route 1 and the town of Korangp'o-ri, the *63d* between Korangp'o-ri and the confluence of the Imjin and Hant'an rivers. Yang's deployment would pit the *64th Army* against the bulk of the ROK 1st Division and the *63d Army* against the British 29th Brigade occupying the left half of the 3d Infantry Division's sector.[4]

Out of the ground between the Imjin and Ch'orwon, the *III Army Group* was to advance south on the Route 33 axis, its three armies attacking abreast in columns of divisions. Nearest the Imjin, the *15th Army* had a narrow zone between the river and Route 33 projecting through the area occupied by the 65th Infantry. Along Route 33 and east of it, the *12th Army* and *60th Army* at group center and left were to attack through ground held by the Philippine 10th Battalion Combat Team on the right flank of the 3d Division and through the Pogae-san ridges occupied by the Turkish brigade and 24th Infantry in the sector of the 25th Infantry Division.[5]

[4] Griffith, *The Chinese People's Liberation Army*, p. 162; USAFFE Intel Dig, no. 96, 16–28 Feb 53; I Corps Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, April 1951, copy in CMH.

[5] USAFFE Intel Dig, no. 1, 1–31 Dec 52.


THE CHINESE SPRING OFFENSIVE
THE MAIN EFFORT
22-30 April 1951
Forward Positions, Evening, 22 Apr
Forward Positions, Evening, 23 Apr
Forward Positions, Evening, 25 Apr
Forward Positions, Evening, 30 Apr
Axis of Enemy Attacks, 22-30 Apr
0
15
MILES
TO KUMHWA
Ch'orwon
POGAE-SAN
KWANDOK-SAN
HWACH'ON RES
Hwach'on
Yuch'on-ni
Chich'on-ni
KANSAS LINE
Yongp'yong
Kaesong
Korangp'o-ri
Chiksong
Solma
Munsan-ni
Pobwon-ni
Chinch'on
Uijongbu
Sinwon-ni
Kup'abal-li
Haengju
Kimpo Afld
SEOUL
Yongdungp'o
Inch'on
Chuktun-ni
Ch'unch'on
Kap'yong
DELTA LINE
Elms, ROK 6th Div
Hongch'on R
CHONGP'YONG RES
NO NAME LINE
GOLDEN LINE
NEVADA LINE
Yangp'yong
Chip'yong-ni
TO HONGCHON
Imjin R
Han R
Pukhan R
Soyang R
Yongp'yong R
Hant'an R
Nuilon R

MAP 32

On the left of the main effort, the *IX Army Group* was to advance southwest out of the Kumhwa area, guiding on Route 3. Sung Shih-lun, the group commander, set the *27th Army* on his right for an attack astride Route 3. The *27th* thus initially would be advancing in a zone centered on the boundary between the 25th and 24th Divisions. Similarly, the *20th Army* on the group's left would attack athwart the I–IX Corps boundary through portions of the 24th Division and ROK 6th Division sectors.[6]

Peng's plan included auxiliary attacks along each flank of the main effort and another east of the Hwach'on Reservoir. In the west, the North Korean *I Corps* was to move southeast toward Seoul over Route 1 and through the ground between the road and the Han River, but its leading forces displacing forward from behind the Yesong River would not reach the Imjin in time to participate in the opening attack on the ROK 1st Division. In the area adjacent to the Hwach'on Dam, the somewhat worn *39th* and *40th Armies* of the *XIII Army Group* were to assist with holding attacks on either side of Route 17 in the eastern portion of the ROK 6th Division's sector and the sector of the 1st Marine Division.[7]

In what would be essentially a separate effort east of the Hwach'on Reservoir, North Korean forces were to strike for Yanggu and Inje, where breakthroughs could open up Routes 29 and 24 leading southwestward to Ch'unch'on and Hongch'on. The North Korean *III Corps*, whose *1st*, *15th*, and *45th Divisions* had been holding the entire eastern front except for the coastal area, had sidestepped westward into a narrow zone abutting on the reservoir for the attack in the Yanggu area. Moving south through the upper Soyang River valley from its assembly at Komisong, the North Korean *V Corps* had deployed in the vacated ground for the attack toward Inje. The *V Corps* commander, General Pang, chose to attack with his seasoned, if understrength, *6th* and *12th Divisions*, keeping in reserve the *32d*, a nearly full strength but green division that had replaced the *7th* while the corps was in Komisong.[8] *III Corps* commander General Yu elected a different course, committing only the *45th Division* in what would be its first offensive of the war, perhaps because it had the virtue of eighty-six hundred men, more than twice the strength of either of Yu's other divisions. The deployment of the *45th Division* set it against the 23d Infantry of the 2d Division at the edge of the reservoir above Yanggu and the 17th and 32d Infantry Regiments of the 7th Division in the adjacent ground to the east. On the opposite wing of the North Korean effort, the *6th Division* faced the ROK 3d Division. At center, the *12th Division* was poised for an attack in a zone straddling the X Corps–ROK III Corps boundary and leading directly to Inje.[9]

Panic at the IX Corps Left

During the afternoon of 22 April, IX

[6] USAFFE Intel Dig, no. 99, 16–31 Jan 53.

[7] Hq, FEC, History of the North Korean Army, 31 Jul 52; USAFFE Intel Dig, no. 115, 1–15 Feb 53.

[8] The North Korean *7th Division*, which had been reduced to about regimental strength during recent operations, was transferred to the *VII Corps* in the Wonsan area.

[9] GHQ, FEC, Order of Battle Information, North Korean Army, 20 Aug 51 and 16 Sep 51; Hq, FEC, History of the North Korean Army, 31 Jul 52; Eighth Army PIR 284, 22 Apr 51.

Corps airborne artillery observers located and brought down fire on a large enemy force concentrated ahead of the ROK 6th Division. Anticipating an attack, General Chang halted his division's advance toward line Wyoming about 1600 and ordered his forward regiments, the 19th and 2d, to develop defensive positions tied in with each other and with the 24th Division and 1st Marine Division on their respective outside flanks. Chang moved his reserve 7th Regiment into supporting positions immediately behind the 2d Regiment, ahead of which more enemy forces had been observed than ahead of the 19th Regiment. Placing reserves so close to the front went against the recommendation of his KMAG adviser, but Chang intended that this show of support would counter uneasiness that had begun to spread among his line forces at word of a probable Chinese attack.[10]

General Hoge moved three corps artillery units forward during the afternoon to help the 1st Marine Division and, in particular, to reinforce the support being given the ROK 6th Division by the New Zealand artillery; Company C, 2d Chemical Mortar Battalion; and the division's own 27th Field Artillery Battalion. The corps' latest ground gains had opened Route 17 in the 1st Marine Division's sector far enough north to allow use of a twisting, narrowly confined valley road branching west off Route 17 near the village of Chich'on-ni into the ROK 6th Division's rear area. The 92d Armored Field Artillery Battalion moved up Route 17 and out the minor road to the west edge of the Marine sector from where its 155-mm. self-propelled howitzers could support both the marines and the South Koreans. The 987th Armored Field Artillery Battalion and 2d Rocket Field Artillery Battery, both equipped with 105-mm. howitzers, used the winding valley road to reach the right half of the ROK sector, where they took position behind the 7th Regiment near the South Korean artillery and American 4.2-inch mortars.[11]

For reasons that never became clear, the 2d and 19th Regiments failed to develop the defensive positions ordered by General Chang. With numerous gaps and open outside flanks, the division front was vulnerable to infiltration, and the nearby reserves were almost as subject to attack as were the forward units. Forces of the *60th Division, 20th Army*, hit Chang's lines about 2000. Without artillery support and with little other supporting fire, van units of the *179th Regiment, 60th Division*, struck the inside battalion of the 2d Regiment. Forces following punched through a central gap, some veering west and east behind the 19th and 2d Regiments, others continuing south toward the 7th Regiment. Within minutes both line regiments were in full flight. Caught up in the rush of troops from the 2d Regiment, the 7th Regiment joined the wild retreat. Abandoned weapons, vehicles, and equipment littered vacated positions and lines of drift as the South Koreans streamed south, east, and west,

[10] Eighth Army AG File, 6 ROK Div, 1951, a special file of correspondence and reports on the operations of the ROK Division, 22–24 Apr 51; Interv, Appleman with Lt Col Thomas E. Bennett, KMAG Advisor to 7th Regt, ROK 6th Div, in CMH; Eighth Army POR, 22 Apr 51.

[11] IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Rad, IXACT–1288, CG IX Corps to CG IX Corps Arty, 14 Apr 51; Eighth Army AG File, 6 ROK Div, 1951; Gugeler, *Combat Actions in Korea*, p. 155.

rapidly uncovering the fire support units.[12]

The New Zealand artillery supporting the 19th Regiment in the west managed to withdraw with guns and equipment intact down the Kap'yong River valley to a position four miles north of the British 27th Brigade assembled near Kap'yong town. To the east, Chinese following the 2d and 7th Regiments caught the ROK 27th Field Artillery Battalion in position. Under fire, its members abandoned guns and joined the southerly surge of infantrymen. The American support units pulled out all weapons and equipment but came under fire as they moved east on their narrow access road to join the 92d Armored Field Artillery Battalion. Hampered further by ROK troops, trucks, and paraphernalia cluttering and finally blocking the poor road, Company C, 2d Chemical Mortar Battalion, and the 2d Rocket Field Artillery Battery reached the 92d with none of their principal weapons, the 987th Armored Field Artillery Battalion with about half its equipment.[13]

Having lost radio and wire communications with his regimental commanders soon after the panic began, General Chang was hard pressed to regain control of his forces, even when they outdistanced the Chinese pursuit after midnight. Traveling rear areas throughout the night, Chang and his staff established a degree of order near dawn, collecting about twenty-five hundred members of his three regiments some ten miles south of the division's original front.[14] To the same depth, the South Korean rout had peeled open the flanks of the 24th Division and 1st Marine Division to the west and east.

At the first indication of the South Korean retreat, the 1st Marine Division commander, General Smith, had begun to shore up his left flank, drawing a battalion from the 1st Marines in reserve near Ch'unch'on and sending it out the valley road from Chich'on-ni to establish defenses tied in with the 92d Armored Field Artillery Battalion. En route aboard trucks before midnight, the 1st Battalion struggled west against a current of retreating South Koreans and scarcely managed to establish a position before dawn.[15]

Operating in a zone coinciding with the eastern third of the ROK 6th Division sector and the western edge of the Marine sector, the *40th Army* of the *XIII Army Group* was well situated to exploit the exposed Marine flank. The *120th Division* at the army's left, in particular, had virtually the entire night to move deep into the vacated ROK sector and sweep behind the Marine front. But, either unaware of the opportunity to envelop the marines or, more likely, unable to change course rapidly, the *120th* attempted only local frontal assaults on the 7th Marines west of Hwach'on town, none of which penetrated or forced a withdrawal. Farther east, forces of the *115th Division, 39th Army*, penetrated the 1st Korean Marine Corps Regiment above the Hwach'on Dam and slashed southwestward to occupy heights commanding the town of Hwach'on in the 5th Marines' central sector; American

[12] IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Eighth Army AG File, 6 ROK Div, 1951.

[13] Wood, *Strange Battleground*, pp. 73–74; Eighth Army AG File, 6 ROK Div, 1951; 1st Lt. Martin Blumenson, "Artillery in Perimeter Defense, April 1951," copy in CMH.

[14] Eighth Army AG File, 6 ROK Div, 1951.

[15] 1st Marine Div Hist Diary, 22–23 Apr 51; Montross, Kuokka, and Hicks, *The East-Central Front*, pp. 104–05.

and ROK counterattacks eliminated this penetration near dawn, and the *115th* made no further attempt to take the dam or town.[16]

Eager to close ranks as the IX Corps front quieted after daylight on the 23d, General Hoge ordered the ROK 6th Division to occupy positions on line Kansas, which was some three miles north of the area in which General Chang was reassembling his forces. The 1st Marine Division was to pull back against the Pukhan River to a line anchored near the Hwach'on Dam and curving southwest to a juncture with the South Koreans.[17] Manning the long curve would compel General Smith to commit his entire division, and even then he would not be able to set up a solid front. And General Chang faced no small task in recovering troops who had scattered east and west into adjacent sectors, reorganizing his entire division, and then moving his nervous forces north toward the enemy. But the adjustments, if achieved, would retain control of the Hwach'on Dam, eliminate the marines' open left flank, and join the two IX Corps divisions with a minimum of movement.

Below Ch'orwon and Kumhwa

At the right of the I Corps, the *59th Division, 20th Army*, though kept under artillery fire while massing in the Kwandok-san ridges below Kumhwa, struck hard at the center of the 24th Division. Leading forces opened a gap between the 19th and 5th Infantry Regiments; reinforcements widened the attack but concentrated on moving through the gap and down a ridge behind the inside battalion of the 19th Infantry. Pressure on the adjacent battalion of the 5th Infantry forced it to withdraw almost a mile. Quick to follow, Chinese reengaged the battalion within an hour.[18]

Regimental reserves took up blocking positions on the flanks of the enemy penetration and helped to confine it, but General Bryan's attempt to move part of his reserve 21st Infantry from line Kansas north onto high ground at the point of penetration failed when Chinese occupied the ground first. By daylight the Chinese drove almost three miles through the center of the division. Bryan withdrew his line regiments down the sides of the enemy wedge into positions below it, where, though kept under pressure at center, they were able to stand. Meanwhile, on learning of the ROK 6th Division's retreat on his right, Bryan set the 21st Infantry in blocking positions along the endangered flank. The Eighth Army Ranger Company, attached to the 21st, patrolled east in search of Chinese approaching the flank but made no contact.[19]

In the Pogae-san ridges below Ch'orwon, the *2d Motorized Artillery Division* prepared the way for infantry attacks on the 25th Division with a three-hour bombardment, dropping most of its fire on the Turkish brigade along Route 33. On the east wing of the *III Army Group*, the *179th Division, 60th Army*, attacked behind the fire about midnight, its bulk hitting the Turks, some forces spilling over against the 24th Infantry at division center. The latter bent back the left of the 24th's

[16] 1st Marine Div Hist Diary, 23 Apr 51; Montross, Kuokka, and Hicks, *The East-Central Front*, pp. 105–07.
[17] Rad, IXACT–1330, CG IX Corps to CG 1st Marine Div et al., 23 Apr 51.
[18] I Corps Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, Apr 51; 24th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51.
[19] Ibid.

line while the forces attacking the Turkish position penetrated at several points and so intermingled themselves that artillery units supporting the brigade were forced to stop firing lest they hit Turks as well as Chinese. Further fragmented by persistent attacks through the night, the Turkish position by morning consisted mainly of surrounded or partially surrounded company perimeters, and Chinese penetrating between the Turks and the curled-back left flank of the 24th Infantry moved almost two miles behind the division's front. Ahead of the 27th Infantry on the division's right, enemy forces (apparently the westernmost forces of the *27th Army*) massed and began their approach at first light, but heavy defensive fire shattered the formation within half an hour, and the Chinese attempted no further attack on the regiment.[20]

Near dawn General Bradley ordered the 24th and 27th Infantry Regiments to withdraw two miles and instructed the Turkish brigade to leave the line and reorganize south of the Hant'an River. The 35th Infantry came out of reserve to take over the Turkish sector. The Turks fought their way off the front during the morning and, except for one company that had been virtually wiped out, assembled below the Hant'an in better condition than Bradley had expected. The Chinese followed neither the Turks nor the two regiments, and the division sector quieted as Bradley developed his new line.[21]

[20] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 22 Apr 51; 25th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; I Corps Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, Apr 51.

[21] 25th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; I Corps Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, Apr 51.

Along the Imjin

General Soule considered the 3d Division's front along the Imjin between Korangp'o-ri and Route 33 to be particularly vulnerable to attack, not only because the line was long and thin with gaps between defensive positions but also because it lay generally alongside and at no great distance from Route 33, his main axis of communications. The 65th Infantry and the attached Philippine 10th Battalion Combat Team occupied the right half of the line, with the Filipinos on the outside flank athwart Route 33 and the 2d and 3d Battalions facing northwest and west along the Imjin. In regimental reserve, the 1st Battalion was located along Route 33 just above the Hant'an River.[22]

The British 29th Brigade with the Belgian battalion attached held the remainder of the division's line. The 1st Battalion of The Gloucestershire regiment (Glosters) anchored the brigade's left flank astride minor Route 5Y near the villages of Choksong and Solma-ri. The right flank of the ROK 12th Regiment, the nearest position of the ROK 1st Division, was a mile to the southwest. Northeast of the Glosters, beyond two miles of unoccupied hills, the 1st Battalion, Royal Northumberland Fusiliers, held a central position below the lower arm of the right-angle bend in the Imjin. At the brigade's right, the Belgian battalion occupied Hill 194, a low mass located above the Imjin inside the right-angle bend. Placing the battalion above the river entailed a risk, at least to Belgian vehicles. Although the Imjin behind Hill 194 was fordable, the east bank in that area was almost vertical. Vehicular movement to and from the

[22] 3d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51.

position followed secondary Route 11, the 29th Brigade's supply road to the south, and depended on two ponton bridges, one crossing the Hant'an near its mouth, the other spanning the Imjin a half mile farther west. The only alternate route was a rudimentary track that followed the upper bank of the Hant'an and connected with Route 33, and its use depended on the Imjin span. Both bridges were vulnerable to enemy action, resting as they did in a mile-wide gap between the Belgians and fusiliers. Reserves available to the 29th Brigade included the 1st Battalion, Royal Ulster Rifles, and the 52-ton Centurion tanks of C Squadron, 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars. Both units were centrally located along Route 11.[23]

Looking at the 3d Division's line as the Chinese might see it, General Soule believed the most vulnerable point was the Imjin angle: a penetration there could easily cut Route 33 and imperil the 65th Infantry north of the cut. Because of this danger the British had set the Belgian battalion above the river inside the angle. Without the 15th Infantry, which was in corps reserve, Soule clustered what reserves he had behind the Imjin east of the Belgians. He set the 2d Battalion of the 7th Infantry and the 64th Tank Battalion just above the Hant'an, principally to thicken the central position, and the remainder of the 7th Infantry below the Hant'an for possible employment either north in the 65th Infantry's sector or west in the British sector.[24]

Vanguards of the *34th Division, 12th Army*, and *29th Division, 15th Army*, opened stinging assaults on the 65th Infantry about midnight, driving one company of the Philippine 10th Battalion Combat Team off position almost immediately. Through the remainder of the night the two enemy divisions failed to reinforce their attacks beyond replacing losses, and they made no further gains. The attacks subsided after an early morning Filipino counterattack recovered the ground lost in the initial assaults. But the withdrawal of the Turkish brigade then under way to the east was uncovering the 65th's right flank, and the regiment's position, as General Soule had anticipated, was also threatened by *XIX Army Group* attacks on the British 29th Brigade to the southwest.[25]

Patrols of the *187th Division, 63d Army*, approached the three battalions on the British front near midnight on the 22d. Entering the gap between the Northumberland Fusiliers and Belgians, a large patrol moved along the Imjin on the Belgian side of the river, passed by a Belgian listening post below Hill 194, and continued east toward the two unguarded bridges on the Belgian access route. On receiving the Belgians' report of the patrol at brigade headquarters, Brigadier Brodie sent a motorized detachment from the Ulster battalion to secure the bridges, but while moving up Route 11 to the Hant'an crossing the detachment drove into an ambush and was all but wiped out.[26]

[23] Ibid.; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Barclay, *The First Commonwealth Division*, p. 62; Crahay, *Les Belges En Coree*, pp. 60, 74, 80; Ltr, CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army, 15 May 51, sub: Report of Gloucestershire Battalion, 22–25 Apr 51, Incl 3 (reserves).

[24] 3d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Ltr, CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army, 15 May 51, sub: Report of Gloucestershire Battalion, 22–25 Apr 51, Incl 3 (reserves).

[25] 3d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51.

[26] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 22 Apr 51; Crahay, *Les Belges En Coree*, pp. 75–76; 3d Div POR 158, 22 Apr 51; 3d Div G3 Jnl, Entries 2 and 24, 23 Apr 51.

A Chinese force following the patrol split as it reached Hill 194, some members turning to attack the Belgians, the remainder continuing toward the bridges. Most of the Belgian front was under assault by first light. The Chinese who bypassed Hill 194 meanwhile reached the bridges, crossed the Imjin, and attacked Company Z of the Northumberland Fusiliers on Hill 257 bordering the river almost due south of the crossings.[27]

Company Z was the right rear unit of a squarish fusilier position marked out by four widely spaced company perimeters at the corners. Well downstream from Z, Company X at the left front corner occupied Hill 152, the crest of a ridge edging the Imjin. Chinese fording the river and attacking Hill 152 forced Company X to withdraw about the same time that the attack out of the Belgian area carried Chinese inside Company Z's position on Hill 257. Thus Company Y at the right front corner, though not under assault, was precariously situated, with Chinese moving past on left and right.[28]

About daybreak, reinforcements, apparently from the *188th Division, 63d Army*, doubled the strength of the Chinese attacking the Belgians on Hill 194. A Belgian patrol slipping off the rear of the hill meanwhile confirmed that Chinese controlled the two bridges on the access route by firing from the near slopes of Hill 257. As the Chinese stepped up their attack, General Soule sent a company of the 2d Battalion, 7th Infantry, and two platoons of the 7th's tank company to reclaim the bridges and remain in support of the Belgians. Reaching the bridge area over the track along the Hant'an, the tankers found no Chinese at the crossings but came under mortar and small arms fire from Hill 257, fire which kept the following infantry at bay. One tank platoon moved to Hill 194 to reinforce the Belgians while the other deployed near the bridges and fired on Hill 257. The amount of Chinese return fire raised doubts that foot troops and wheeled vehicles could pass safely through the bridge area.[29]

Wary of a strike down Route 11 by the Chinese attacking the fusilier battalion, in particular by those attacking Company Z on Hill 257, Brigadier Brodie after daylight on the 23d organized defenses athwart the road about two miles below 257. The fusiliers withdrew to a ridge bordering Route 11 on the west while the bulk of the Royal Ulster Rifles battalion occupied positions east of the road. The Chinese, as a result, gained control of a wide expanse of ground between Brodie's new central position and the Belgians. There also remained between the fusiliers and Gloster battalions a two-mile gap, which aerial observers as early as 0830 reported Chinese to be entering. Having all but depleted brigade reserves, Brodie asked for help from General Soule, who agreed to send the 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, to establish positions be-

[27] Crahay, *Les Belges En Coree*, p. 76; Barclay, *The First Commonwealth Division*, p. 62; 3d Div G3 Jnl, Entries 27, 38, 46, 52, and 65, 23 Apr 51; 3d Div POR 159, 23 Apr 51.

[28] 3d Div G3 Jnl, Entries 2, 24, 38, 39, 46, and 52, 23 Apr 51; 3d Div POR 159, 23 Apr 51; Barclay, *The First Commonwealth Division*, p. 62.

[29] 3d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; 3d Div G3 Jnl, Entries 62, 65, 75, 97, 105, and 114, 23 Apr 51; Ltr, CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army, 15 May 51, sub: Report of Gloucestershire Battalion, 22–25 Apr 51, Incl 3 (reserves) and Incl 16 (3d Div G3 Summary of 29th BIB Action, 22–25 Apr 51); Crahay, *Les Belges En Coree*, pp. 76–79.

tween Brodie's central and left flank defenses.[30]

At the brigade's left, the Gloster battalion also had had to give ground after a hard, costly battle lasting the night. The battalion's position astride Route 5Y, as originally developed, was a set of company perimeters about a mile and half below the Imjin. From Hill 148 west of the road and Hills 182 and 144 east, Companies A, D, and B commanded long spurs sloping toward the river. Giving the position some depth was Company C, a mile behind Company D on Hill 314 below the towering crest of Kamak Mountain (Hill 675), easily the dominant height in the entire brigade area. West of Route 5Y opposite Hill 314, battalion pioneers secured Hill 235. The battalion commander, Lt. Col. James P. Carne, had set up headquarters and placed his mortars along 5Y where it bent through a valley behind Company C and just above the village of Solma-ri. After Chinese patrols were observed on the north bank of the Imjin during the day, Colonel Carne established an additional position at last light on the 22d. Certain that the Chinese had located Gloster Crossing, a ford straight ahead of his lines, since his sappers earlier had marked its course with buoys, Carne concealed sixteen men of Company C in ambush in ruined buildings at the near end of the crossing.[31]

Able to see the far bank clearly by the light of the full moon, the ambush party watched seven Chinese step into the water about 2200, allowed them to reach the near bank, then shot down all seven with a brief burst of fire. Before withdrawing to their company position after exhausting their ammunition, the sixteen Glosters defeated three more crossing attempts, killing altogether some seventy Chinese. The small force itself suffered no casualties.[32]

On the heels of the ambush party's withdrawal, a battalion of the *559th Regiment, 187th Division*, forded the river at Gloster Crossing and a mile and a half west at an underwater bridge that past Gloster reconnaissance had somehow failed to reveal. British artillery bloodied and delayed the forces at Gloster Crossing, but the Chinese approaching from the northwest were already climbing the long spurs toward Company A.[33]

Company A turned back repeated charges until almost dawn, when its fifty-eight able-bodied men lost the dominant platoon position located among the ruins of an ancient castle near the crest of Hill 148. Company D lost no important ground on Hill 182 to the Chinese attacking out of the Gloster Crossing area but also suffered high casualties. Company B on Hill 144 was no more than brushed by Chinese patrols and survived the night intact.[34]

[30] Ltr, CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army, 15 May 51, sub: Report of Gloucestershire Battalion, 22–25 Apr 51, Incl 3 (reserves); 3d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; 3d Div G3 Jnl, Entries 34 and 81, 23 Apr 51; 3d Div POR 159, 23 Apr 51.

[31] 3d Div Sit Ovlay, 22 Apr 51; E. J. Kahn, Jr., "A Reporter in Korea—No One But the Glosters," *New Yorker*, 26 May 51; Farrar-Hockley, *The Edge of the Sword*, pp. 11–13, 16–18. Captain Farrar-Hockley was the adjutant of the Gloster battalion during the battle at the Imjin.

[32] 3d Div G3 Jnl, Entry 2, 23 Apr 51; Farrar-Hockley, *The Edge of the Sword*, pp. 18–22; Robert O. Holles, *Now Thrive the Armourers* (London: George G. Harrap & Co., Ltd., 1952), p. 150.

[33] Farrar-Hockley, *The Edge of the Sword*, pp. 22–25; Holles, *Now Thrive the Armourers*, p. 150.

[34] 3d Div POR 159, 23 Apr 51; 3d Div G3 Jnl, Entry 52, 23 Apr 51; Farrar-Hockley, *The Edge of the Sword*, pp. 25–31, 36.

Colonel Carne pulled his forward companies back to the Solma-ri area shortly after daylight, covering their withdrawal with heavy mortar and artillery fire and air strikes. West of Route 5Y, much-reduced Company A occupied Hill 235 and Company D a squarish flattop hill extending east from 235 toward the position of Company C on the opposite side of the road. Company B took position just east of Company C. Under the pounding covering fire, the Chinese went to ground, either to take cover or to hold up their attack until reinforcements crossed the Imjin.[35]

Adjusting the Line

Considering the forward I Corps and IX Corps positions untenable, opened to envelopment as they were by the flight of the ROK 6th Division, General Van Fleet about midmorning on 23 April ordered General Milburn and General Hoge to withdraw and directed all corps commanders to develop defenses in depth along line Kansas. At the same time, Van Fleet canceled the advance to line Alabama which was to have been opened on the 24th by forces east of the Hwach'on Reservoir.[36]

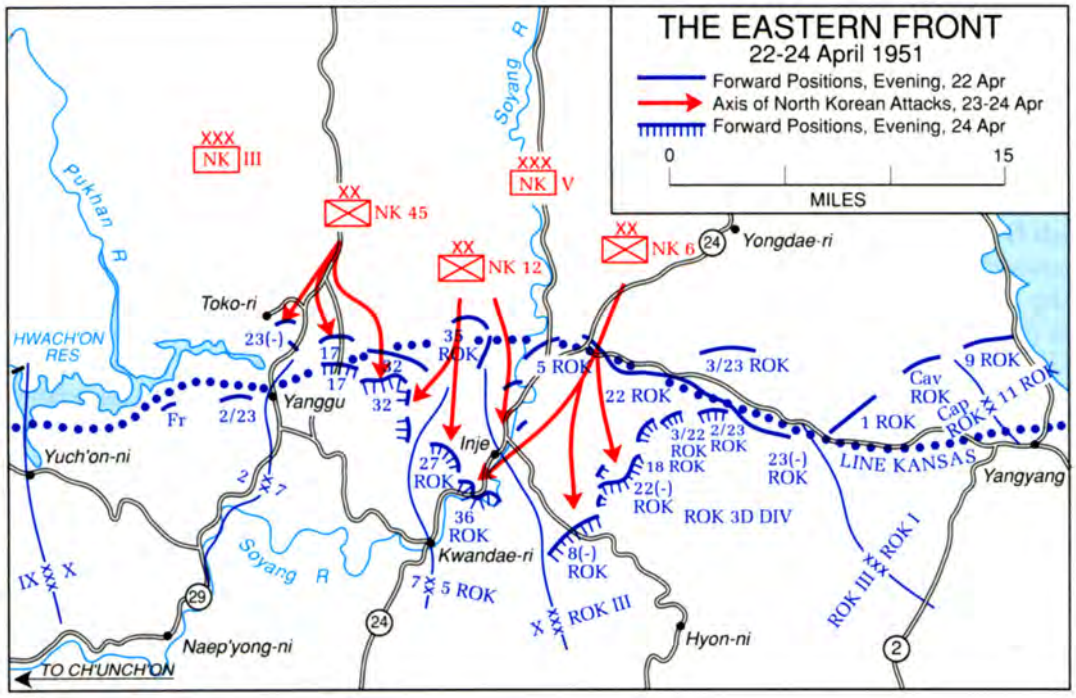
For the forces east of the reservoir, the initial task created by Van Fleet's order was to block a North Korean salient being driven into line Kansas. *(Map 33)* Above Yanggu, adjacent to the reservoir, the inexperienced North Korean *45th Division* had attacked during the night behind mortar and artillery barrages but had made only a few local gains against the 32d Infantry on the right flank of the 7th Division. On the east flank of the enemy attack, the North Korean *6th Division* was more successful in assaults on the ROK 3d Division. Forcing its left and center units to the southwest, the North Koreans by midmorning on the 23d pushed the 3d Division well back from Route 24, partially opening the way to Inje.[37]

A bigger threat to Inje materialized at the right flank of the X Corps, where the North Korean *12th Division* caught the X Corps and ROK III Corps part way through the shift of divisions required for the now canceled advance to line Alabama. The *12th Division* struck the 35th Regiment of the ROK 5th Division at midnight on the 22d and began sliding forces into the two-mile gap between the 35th and the 5th Regiment of the ROK 7th Division to the east. By first light the 35th Regiment abandoned its position and fell back in disorder almost to the Soyang River below Inje. Taken under frontal attack and threatened with encirclement by the North Koreans working through the gap, the 5th Regiment followed suit but withdrew in better order, falling back gradually while still in contact toward a line two miles above Inje. During the day, Col. Min Ki Shik, in command of the ROK 5th Division, took charge of all forces in the Inje area, which now included the 3d Regiment of the ROK 7th Division, and organized defenses above Inje generally in the area toward which the 5th Regiment was withdrawing. By evening of the 23d Colonel Min set the 27th, 36th,

[35] 3d Div G3 Jnl, Entry 74, 23 Apr 51; 3d Div POR 159, 23 Apr 51; Farrar-Hockley, *The Edge of the Sword*, pp. 30–35.

[36] Rad, GX–4–4635 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 23 Apr 51.

[37] X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; 7th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entry 1000, 23 Apr 51; Eighth Army POR, 23 Apr 51.



MAP 33

and 3d Regiments on the line while the 35th Regiment continued to reorganize behind it and the 5th Regiment continued to withdraw toward it.[38]

As the initial IX Corps step to the rear General Hoge let stand his plan to pull the 1st Marine Division onto a line curving from the Hwach'on Dam southwestward along the Pukhan River and to push the ROK 6th Division north onto line Kansas. The marines occupied their arching line, designated Pendleton, by late afternoon, the 1st Marines taking up widely separated battalion positions on the division's left to refuse the flank and stretch the line toward the planned connection with the South Koreans. With all regiments on line, the division faced as much to the west as to the north. The 92d Armored Field Artillery Battalion and the units that had joined it after scrambling out of the ROK 6th Division's sector withdrew to the vicinity of Chich'on-ni, where the bulk of the Marine division's artillery, the 11th Marines, was clustered. General Hoge directed the 92d, which absorbed the members of the weaponless 2d Rocket Field Artillery Battery, and the half-equipped 987th Field Artillery Battalion to reinforce the fires of the 11th Marines. Company C, 2d Chemical Mortar Battalion, out of action for lack of weap-

[38] X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Eighth Army PIR 285, 23 Apr 51; Eighth Army G3 Entries 1405, 1500, 2130, 240905, and 240940, 23 Apr 51, and Briefing Notes for CG; Eighth Army POR, 23 Apr 51.

ons and equipment, left the division sector for refurbishing.[39]

Since the ROK 6th Division had lost its artillery support during the debacle of the previous night, General Hoge directed the British 27th Brigade to recommit the New Zealand artillery and transferred the 213th Field Artillery Battalion from a reinforcing mission in the Marine sector to support the South Koreans. During the afternoon the New Zealand unit, accompanied by the Middlesex battalion for protection, moved up the valley of the Kap'yong River while the 213th circled out of the Marine sector and moved up the valley of a Kap'yong tributary in the eastern portion of the South Korean sector.[40]

Meanwhile, as the day wore on, the move of the ROK 6th Division north to line Kansas appeared less and less probable. Still reorganizing the division at midday, General Chang informed corps headquarters that he would have his forces on the line by 1700. But as that hour approached, no part of the division had yet moved forward.[41]

Wary of another failing performance by Chang's division, General Hoge in midafternoon ordered the British 27th Brigade to block the Kap'yong River valley behind the South Koreans to prevent enemy forces from coursing down the valley and cutting Route 17 at Kap'yong town. Brigadier Burke was to establish the blocking position along the trace of line Delta four miles north of town where the Kap'yong River flowing from the northwest was joined by the tributary from the northeast just above a large bend turning the Kap'yong southwest toward the Pukhan. From hill masses rising on either side of the junction of the Kap'yong and its tributary the commonwealth forces could cover both valley approaches.[42]

Burke organized the block with the 3d Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, and 2d Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, setting the Australians in the Hill 504 mass on the right to block the valley approach from the northeast, the Canadians on the crest and slopes of Hill 677 to control the Kap'yong valley. Four American units—all but one platoon of Company A, 72d Tank Battalion; Company B, 2d Chemical Mortar Battalion; and Companies B and C, 74th Engineer Combat Battalion—moved up in support, the tankers taking position with the Australians, the mortarmen setting up in a small lateral valley behind Hill 504. The engineers bivouacked along the Kap'yong about a mile in rear of the blocking position.[43]

The artillery battalions assigned by

[39] 1st Marine Div Hist Diary, Apr 51; Montross, Kuokka, and Hicks, *The East-Central Front*, pp. 110–13; After Action Intervs, Blumenson, "Artillery in Perimeter Defense"; 1st Marine Div POR no. 230, 23 Apr 51; Rad, IX ART–68, CG IX Corps to COs 987th FA Bn, 92d AFA Bn, and 11th Marine Regt, 23 Apr 51.

[40] Rads, IX ACT–1338 and IX-ACT 1330, CG IX Corps to CG 27th BCB and CG 1st Marine Div, respectively, 23 Apr 51; After Action Intervs, 1st Lt. Martin Blumenson, "Tanks Above Kap'yong," Intervs with Maj Don W. Black, Asst S3, IX Corps Arty, and Capt Blaine Johnson, Asst S3, 213th FA Bn.

[41] Ltr, Brig Gen George B. Peploe, IX Corps CofS, to CG Eighth Army, 5 May 51, sub: Report on Disintegration of the 6th ROK Division in Military Operations During the Period 22–24 April 1951, in Eighth Army AG File, 6 ROK Div (1 May), 1951.

[42] Rad, IX ACT–1338, CG IX Corps to CG 27th BCB, 23 Apr 51.

[43] Ibid.; Rad, IX ACT–1340, CG IX Corps to CG 27th BCB, 23 Apr 51; After Action Intervs, Blumenson, "Tanks Above Kap'yong," Intervs with 1st Lt Kenneth W. Koch, CO, Co A, 72d Tank Bn, and Maj Wade H. Padgett, S3, 74th Engr Cmbt Bn; N. Bartlett, ed., *With the Australians in Korea* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1954), pp. 91–92; Wood, *Strange Battleground*, pp. 74–75; Barclay, *The First Commonwealth Division*, p. 68.



ON THE 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION FRONT *south of Ch'orwon, 23 April 1951.*

General Hoge to support the ROK 6th Division were still moving into position when reports reaching corps headquarters indicated that General Chang had given up attempts to move his division to the Kansas line and had deployed in the vicinity of his assembly area. Doubtful that the division was in position or condition to perform better than it had the night before and thus fearful that the supporting battalions were out on a limb, the corps artillery officer authorized the 213th Field Artillery Battalion to withdraw behind the 27th Brigade's blocking position at the first sign of another ROK rout. Alerted to the possibility of a repeat performance by the South Koreans, Brigadier Burke prepared to pull out the New Zealanders and Middlesex battalion and at dark placed the forces at the blocking position on a 50 percent alert.[44]

General Chang's failure to place the 6th Division on line Kansas also left the 1st Marine Division vulnerable. Its long front along the Pukhan was protected on the east by the barrier of the Hwach'on Reservoir, and its west flank was no longer wide open as it had been the night before, but the nearest solid

[44] Ltr, Peploe to CG Eighth Army, 5 May 51; sub: Report on Disintegration of the 6th ROK Division in Military Operations During the Period 22–24 April 1951, and Overlay, Disposition of 6th ROK Div, 231800 Apr 51, both in Eighth Army AG File, 6 ROK Div (1 May), 1951; After Action Intervs, Blumenson, "Tanks Above Kap'yong," Intervs with Black and Johnson; Barclay, *The First Commonwealth Division, p. 67; Bartlett, With the Australians in Korea*, p. 94.



FORCES OF THE 24TH INFANTRY DIVISION WITHDRAWING TO LINE KANSAS

position was that of the 27th Brigade above Kap'yong. The intervening seven-mile gap offered the Chinese an open southeastward shot at Ch'unch'on and the intersection of Routes 17 and 29 and thus an opportunity to envelop the marines or at least cut their lines of communications. Balancing this risk against that of a nighttime withdrawal that probably would have to be made while under attack, General Hoge directed the Marine division to withdraw to line Kansas the following morning. This move would shorten the front enough for the bulk of one regiment to be taken off the line and sent south to defend Ch'unch'on.[45]

Along the eastern portion of the I Corps line, the 25th Division, whose front had quieted after daylight on the 23d, was on line Kansas by midafternoon. The 35th and 24th Infantry Regiments reoccupied the division's former positions on the ridges between the Hant'an and Yongp'yong rivers while the 27th Infantry and Turkish brigade assembled immediately behind the Yongp'yong. At the far corps right, Chinese maintained pressure against the center of the 24th Division, mainly against the 19th Infantry, and attempted to follow the division's withdrawal but gave up after suffering heavy casualties to the covering artillery fire. The division occupied line Kansas about 1800, the 19th and 21st Infantry Regiments on left and right, the 5th

[45] Rad, IX ACT–1339, CG IX Corps to CG 1st Marine Div, 23 Apr 51; Montross, Kuokka, and Hicks, *The East-Central Front,* p. 117.



MEN OF THE 65TH INFANTRY, 3D INFANTRY DIVISION, WITHDRAWING FROM LINE UTAH

Infantry in reserve about five miles behind the line. Later, on receiving word that the ROK 6th Division would not move north onto line Kansas, the 21st Infantry refused its right as far as possible with its reserve battalion, and General Bryan deepened the protection by moving a battalion of the 5th Infantry into blocking positions along the east flank.[46]

Under General Soule's plan for pulling back the 3d Division's rightmost forces, the 7th Infantry was to occupy the division's eastern sector of line Kansas. Protected on the west by the Belgian battalion, the 65th Infantry was to leapfrog off line Utah, pass through the 7th Infantry via Route 33, and assemble in division reserve near Route 33's junction with Route 11. Exactly how the Belgians would then get out of the Imjin angle was yet to be determined.[47]

The battalions of the 65th Infantry began bounding off line Utah about noon, moving easily as the Chinese opposite made no attempt to follow. Except for the tanks supporting the Belgian battalion, the division reserves stationed earlier above the Hant'an dropped below the river during the

[46] I Corps Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, Apr 51; 24th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51.

[47] 3d Div OI 15–12, 23 Apr 51.

65th's leapfrog action. No interference materialized out of the Imjin angle as the Belgians, though heavily engaged, held their ground with the assistance of air strikes and artillery and tank fire. Bringing up the regimental rear, the 3d Battalion of the 65th, reinforced by the 3d Reconnaissance Company and 64th Tank Battalion, occupied a position blocking Route 33 just above the Hant'an, which was to be held until the Belgian battalion had withdrawn from Hill 194.[48]

In considering ways to get the Belgian battalion out of the Imjin angle, Brigadier Brodie early in the afternoon proposed to General Soule that the Belgians destroy their vehicles and withdraw east across the Imjin off the back side of Hill 194. But Soule believed that the bridge area could be opened for the vehicles by attacking Hill 257 from the south. About 1400 he ordered the 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, to make the attack and instructed the Philippine 10th Battalion Combat Team, then leading the 65th Infantry off line Utah, to join the 29th Brigade and take over the 1st Battalion's previously assigned mission of occupying a position in the gap between the fusilier and Gloster battalions.[49]

In carrying out its original mission, the 1st Battalion, with a platoon of regimental tanks attached, by 1400 had moved up Route 11 behind the fusiliers, turned its three rifle companies west on a wide front, and begun sweeping the slopes rising to Hill 675, the peak of Kamak Mountain, in the gap area. It was 1800 before the commander, Lt. Col. Fred C. Weyand, could reassemble the battalion and open the attack on Hill 257 to the north. Once above the fusilier-Ulster lines, the battalion came under heavy fire from the flanks and front and had to fight off Chinese groups who attempted to knock out the supporting tanks with grenades and shaped charges. By 2000 the battalion had gained no more than a foothold in the 257 hill mass.[50]

In the Belgian withdrawal, begun as the attack on Hill 257 opened, the bulk of the battalion moved off the back side of Hill 194 and waded the Imjin under the cover of artillery fire and air strikes. Harassed by mortar fire until they ascended the steep east bank, the Belgian foot troops by 1830 were out of contact and en route east to Route 33 and then south to an assembly area to await the battalion's vehicles. In column, drivers raced the vehicles over the Imjin bridge while the 7th Infantry tankers sent to the Belgians during the morning fired on the slopes of Hill 257 to the south and the 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, moved into the hill mass from the opposite direction. Incoming fire from 257 destroyed four trucks but was generally weak. Although it had not cleared 257, Colonel Weyand's battalion apparently had distracted most of the Chinese holding the hill. Once the last vehicle had crossed the bridge about 2000, the motor column followed

[48] 3d Div G3 Jnl, Entries 112 and 143, 23 Apr 51; 3d Div POR 159, 23 Apr 51; 3d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51.

[49] 3d Div G3 Jnl, Entries 108, 110, 112, and 114, 23 Apr 51; 3d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51.

[50] 3d Div G3 Jnl, Entry 61, 24 Apr 51; Ltr, CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army, 15 May 51, sub: Report of Gloucestershire Battalion, 22–25 Apr 51, Incl 3 (reserves) and Incl 16 (3d Div G3 Summary of 29th BIB Action, 22–25 Apr 51). See also article by two participants in the Hill 257 battle, Capt. William F. Long, Jr., and Capt. Walter M. Turner, "Challenge Accepted," in *Combat Forces Journal*, January 1952, pp. 12–16.



BELGIAN TROOPS WITHDRAWING FROM THE HILL 194 AREA

the track along the Hant'an to reach Route 33. Troops and vehicles reunited, the Belgian battalion moved south and assembled near the Routes 33–11 junction.[51]

Behind the Belgians, the 3d Battalion of the 65th Infantry, 64th Tank Battalion, and 3d Reconnaissance Company left their Hant'an blocking position, the 3d Battalion joining the 7th Infantry on line Kansas, the tankers and reconnaissance troops assembling close to 3d Division headquarters near the Routes 33–11 junction. With considerable difficulty the 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, meanwhile disengaged at Hill 257 and returned to the 7th's sector of line Kansas, where it went into reserve. Ahead of all these movements, the Philippine 10th Battalion Combat Team, en route to occupy the gap in the 29th Brigade's lines, reached the brigade headquarters area along Route 11 about 2000, too late in the day, Brigadier Brodie decided, for it to attempt to take position between the fusilier and Gloster battalions.[52]

[51] Crahay, *Les Belges En Coree*, pp. 79–81; Ltr, CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army, 15 May 51, sub: Report of Gloucestershire Battalion, 22–25 Apr 51, Incl 16 (3d Div G3 Summary of 29th BIB Action, 22–25 Apr 51).

[52] 3d Div G3 Jnl, Entries 139, 141, 148, 157, 180, 182, and 189, 23 Apr 51; Ltr, CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army, 15 May 51, sub: Report of Gloucestershire Battalion, 22–25 Apr 51, Incl 3 (reserves) and Incl 16 (3d Div G3 Summary of 29th BIB Action, 22–25 Apr 51); 3d Div PORs 159 and 160, 23 and 24 Apr 51.

The withdrawal to line Kansas and other force adjustments swung the 3d Division south like a gate hinged on the west at the position of the Gloster battalion, which, after Colonel Carne consolidated forces in the Solma-ri area, had remained quiet throughout the day except for meeting engagements between patrols in Company B's sector at the far right. Both the *64th* and *63d Armies*, however, had built up forces below the Imjin to the front and flanks of the battalion.[53]

To the left of the Glosters, the *192d Division, 64th Army*, had begun to ford the Imjim at three points on the Korangp'o-ri bend by daybreak. Sighted by air observers, the crossing operation was shut off by 1100 by air strikes and artillery fire, and most of the Chinese who had crossed by that time hesitated in areas not far below the river. A few company-size groups moved south and tested positions of the 12th Regiment at the right of the ROK 1st Division but were turned back by noon. Sorties by two task forces of South Korean infantry and tanks of the 73d Tank Battalion, which was attached to the 1st Division, punished Chinese forces ahead of ROK lines until dusk. One task force estimated that it killed three thousand Chinese.[54]

Gloster forces on Hill 235 meanwhile caught sight of Chinese on the near high ground in the gap between the battalion and the ROK 12th Regiment. They had come either from the Korangp'o-ri bend or out of the Gloster Crossing area, where, despite British mortar and artillery fire, the *187th Division*, and apparently the *189th Division*, pushed additional forces over the Imjin. To the northeast, units of the *187th* and *188th Divisions* continued to enter the gap between the Glosters and fusiliers, directing their movement mainly toward Hill 675. Some forces worked through each gap and reached Route 5Y early in the afternoon. An attack by these forces on the Gloster supply point along the road made clear that the battalion at Solma-ri had been surrounded.[55]

Given this penetration and the buildup of Chinese below the Imjin in the west and given, in particular, the frail central position of the ROK 6th Division and open ground on either side of it, which invited envelopments both west and east, it was doubtful that the I and IX Corps lines as they stood at dark on the 23d could be held against the next surge of enemy attacks. Earlier in the day a number of officers had recommended long withdrawals to General Van Fleet to gain time to organize stronger defenses. One division commander in the I Corps had proposed falling back to line Golden just above Seoul. But Van Fleet had refused to give ground voluntarily in deep withdrawals. While by no means assuming a stand-or-die position, the enemy, he insisted, would have to "take all he gets." [56]

[53] Farrar-Hockley, *The Edge of the Sword*, pp. 30, 36.

[54] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, 23 Apr 51; Eighth Army PIR 285, 23 Apr 51; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; I Corps Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, Apr 51.

[55] Farrar-Hockley, *The Edge of the Sword*, p. 34; Holles, *Now Thrive the Armourers*, pp. 152, 155; Ltr, CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army, 15 May 51, sub: Report of Gloucestershire Battalion, 22–25 Apr 51, Incl 14 (Summary of Enemy Operations); Kahn, "A Reporter in Korea—No One But the Glosters."

[56] Interv, Appleman with Van Fleet, 15 Sep 51, copy in CMH.

CHAPTER XXII

The Chinese Spring Offensive On the Central and Eastern Fronts

Attack on the Pendleton Line

As the 1st Marine Division drew back to the curving Pendleton line at the right of the IX Corps sector on 23 April, Marine aerial reconnaissance disclosed numerous enemy groups moving south through the ground surrendered by the ROK 6th Division the night before. They appeared to be van forces moving well ahead of main bodies, though the latter were not sighted. The Marine intelligence staff concluded that the groups nearest the marines were attempting to get into position for a strike against the division's main supply route.[1]

If this was the case, the *120th Division, 40th Army*, which had missed the opportunity to enter the marines' open left flank the previous night, also failed to find the open path to Ch'unch'on. In a shallower southeastward swing out of the ground along the division boundary, begun about 2000, the division's *359th* and *360th Regiments* launched repeated frontal assaults behind mortar fire against two battalions of the 1st Marines and a battalion of the 7th Marines now covering the division's left. The Chinese made no earnest effort to move through the gaps between battalions, a mistake that allowed the marines to concentrate defensive fires; the supporting fire delivered by the 11th Marines and Army artillery from Chich'on-ni was particularly effective. The Chinese kept heavy pressure on the three battalions all night but could deliver no penetrating blow. Frequent but far weaker attacks in other sectors of the Marine front by forces of the *115th* and *116th Divisions* of the *39th Army* faded out at dawn.[2]

Starting the division's withdrawal to line Kansas about daylight, General Smith held to three engaged battalions and supporting artillery in position to contain the attack from the west and cover the units to the east as they vacated their inactive sectors. The artillery was to follow, with displacing units spaced to insure continuous support of the three battalions bringing up the rear. Smith's air officer requested twelve planes an hour to help cover the rearguard action.[3]

As the marines in the east dropped off the line in the early light of the 24th, Chinese entered Hwach'on town and the dam area but did not pursue the

[1] 1st Marine Div Hist Diary, Apr 51.

[2] Ibid.; Montross, Kuokka, and Hicks, *The East-Central Front*, pp. 113–15.

[3] 1st Marine Div Hist Diary, Apr 51.

withdrawal to the Kansas line. The more persistent forces of the *120th Division* to the west began to lap around one of the covering battalions located along the Chich'on-ni road shortly before dawn; two hundred or more reached the 92d Armored Field Artillery Battalion behind the marines as that unit was preparing to displace. A half dozen crews set up machine guns in hills sloping to the battalion's position while riflemen and grenadiers crept into a field and cemetery close to the artillery pieces. The first "round" fired was a roll of toilet paper flung by a startled artilleryman who discovered several Chinese crawling toward him when he walked into the cemetery. Startled themselves by the unusual missile, the Chinese allowed the man to run back to his battery; but minutes later, machine gunners and riflemen opened fire while grenadiers tried to reach the nearest self-propelled howitzers.[4]

The commander of the 92d, Lt. Col. Leon F. Lavoie, a stickler for setting up an elaborate defensive perimeter that required two or three days to develop fully, had established the basic positions by dark on the 23d. Most positions had been vacated just before daylight as the battalion began to get into march order, but Lavoie's forces were able to reoccupy them in time to take on the first line of Chinese. Enemy grenadiers reaching a howitzer during the battalion's rush to battle stations were shot down before they could damage it; direct howitzer fire blasted the Chinese machine guns in the hills; and fire from the perimeter, which bristled with .30-caliber and .50-caliber machine guns on ground mounts and armored personnel carriers, swept the field and cemetery with devastating effect. Fire from tanks the marines sent to join the battle added to the enemy toll. Within two hours the artillerymen destroyed the Chinese force and were in march order for the artillery displacement. The battalion's losses in the engagement were four killed and eleven wounded.[5]

The withdrawal of the rearguard battalions was a costly running battle with *120th Division* forces who followed the marines the entire distance to line Kansas. Ample artillery fire and numerous air strikes steadily weakened the pursuit, although at a price in aircraft. Chinese fire downed three Corsairs and one observation plane. Much reduced by the time the marines were back in old positions on the Kansas line, the Chinese were unable to mount more than mild assaults, all unsuccessful, and no reinforcements arrived to strengthen them. As indicated when no major attack developed anywhere on the 1st Marine Division front by daylight on 25 April, neither the *120th Division* nor the divisions of the *39th Army*, whose operations had been minor from the start, would attempt further action of any scale.[6]

Inje Falls

In the X Corps sector to the east of the marines, an attack opened near dawn on the 24th by the North Korean *12th Division* thoroughly disorganized the ROK 5th Division and carried the North Koreans through Inje by mid-

[4] Ibid.; After Action Intervs, Blumenson, "Artillery in Perimeter Defense," Narrative.

[5] For a detailed account of this battle see Gugeler, *Combat Actions in Korea*, pp. 154–65.

[6] 1st Marine Div Hist Diary, Apr 51.



MARINES UNDER FIRE

morning. *(See Map 33.)* The North Korean *6th Division* at the same time continued to push the left and center units of the ROK III Corps away from Route 24. The two enemy divisions reduced the pressure of their attacks only after their point units had driven two to five miles below Inje. Given some respite, the South Korean forces were able to organize defenses strong enough to hold off the two enemy divisions' continuing but weaker attempts to deepen and widen their salient. To the northeast, the North Korean *45th Division* again displayed its inexperience on the 24th in unsuccessful attacks on the 32d Infantry of the U.S. 7th Division at the immediate left of the ROK 5th Division and against the 23d Infantry of the U.S. 2d Division anchoring the X Corps' west flank above the eastern tip of the Hwach'on Reservoir. Opposite the 23d Infantry, some four hundred troops of the *45th* made the mistake of assembling in a steep-sided draw near the village of Tokko-ri in full view of an artillery forward observer with Company C. The observer brought down a battalion time on target barrage of fifteen volleys using rounds tipped with variable time fuses. Afterward the observer saw just two North Koreans come out of the draw. The only ground gained by the *45th Division* during the day was a gift from the 32d Infantry as the regiment pulled back to ridgetop positions that allowed it to tie in with the ROK 5th Division below Inje and

thus contain the North Korean salient along its southwestern shoulder.[7]

As a result of the 1st Marine Division's withdrawal to line Kansas, General Almond late on the 24th ordered changes in 2d Division dispositions. On the morning of 25 April the 23d Infantry was to drop back to positions just below the eastern tip of the Hwach'on Reservoir, a move that would place the regiment on the exact trace of line Kansas; beginning on the 25th General Ruffner was to make daily physical contact with the Marine division's right flank located near the village of Yuch'on-ni at the western tip of the reservoir. The latter step was a hedge against the possibility that enemy forces might penetrate the right of the Marine line and make a flanking or enveloping move against the X Corps through the otherwise unoccupied ground below the reservoir. To screen this ground and maintain contact with the marines, Ruffner organized Task Force Zebra under the commander of the division's 72d Tank Battalion, Lt. Col. Elbridge L. Brubaker. Included in the task force were a platoon of tanks from the 72d, the 2d Reconnaissance Company, the division's attached Netherlands and French battalions, and, later, the 1st Ranger Company.[8]

General Almond on the morning of the 25th ordered an afternoon attack by the ROK 5th Division to retake Inje and the high ground immediately above the town as a first step in regaining line Kansas. As worked out by Almond with General Yu, the leftmost units of the ROK III Corps were to join the advance. Yu's attack—for reasons not clear—did not materialize, and although the ROK 5th Division recaptured Inje, enemy pressure forced the unit to return to its original positions below the town. Ever aggressive, General Almond planned to attack again on the 26th. But, as he would soon learn, any attempt to retake line Kansas was for the time being out of the question as a result of a second failing performance by the ROK 6th Division in the left half of the IX Corps sector.[9]

Repeat Performance

The enemy formations approaching the ROK 6th Division on the 23d were from the *60th Division, 20th Army*, and *118th Division, 40th Army*. The *60th Division*, which had stampeded the South Koreans the night before, was on a southwesterly course as the *20th Army* continued to guide on Route 3 in its advance toward Seoul. That direction would take the division into the I Corps sector after no more than a glancing blow at the ROK 19th Regiment at the left of the 6th Division's front. Forces of the *118th Division* moved south through the right half of the South Korean sector on a line of march that would carry them to the ROK 2d and 7th Regiments and, if maintained, to the British 27th Brigade's blocking position above Kap'yong.[10]

When the leading enemy forces

[7] Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 24 Apr 51; Eighth Army G3 POR, 24 Apr 51; X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; 2d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; 7th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51.

[8] X Corps OI 160, 24 Apr 51; 2d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51.

[9] X Corps OI 161, 25 Apr 51; Rads, X 18709 and X 18718, CG X Corps to CG Eighth Army, 25 Apr 51.

[10] Eighth Army PIR 286, 24 Apr 51; Barclay, *The First Commonwealth Division*, p. 69.

struck the ROK line just after dark, the South Koreans bolted south almost immediately, disordered columns of troops and trucks flooding the two valleys converging at the British brigade's position. The New Zealand artillery, Middlesex battalion, and 213th Field Artillery Battalion, which had gone up the valleys to support the 6th Division, had scarcely deployed before South Koreans began passing through their areas. The three battalions withdrew behind the Australians and Canadians, negotiating the cluttered valley roads with no loss of men or equipment except for a howitzer of the 213th Field Artillery Battalion which had to be run off the road to avoid striking a group of milling South Koreans.[11]

ROK forces began streaming into the 27th Brigade's lines around 2000, the heavier flow coming down the northeast valley into the position of the Australian battalion. After a chaotic and clamorous passage through the blocking position, ROK leaders were able to slow the wild flight—getting safely behind the 27th Brigade seemed to have a calming effect—and eventually assembled the forces just off Route 17 about five miles southwest of Kap'yong town. On the morning of the 24th General Chang notified General Hoge that he had collected and was reorganizing between four thousand and five thousand men, about half the division's strength.[12]

The *60th Division*, keeping to its southwesterly course, had not pursued the ROK 19th Regiment after putting it to rout in the Kap'yong valley. The *60th* next would be in contact with the 24th Division in the I Corps sector. The *118th Division* stayed on the heels of the South Koreans racing down the northeast valley, its *354th Regiment* reaching the Australian battalion about 2200 as the din of the South Korean retreat through the 27th Brigade began to subside.[13]

Intent on pursuing the South Koreans and probably unaware of the Australian position, the van forces of the *354th Regiment* kept to the valley, splitting as they approached a long, low north-south ridge rising as an island in the valley's mouth. Company B of the Australians and the 1st Platoon of Company A, 72d Tank Battalion, were atop the southern end of the ridge overlooking the valley road passing by on the east. The remaining three companies of the Australian battalion were east of the road on the crest and upper slopes of Hill 504. To the north, the 4th Platoon of tanks was on outpost, two tanks on the nose of the island ridge, three astride the road in the flat ground just beyond. In the village of Chuktun-ni behind the island ridge, the road ended in a junction with the Kap'yong valley road coming in from northwest. Near Chuktun-ni, the Kap'yong road reached a ford across the Kap'yong

[11] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 23 Apr 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Ltr, Peploe to CG Eighth Army, 5 May 51, sub: Report on Disintegration of the 6th ROK Division in Military Operations During the Period 22–24 Apr 51; Barclay, The *First Commonwealth Division*, p. 67; After Action Intervs, Blumenson, "Tanks Above Kap'yong," Interv with Johnson.

[12] After Action Intervs, Blumenson, "Tanks Above Kap'yong," Interv with 1st Lt Wilfred D. Miller, Plat Ldr, 1st Plat, Co A, 72d Tank Bn; Bartlett, *With the Australians in Korea*, p. 94; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Ltr, Peploe to CG Eighth Army, 5 May 51, sub: Report on Disintegration of the 6th ROK Division in Military Operations During the Period 22–24 Apr 51.

[13] Eighth Army PIR 286, 24 Apr 51; Bartlett, *With the Australians in Korea*, p. 94; Wood, *Strange Battleground*, p. 74.

River on the upper arm of the large bend that turns the river's flow from southeast to southwest. The command group and 2d Platoon of the tank company were deployed astride the road just below the ford, whence the tanks could fire up both the Kap'yong and northeast valleys. The Australian battalion's command post, protected by a small group of pioneer, police, and signal troops, was located against some low hills not far to the left rear of the tanks. With the leading Chinese confining their march to the valley, one group following the road, the other swinging wide through the undefended valley floor west of the island ridge and southeast along the Kap'yong, the American tankers on outpost and at the ford were first to be engaged. The approaching Chinese reached the two positions almost simultaneously.[14]

Upon a Chinese approach, the 4th Platoon had standing orders to withdraw from its outpost to a blocking position on the road between the forces on the island ridge and those on Hill 504, but the tankers were under fire before they realized that the oncoming troops were not more retreating South Koreans. A brief exchange of fire in which the tank crews fought with hatches open for better vision in the darkness cost the platoon four wounded (two of them tank commanders), and the platoon leader was fatally shot as the tanks turned to withdraw. The leaderless survivors pulled out in disorder toward the 2d Platoon at the Kap'yong ford. The 1st Platoon leader, 1st. Lt. Wilfred D. Miller, ran down to the road from his position on the island ridge and stopped the tanks at the blocking position, but Chinese appearing from the north forced him back up the ridge, and the 4th Platoon continued toward the river crossing.[15]

The ragged withdrawal took the platoon from one fire fight to another. Tank company commander 1st. Lt. Kenneth W. Koch, afoot and under considerable fire, reorganized the platoon under the command of a sergeant and deployed it alongside the 2d Platoon against the Chinese attacking from the northwest. With the road open as far as the ford, Chinese entered the battle from the north, and the two leading groups, now joined, widened their assault to include the small force of Australians defending the battalion command post. Numbers of Chinese infiltrating or skirting the ford area settled in the high ground bordering the Kap'yong road on the west. Those moving deepest reached and exchanged fire with the Middlesex battalion, which had taken a reserve position athwart the road two miles behind the Australians. North of the ford, following formations of the *354th Regiment* spread out to attack the forces on the island ridge and Hill 504.[16]

Lt. Col. I. B. Ferguson, the Australian battalion commander, was hard pressed to direct the defense. South Koreans charging through his position had torn out his wire from command post to companies, and he could communicate with the forward units only inter-

[14] Bartlett, *With the Australians in Korea*, p. 92; After Action Intervs, Blumenson, "Tanks Above Kap'yong," Interv with Koch.

[15] After Action Intervs, Blumenson, "Tanks Above Kap'yong," Narrative and Intervs with Koch, Miller, Pfc Leroy W. Ritchotte, 4th Plat, and Pvt Robert B. Brown, 4th Plat.

[16] Ibid., Intervs with Koch and Lt A. Argent, Intel Off, 3d Bn, Royal Australian Regt.

mittently by radio. Losing all artillery support put the Australians at further disadvantage as the Chinese enlarged their attack. After withdrawing down the Kap'yong valley, the New Zealand unit and 213th Field Artillery Battalion had established positions between the Middlesex and Australian battalions; but when the enemy attack intensified, Brigadier Burke ordered the two units into safety positions behind the Middlesex. Dawn came before they could again answer calls for fire.[17]

Nor was support available from the 4.2s of Company B, 2d Chemical Mortar Battalion. Communications had not yet been established with the mortar position in the valley behind Hill 504 when the Chinese spread out to assault the Australians, and the mortar company, in any case, left its position shortly afterward. Fearful of being overrun, the mortarmen abandoned thirty-five vehicles loaded with equipment and retreated over a minor road ten miles east to Ch'unch'on.[18]

During a nightlong series of assaults, the three Australian companies on Hill 504, in spite of their lack of artillery and mortar support, lost only two platoon positions and later regained one of these. Company B and the platoon of tanks on the island ridge had little trouble holding their ground and took a high toll of Chinese crowded along the valley road when they were exposed in the light of burning buildings set ablaze by fire from the tanks. Enemy forces got among the tanks at the ford, but the two platoons stayed in position, the tankers firing in all directions, even at each other, to keep Chinese from getting on the tanks. A 3.5-inch rocket fired from the hill above the Australian command post damaged a tank, killed one man, and wounded two. Another tanker was wounded when two crews drove south from the ford and eliminated a block on the Kap'yong road that aidmen had discovered while transporting other casualties to the rear. In exchange for these losses, the tankers killed more than a hundred Chinese before the attack faded out about daylight.[19]

Well before dawn the Chinese attacking the battalion headquarters area were threatening to overrun the command post. In answer to Colonel Ferguson's request to Brigadier Burke for reinforcements, a Middlesex company started forward but, on encountering resistance by Chinese in the hills edging the Kap'yong road, inexplicably turned east and withdrew over the route used earlier by the American 4.2-inch mortar company. Compelled to withdraw, Ferguson started his headquarters vehicles and troops toward the Middlesex position, using the two tanks that had cleared out the roadblock to cover the move. Fire from the hills above the road forced sections of the column to halt and take cover from time to time but caused no casualties and was easily silenced by the tanks. The only loss during the withdrawal was Ferguson's own jeep, which had a wheel blown off by a mortar round. The two American engineer companies biv-

[17] Bartlett, *With the Australians in Korea*, p. 95; After Action Intervs, Blumenson, "Tanks Above Kap'yong," Interv with Johnson.

[18] Bartlett, *With the Australians in Korea*, p. 95–96; After Action Intervs, Blumenson, "Tanks Above Kap'yong," Interv with Argent.

[19] Bartlett, *With the Australians in Korea*, pp. 96–104; After Action Intervs, Blumenson, "Tanks Above Kap'yong," Intervs with Miller and Koch.

ouacked within sight of the road meanwhile mistook the passing headquarters forces for the beginning of a general withdrawal and themselves pulled out in haste and confusion, abandoning tentage, several trucks, kitchens, and a water point they had installed.[20]

From the new battalion command post, Colonel Ferguson shortly before dawn ordered Company B to leave its isolated position on the island ridge and join forces with the companies on Hill 504. The company remained engaged until after daylight, when the Chinese began withdrawing to the north. Company B and the tank platoon whipped the withdrawing troops with fire for over an hour. As a sort of finale to the engagement, a patrol reconnoitering a route to 504 brought back about forty prisoners bagged near the northern edge of Chuktun-ni. Moving roundabout to avoid Chinese still attacking 504, Company B, with prisoners in tow, occupied a rear position on the hill about midmorning.[21]

In the continuing engagement on Hill 504, daylight and artillery support from the New Zealanders gave the Australians the advantage. Although the Chinese attacked repeatedly, almost at half-hour intervals, they were now fully visible, and each dash from cover to cover brought down an assortment of telling Australian fire. Except for a misdirected air strike in which Marine Corsairs dropped napalm on one Australian company, killing two, injuring several, and destroying some weapons and equipment, "the situation rather resembled sitting in the middle of a wheatfield at dawn potting rabbits as they dashed hither and thither." [22]

The battalion nevertheless was potentially in danger of encirclement. A three-mile gap between the Australians and the Canadians to the west, whose position had not yet been seriously tested, and a far greater expanse of open ground to the east gave the Chinese room to close in. Evacuating Australian casualties and replenishing supplies also became a problem with most of the road between Hill 504 and the Middlesex position kept under Chinese guns from the bordering high ground.

Wary of losing the battalion if it remained on 504 another night, Brigadier Burke at midmorning ordered Colonel Ferguson to withdraw behind the Middlesex. The American tankers, who had used the morning respite to refuel and rearm in the company bivouac area, came back into action, one group under Lieutenant Miller initially carrying Ferguson and staff members over the fire-swept road to 504 to organize the withdrawal. Miller's group also delivered ammunition and brought back casualties, making a second trip to get all the Australian wounded out. Another group, under Lieutenant Koch, the company commander, carried volunteers from Company B, 74th Engineer Combat Battalion, to the vacated 4.2-inch mortar position and covered them while they drove out the

[20] Bartlett, *With the Australians in Korea*, pp. 96, 98–99; After Action Intervs, Blumenson, "Tanks Above Kap'yong," Intervs with Cpl William O. Suiter, Jr., Co A, 72d Tank Bn, Padgett, and Sgt Harold Burros, Sgt John L. Mazyck, Cpl Haywood Butler, Cpl Mason F. Scott, Pfc James Jackson, Pfc Johnnie L. Lewis, Pfc Johnnie Barksdale, Pfc Arthur Lee Gayles, and Pvt Robert J. Booker, all of Co B, 74th Engr Bn.

[21] Bartlett, *With the Australians in Korea*, pp. 99–100; After Action Intervs, Blumenson, "Tanks Above Kap'yong," Interv with Miller.

[22] The commander of Company A, quoted in Bartlett, *With the Australians in Korea*, p. 101.

vehicles abandoned by the mortar company. On a final round trip, tankers protected the engineers while they retrieved their own equipment left behind during their hurried morning withdrawal.[23]

After completing the evacuation of casualties and equipment in midafternoon, the tankers moved north to the ford area to ward off any Chinese moving down the Kap'yong valley while the Australians were withdrawing from 504. The New Zealand artillery blinded the Chinese on the slopes of 504 with smoke and trailed the Australian rearguard with high explosive rounds as the four companies moved one at a time down a long ridge sloping southeast to the Kap'yong River. Crossing the stream a mile and a half behind the tanks, the Australians passed through the Middlesex battalion not long after dark. The tanks dropped back after the rearguard company crossed the river but stayed forward of the Middlesex until it was clear that no Chinese had followed the withdrawal. The night and day of battle had cost the Australians thirty-one killed, fifty-eight wounded, and three missing, the tank company two killed, eleven wounded, and one missing.[24]

Instead of following the Australian withdrawal, the *354th Regiment*, much reduced after its attacks on Hill 504 but apparently being reinforced by at least part of another regiment of the *118th Division*, turned toward the Canadian battalion on Hill 677. The Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry commander, Lt. Col. J. R. Stone, originally had deployed his four companies on the crest and northern slopes of 677, but after Chinese began moving into the hills along the Kap'yong road a step that placed them to the right and right rear of the Canadians, Stone shifted Company B to a southeastern slope against the possibility of an attack via the battalion's back door.[25] Mortar and long range machine gun fire struck the company at 2200, one of the machine guns firing tracer ammunition to direct an assault by two hundred Chinese that followed. A smaller group slipped up a gully from the southeast to attack the battalion's command post and mortars located in rear of Company B. A larger force, clearly visible to the Canadians in the moonlight, meanwhile began fording the Kap'yong to the east. A heavy concentration of New Zealand artillery fire broke up the force crossing the river, and, just as effectively, Canadian mortarmen and machine gunners almost literally blew back the Chinese attacking up the ravine. Company B beat off the first Chinese charge, lost a platoon position to the second, then successfully weathered a succession of assaults lasting most of the night.[26]

A stronger attack about 0200, evidently by fresh forces coming out of the Kap'yong valley, hit Company D defending the Canadians' left flank from the 677 crest. The first assaults, launched across a saddle from the west and up steep slopes from the south, carried Chinese into the company's de-

[23] Wood, *Strange Battleground*, pp. 74–76; After Action Intervs, Blumenson, "Tanks Above Kap'yong," Intervs with Koch and Miller.

[24] Bartlett, *With the Australians in Korea*, pp. 105–06; After Action Intervs, Blumenson, "Tanks Above Kap'yong," Interv with Koch.

[25] American tankers making one of their runs on the Kap'yong road as the Canadian company took position mistakenly opened fire on it and wounded one man.

[26] Wood, *Strange Battleground*, pp. 76–77.

fenses in such numbers that the Company D commander was able to drive them out only by calling down artillery fire on his own position. Following charges kept pressure on the company, nicking its position here and there, but gradually wore down under the company's defensive fire and heavy pounding by the New Zealand artillery.[27]

Under additional fire from two platoons of Company A, 72d Tank Battalion, which maneuvered within range near dawn, the Chinese gave up their attacks on the Canadian flanks about daylight but stayed in contact with a heavy delivery of fire. Since the continuing Chinese control of the Kap'yong road as far south as the Middlesex position kept the Canadians from using it to bring up a resupply of ammunition and rations, Colonel Stone, as the enemy assaults died out, requested an airdrop. In remarkable time given the long route Stone's request had to take, C–119s from Japan delivered the supplies six hours later. By that time, however, the Chinese fire had begun to diminish, and at 1400 Company B patrols found the Kap'yong road open. By late afternoon the *118th Division*, bloodied at Hill 504 and again severely punished by the Canadians in exchange for ten killed and twenty-three wounded, gave up the battle and withdrew north.[28]

[27] Ibid., pp. 77–78; Barclay, *The First Commonwealth Division*, p. 69.

[28] IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Wood, *Strange Battleground*, p. 78; Barclay, *The First Commonwealth Division*, p. 70. For their stand above Kap'yong, the Australian and Canadian battalions and Company A, 72d Tank Battalion, were awarded the U.S. Presidential Unit Citation. For personal efforts in support of the Australians, 1st Lt. Kenneth W. Koch and 1st Lt. Wilfred D. Miller of the tank company each received the Distinguished Service Cross.

Censure

That two battalions and a tank company had withstood attacks no weaker, and perhaps stronger, than those that twice had routed the ROK 6th Division underscored how completely control had broken down in the division. The huge tally of equipment lost as a result of the division's successive debacles emphasized the breakdown further. Major items lost by the South Koreans included 2,363 small arms, 168 machine guns and Browning automatic rifles, 66 rocket launchers, 2 antitank guns, 42 mortars, 13 artillery pieces, and 87 trucks. The three American fire support units—987th Armored Field Artillery Battalion; 2d Rocket Field Artillery Battery; and Company C, 2d Chemical Mortar Battalion—stymied by overturned South Korean vehicles and other abandoned equipment on their withdrawal route during the night of the 22d, lost 15 105-mm. howitzers, 13 4.2-inch mortars, and 73 vehicles. Hundreds of other items—242 radios alone—lengthened the list.[29]

General Hoge used no euphemisms in rebuking General Chang for the conduct of the division, summing it up as "disgraceful in all its aspects."[30] Hoge nevertheless considered Chang one of the better ROK commanders—and the 6th Division representative of all ROK divisions—and did not seek his relief. To place blame solely on Chang, in any case, would be to make him a scapegoat. Lack of leadership and control on the part of all grades of officers and non-

[29] DF, Eighth Army G4 to Chief of Staff, 10 May 51, sub: Report on Disintegration of ROKA 6th Div, in Eighth Army AG File, 6 ROK Div (1 May), 1951.

[30] Ltr, Gen Hoge to Gen Chang, 28 Apr 51, in Eighth Army AG File, 6 ROK Div (1 May), 1951.

commissioned officers had caused the division's disintegration. With exceptions that only proved the rule, deficient leadership indeed continued to be the major weakness of the ROK Army.[31]

The ROK Army chief of staff, General Chung, attempted to explain to General Van Fleet that the 6th Division's breakdown and the wider leadership problem came from a lack of training. He was right to the extent that ROK troops and leaders at every level and in every unit suffered from sketchy military schooling. But Van Fleet refused the explanation, pointing out to Chung that the 6th Division had conducted itself creditably in past operations and that the making of officers could not be confined to the mastery of military skills. A high sense of responsibility, devotion to duty, physical and moral courage, and the will to fight for homes and families were fundamental to competent military leadership; these were the attributes, he emphasized, that, along with training in military science, had to be developed among South Korean officers and noncommissioned officers if the ROK Army was to be a capable and dependable force.[32]

The rout of the ROK 6th Division could not have happened at a worse time for President Rhee's attempt to put more men under arms. On 18 April the ROK representative to the United Nations, Col. Ben C. Limb, had asked the Joint Chiefs of Staff for arms and equipment for ten additional divisions, and on the 23d, following the 6th Division's first collapse and preceding its second by only hours, Rhee had submitted a personal request for the same. The request had some appeal in Washington by raising the prospect of eventually using additional South Korean formations to replace American units. General Ridgway and General Van Fleet, however, argued successfully against any immediate increase in ROK divisions. There was no way, they insisted, that American personnel and other resources could be spared to provide the supervision and training for an expansion as long as heavy fighting continued. In any case, a need to develop competent leadership, not a need for more men, was the primary problem of the ROK Army and certainly was prerequisite to its enlargement. The ROK 6th Division's dissolution illustrated the point. Creating new divisions without able leaders, Van Fleet said, would be "a criminal waste of badly needed equipment." [33]

Ridgway, Van Fleet, and Ambassador Muccio personally delivered the refusal to President Rhee. Their message was blunt: from the minister of defense to the lowest level of command in the ROK Army, leadership was inadequate, and under this serious weakness was eliminated there would be no more talk about the United States arming and equipping additional divisions. Rhee nevertheless continued to lobby for support of a larger army, but he would get no substantial help until improved pro-

[31] Ltr, Gen Hoge to Gen Van Fleet, 28 Apr 51, in Eighth Army AG File, 6 ROK Div (1 May), 1951.

[32] Ltr, Gen Van Fleet to Gen Chung, 2 May 51, copy in Eighth Army AG File, 6 ROK Div (1 May), 1951.

[33] Sawyer, *Military Advisors in Korea*, p. 170; Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, pp. 394–95; Ridgway, *The Korean War*, p. 176; Ltr, Gen Van Fleet to Ambassador Muccio, 3 May 51, copy in Eighth Army AG File, 6 ROK Div (1 May), 1951.

grams began to produce the professional talent needed to lead existing and additional forces.[34]

[34] Ridgway, *The Korean War*, pp. 161, 176; Ltr, Gen Van Fleet to Ambassador Muccio, 3 May 51; Ltr, Maj Gen H.I. Hodes, Dep CofS, Eighth Army, to CINCFE, 5 May 51, sub: Republic of Korea Army Losses, copy in Eighth Army AG File, 6 ROK Div (1 May), 1951. For detailed accounts of the expansion of the ROK Army during 1952 and 1953, see Sawyer, *Military Advisors in Korea*, and Walter G. Hermes, *Truce Tent and Fighting Front*, U.S. ARMY IN THE KOREAN WAR (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1966).

CHAPTER XXIII

The Chinese Spring Offensive On the Western Front

Since January, after the Fifth Air Force evacuated the airfields at Kimpo, Seoul, and Suwon, a shortage of fields, especially of airstrips near the front, had impeded close air support to the Eighth Army. Early in March General Partridge had approved plans for the construction of all-weather fields, including three forward strips, but only in June would he acquire enough engineer aviation battalions to begin any extensive airfield development. Consequently, at the opening of the Chinese April offensive only three Fifth Air Force groups were based in Korea. All other groups flew from bases in Japan, a situation that raised the related problems of distance and range limitations. Staging through Korean fields, primarily the airfield at Taegu, helped, but the time that aircraft based in Japan could spend at the front was nevertheless reduced. Compensating considerably were the fighter squadrons of the 1st Marine Air Wing, five land based in southeastern Korea, another aboard the escort carrier *Bataan* with Task Force 95 in the Yellow Sea. To help further, Task Force 77 in the Sea of Japan shifted its fast carrier operations from interdiction to close support beginning on 23 April.[1]

Though unable to operate at top capacity, the Fifth Air Force alone flew some three hundred forty close support sorties on the 23d, a number that almost equaled the highest flown during a single day so far in the war, and the 1st Marine Air Wing flew over a hundred fifty missions. The bulk of the air strikes supported the I Corps as General Milburn pulled the 24th and 25th Divisions and the rightmost forces of the 3d Division back to line Kansas. He judged that the Fifth Air Force and Marine attacks, in combination with artillery fire, had been instrumental in preventing Chinese forces from following his withdrawal closely.[2]

Defending the Kansas Line

Chinese following the withdrawal of the 24th and 25th Divisions finally reestablished contact with small, groping attacks near midnight on the 23d. Almost at the same hour, far harder attacks struck the ROK 1st Division and British 29th Brigade along the Imjin, particularly their neighboring interior

[1] Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, pp. 334–35; Montross, Kuokka, and Hicks, *The East-Central Front*, pp. 103, 108; Field, *United States Naval Operations, Korea*, p. 346.

[2] Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, pp. 336–37; Montross, Kuokka, and Hicks, *The East-Central Front*, p. 108; I Corps, Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, Apr 51, p. 18.

units, the 12th ROK Regiment and the British brigade's isolated Gloster battalion at Solma-ri. *(See Map 32.)*

The midnight exploratory probes in the eastern half of the corps sector developed into stout but not overpowering daytime assaults by three divisions against the 24th Infantry on the right of the 25th Division and on the entire front of the 24th Division. The *179th Division* seized Hill 664, the highest ground in the 24th Infantry sector, but failed in daylong attacks to dislodge the regiment and two reinforcing battalions of the 27th Infantry from a new line established in the foothills of the high feature. Forces of the *80th* and *59th Divisions* kept the 24th Division's front under pressure all day, but only the *80th* attacking the 19th Infantry made any penetrations, all shallow. Counterattacks by regimental reserve forces eliminated all of them. Of more concern was a visible enemy buildup in front of the division, particularly ahead of the 21st Infantry on the right flank.[3]

At the Gloster battalion's Solma-ri position along the Imjin, the *187th Division* reopened its attack on the British by sending its *559th Regiment* up the slopes east of Route 5Y toward Company C near the road and Company B on the battalion's right flank. Unaware of exactly where or how the two companies were deployed, the enemy regiment attacked obliquely across the Gloster front, wasting the force of repeated assaults and taking heavy casualties from Gloster fire partially enfilading the skirmish lines. Finally correcting the direction of attack, the Chinese shoved their way onto the highest ground inside Company C's position to command the remainder of the company's hill and the valley behind, where the mortars and battalion headquarters were located. Expecting that the Chinese would quickly exploit their advantage, Colonel Carne ordered the troops in the valley and Company C to withdraw west across Route 5Y to positions between Companies A and D in the Hill 235 area. The withdrawal would leave Company B isolated on the east flank, but Carne doubted that the unit could make the long trek to Hill 235 from its distant position without becoming scattered and lost in the darkness; he decided to wait until daylight to pull it in.[4]

While Carne had few alternatives, he had to a degree played into Chinese hands. Making no move to follow Company C when it broke away or to move into the valley, where much of the battalion's ammunition, food, and other supplies lay abandoned after the hasty evacuation of the headquarters site, the attack force turned its weight against Company B, surrounding and squeezing the unit with assaults from all directions. Though steadily weakened by casualties, the isolated company turned back the repeated rushes until dawn. Then the Chinese changed tactics, keeping the company encircled and engaged all around but concentrating forces on the north for an assault on one platoon. Penetrated by the focused attack, the Gloster company had no choice but to try to disengage. Colonel Carne covered the attempt with every weapon he could bring to bear on the

[3] I Corps, Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, Apr 51, pp. 19–20; Barth, *Tropic Lightning and Taro Leaf in Korea*, pp. 80–81; 24th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51.

[4] This paragraph and the one following are based on Farrar-Hockley, *The Edge of the Sword*, pp. 35–47.

Chinese who had hemmed in the company and had left only a path down wooded slopes to the south, where the Glosters, breaking away in groups, tried to get through the smaller ranks of Chinese who had circled behind them. The attempt, if unavoidable, was disastrous. Only twenty men reached the main body of the battalion at Hill 235.

Along Route 11 northeast of the Glosters, forces of the *188th Division* meanwhile had followed the late night withdrawal of the 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, out of the Hill 257 mass and engaged the Northumberland Fusiliers and Royal Ulster Rifles standing across the road about two miles to the south. Handling the Chinese frontal pressure fully occupied the two battalions and left them vulnerable to a flanking or enveloping attack out of the gap between the fusiliers and Glosters, a gap that as a result of the Glosters' withdrawals to the Hill 235 area had widened to four miles.[5]

In a move to fill the gap at least partially and at the same time to restore the deteriorating Gloster position, the 3d Division commander, General Soule, early in the morning of the 24th directed Brigadier Brodie to move a reserve battalion into the gap and also to send a tank-infantry force up Route 5Y to clear the road and reinforce the Gloster battalion. For the latter effort Brodie added six Centurions from C Squadron, 8th Hussars, to the three rifle companies and four light tanks of the Philippine 10th Battalion Combat Team and sent the force toward the Glosters about 0730. Word that reinforcements were on the way reached Colonel Carne as the few survivors of Company B began to trickle in at Hill 235. By midmorning, however, perhaps because the Glosters had reported a large enemy buildup in their area, Brodie changed the concept of the operation. The 10th Battalion Combat Team now was to set up a blocking position at a pass about two miles below Hill 235, and from there only tanks were to move on to join the Gloster battalion. Brodie may not have been aware that the big Centurions, leading the way up Route 5Y at the moment, would be unable to proceed much farther than the blocking position. As the hussars had learned during earlier reconnaissance, the road beyond became too narrow at defiles to allow the nearly twelve-foot-wide tanks to pass. The attempt to reach the Glosters, in any case, could be made only by the 10th Battalion Combat Team's four light tanks. Brodie also gave the Glosters the choice of fighting their way to safety, apparently visualizing a linkup of Glosters and Filipinos at the latter's blocking position. But Colonel Carne, doubting that his weakened battalion could make it and remaining under the impression that the full tank-infantry force would attempt to reach him, elected to stay in position in the hope that the approaching column would succeed.[6]

The Belgian battalion, which Brodie intended to place in the gap between the Glosters and Northumberland Fusiliers, had made a second march

[5] 3d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; I Corps Report on Action (Johnson, G3), 3 May 51.

[6] 3d Div G3 Jnl, Entries 48, 52, 60, and 69, 24 Apr 51; Ltr, CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army, 15 May 51, sub: Report of Gloucestershire Battalion, 22–25 Apr 51, Incl 16 (3d Div G3 Summary of 29th BIB Action, 14 May 51); Interv, Appleman with Maj Henry Huth, CO, C Sqn, 8th Hussars, copy in CMH; 3d Div POR 160, 24 Apr 51.

during the night after withdrawing out of the Imjin angle, moving from its initial assembly along Route 33 to an area near the 29th Brigade's command post. Tired and somewhat disorganized by the Imjin angle battle and disengagement, the Belgians needed rest and time to straighten their ranks before moving into the gap. The commander, Colonel Albert Crahay, informed Brodie that the battalion would be ready by the start of the afternoon.[7]

General Soule, however, had second thoughts about committing the Belgians. Nine Glosters who had been captured during the Chinese attack on the battalion's supply point the day before and who had been taken off to Hill 675 in the gap escaped their captors during an early morning air strike (Mustangs dropping napalm) and reached the 29th Brigade command post. They reported at least a thousand Chinese to be on Hill 675, an estimate tending to confirm other reports that the Chinese in the 675 area had reached regimental strength. Reluctant to pit the Belgians against that possible enemy strength, Soule about noon informed Brodie that the Belgian battalion was not to be committed to action without division approval.[8]

Soule did not question Brodie's decision to stop the 10th Battalion Combat Team short of the Gloster battalion. Because of the growing enemy strength in the Gloster and gap areas, Soule now planned to attack with two battalions of the 65th Infantry, the bulk of the 64th Tank Battalion, and the 10th Field Artillery Battalion to relieve the Glosters and clear the Chinese from Hill 675. The 10th Battalion Combat Team, as an attachment to the 65th Infantry, was to remain in its blocking position until the attack force passed through, then was to follow the force to its objectives. Soule set the attack for 0630 on the 25th after checking with Brodie to ask if that timing was satisfactory in light of the Gloster battalion's overnight reverses and present condition. Brodie assured him that the Glosters could hold out until relieved by the 65th Infantry.[9]

In a midafternoon conference at the 3d Division airstrip, Soule briefed General Milburn, General Van Fleet, and General Ridgway (who had arrived in Korea at noon) on the attack plan. They questioned waiting until morning to attack. But Soule told them that the attack could not be made in what remained of the afternoon: the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 65th Infantry were then only beginning to assemble for the attack a mile west of the 29th Brigade's command post and two miles southeast of Hill 675 and would not complete their move until 1730. Soule, in any case, had no reason to believe that the Gloster battalion could not hold its position; he had Brigadier Brodie's assurance. According to a noontime report from the 29th Brigade, the battalion's only critical supply need was radio batteries, which, along with a

[7] 3d Div G3 Jnl, Entry 52, 24 Apr 51; Crahay, *Les Belges En Coree*, pp. 81–82.

[8] 3d Div G3 Jnl, Entries 80 and 96, 24 Apr 51; Ltr, CG Eighth Army to CINCFE, 5 May 51, sub: Report of Action Involving the Loss of Gloucestershire Battalion, 29th British Brigade, Tab A, 1 Corps Report on Action of Gloster Battalion, 29th British Brigade, 23, 24, 25 Apr 51, 3 May 51.

[9] 3d Div OI 15–13, 24 Apr 51; 3d Div G3 Jnl, Entry 80, 24 Apr 51; Ltr, CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army, 15 May 51, sub: Report of Gloucestershire Battalion, 22–25 Apr 51, Incl 13 (Memo to CG fr Brig Gen A. D. Mead, Dept CG, 3d Div, 7 May 51).

resupply of other items, were to be air-dropped before dark. The 10th Battalion Combat Team meanwhile had broken through a spot of resistance about three miles south of Hill 235 and, with its light tanks now leading, the Centurions next in column, and foot troops bringing up the rear, was again on the move toward the Glosters.[10]

By 1530 the tanks leading the 10th Battalion Combat Team were climbing into the pass where the Filipino force was to set up the blocking position. Encouraged by the column's progress, Brigadier Brodie reverted to his original plan and instructed the entire force to go on to the Glosters. He had scarcely issued the order when the point tank lost a track to a mine or mortar round in an extremely narrow, steep-sided defile. Chinese strung out atop the hills bordering both sides of the defile swept the road with fire while others armed with charges worked down the steep banks toward the disabled tank. The M24 crews to the rear, evidently believing the road ahead of them to be mined, made no attempt to pull or push the damaged tank out of the defile or to rescue the stranded crew. Two less cautious Centurion crews squeezed their huge tanks past the Filipino armor and went as far forward as the narrowing road allowed. Though they stopped short of the disabled M24, their covering fire allowed its crew to escape. Meanwhile, the Filipino infantry became involved in a fire fight with Chinese occupying two hills abutting the road some two hundred yards to the rear.[11]

When Maj. Henry Huth, in command of the Centurions, radioed brigade headquarters that the road was blocked and that the wide Centurions in any case could not get through the defile, he was given authority to withdraw. Major Huth understood the clearance to withdraw to apply to the 10th Battalion Combat Team as well as his group of tanks, and he gave the Filipinos the word to return to their assembly area after the combat team commander, Lt. Col. Dionisio Ojeda, told him that he did not believe his three rifle companies could move forward through what appeared to be a battalion of Chinese. If someone at brigade headquarters had allowed the 10th Battalion Combat Team to withdraw, it was only afterward that Brigadier Brodie sought General Soule's approval of the move.[12] At the same time, apparently after discussing a breakout with Colonel Carne, who began to prepare plans, Brodie requested permission to pull the Gloster battalion out after dark. Soule, however, was certain the Glosters would suffer high losses in a nighttime withdrawal and instructed Brodie to hold both battalions in their present locations until the 65th Infantry reached them the next day. Brodie

[10] Interv, Appleman with Gen Soule, 8 Sep 51, copy in CMH; Eighth Army CG Jnl, 24 Apr 51; Ltr, CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army, 15 May 51, sub: Report of Gloucestershire Battalion, 22–25 Apr 51, Incl 3 (reserves) and Incl 13 (Memo to CG fr Brig Gen A. D. Mead, Dept CG, 3d Div, 7 May 51); 3d Div G3 Jnl, Entry 96, 24 Apr 51; 3d Div POR 160, 24 Apr 51; Interv, Appleman with Huth.

[11] 3d Div G3 Jnl, Entries 109 and 138, 24 Apr 51; Interv, Appleman with Huth.

[12] Later investigation of the withdrawal order came to no clear conclusion. There was no brigade journal record of its issue, and no one at headquarters could recall its scope or exactly who gave it. Available evidence indicates that the order did apply to the entire force. The 3d Division G–3 Journal for 24 April 1951, Entry 129, for example, records an evening report from the 29th Brigade stating in part that the "relief force of 10th BCT and Tks have been ordered back."

nevertheless permitted the 10th Battalion Combat Team, already en route to the rear, to continue its withdrawal. Leapfrogging rear guards, alternately tanks and infantry, held off Chinese who followed part of the way back and allowed the force to reach its starting point about 1900. General Soule, who had gone to the 7th Infantry front after his conference with Brodie, was unaware of the 10th Battalion Combat Team's withdrawal until he returned to headquarters about 2100. At that late hour he could only accept Brodie's handling of the matter. A late evening report on the Glosters from Brodie's headquarters reassured him, however, that the isolated battalion could hold its ground without reinforcement until relieved by the 65th Infantry. The position, according to the report, was "fairly safe," and although the battalion had had some weapons and equipment shot up, its casualties did not appear to be heavy.[13]

If the Gloster position could be called "fairly safe," it was only because the Chinese swarming around Hill 235 had attempted no further daylight assaults after destroying Company B. The able-bodied strength of the battalion was down to around three hundred fifty men. Supplies were so critically short that Colonel Carne had had to risk sending a carrying party to the former headquarters site in the valley. Under the concealment of smoke, the group retrieved a small quantity of food, water, ammunition, and radio batteries. Carne pounded the remaining supplies and several vehicles in the valley with artillery fire to prevent them from falling into Chinese hands. The arrangements for resupply by airdrop, under way since midmorning, meanwhile bogged down in the mix of 29th Brigade, 3d Division, and I Corps channels for lack of an order to execute, and the drop finally was postponed to 0700 on the 25th. A last-minute effort to free-drop a few supplies from two 3d Division light aircraft was only partially successful, much of the material landing outside the Gloster position. Together, the sortie to the valley and the free-drop gave the Glosters scarcely enough for another night of modest battle.[14]

Colonel Carne had given Brigadier Brodie a correct appraisal of the battalion's condition after the brigade commander informed him of the 10th Battalion Combat Team's unsuccessful attack and relayed General Soule's order that the battalion was to stay in position. While not asking to withdraw, Carne warned that his reduced battalion would not be able to handle the Chinese much longer. Less lenient than he had been with the 10th Battalion Combat Team, Brodie insisted that it was essential that the Glosters remain in position as directed by General Soule. Carne chose to make his stand on the long, thin crest of Hill 235, where extremely steep slopes except on the

[13] Interv, Appleman with Huth; Ltr, CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army, 15 May 51, sub: Report of Gloucestershire Battalion, 22–25 Apr 51, and Incl 5 (Statement of Col O. P. Newman, CofS, 3d Inf Div); Interv, Appleman with Soule, 8 Sep 51; 3d Div G3 Jnl, Entry 129, 24 Apr 51; Interv, Appleman with Capt M. G. Harvey, CO, Co D, 1st Bn, the Gloucestershire Regiment, 10 Sep 51.

[14] Farrar-Hockley, *The Edge of the Sword*, pp. 47–50; Holles, *Now Thrive the Armourers*, p. 163; Ltr, CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army, 15 May 51, sub: Report of Gloucestershire Battalion, 22–25 Apr 51, Incl 8 (Memo, G4, 3d Div, to CG, 3d Div, 9 May 51, sub: Air Drop for Gloucester Battalion).

northwest and southeast limited the approaches favoring enemy attacks in strength. To prevent the Chinese from observing the change of position, Carne waited until after dusk to move his forces. The Glosters were dug in by 2100, Company A on the northwest and west, Company C and the remnants of Company B on the south and southeast, and Company D on the north and northeast.[15]

To the left of the Glosters, the *64th Army* had shown little of the clumsiness with which its *192d Division* opened operations against the ROK 1st Division. Driving out of its shallow bridgehead inside the Imjin River's Korangp'o-ri bend at midnight on the 23d, the *192d* slowly, but persistently, forced the 12th Regiment at the right of the ROK line to give ground. The pressure on the South Koreans increased around dawn, after the *190th Division* crossed the Imjin at several points southwest of Korangp'o-ri town and sent van units down the boundary between the ROK 11th and 12th Regiments. Also crossing the Imjin during the night in the Korangp'o-ri bend area, the *189th Division* of the *63d Army* advanced southeast on a course taking it into the gap between the ROK 12th Regiment and the Gloster battalion on Hill 235.[16]

By noon a battalion leading the attack of the *190th Division* drove a wedge more than a mile deep between the 11th and 12th Regiments. General Kang countered by sending a tank-infantry force—two battalions of his reserve 15th ROK Regiment and Company A, 73d Heavy Tank Battalion—against the penetration. By evening the task force drove out the Chinese and established defensive positions in the gap that had been opened between the 11th and 12th Regiments. By that time the *192d Division* had pressed back the 12th Regiment roughly three miles to the southwest of its original positions, widening by the same distance the gap between the South Korean division and the Gloster battalion on Hill 235. The *189th Division*, after brushing the right flank of the 12th Regiment, meanwhile began passing through the widening gap between the South Koreans and Glosters.[17]

As the 12th Regiment gave ground during the afternoon, General Milburn ordered his lone reserve, the 15th Infantry of the 3d Division, out of its assembly on the northwest outskirts of Seoul into positions six miles behind the South Koreans to block a secondary road, Route 1B, which if the Chinese reached would afford them an easy path to Route 1 and Seoul. Milburn shortly diverted the 1st Battalion of the 15th to clear Route 2X, a lateral secondary road connecting Route 1 to Route 3 at Uijongbu, after receiving a report that two hundred fifty infiltrating Chinese had set up a roadblock about seven miles west of Uijongbu. The 1st Battalion located the enemy force at 1800, killing twenty before the remaining Chinese broke away into nearby hills. With darkness approaching, the battal-

[15] Farrar-Hockley, *The Edge of the Sword*, pp. 49–53.

[16] I Corps Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, Apr 51, p. 23; Eighth Army PIR 286, 24 Apr 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entry 0040, 24 Apr 51; 3d Div, G2, Summary of Enemy Operations in the 29th BIB Sector During the Period 211800 to 251800 Apr 51, 9 May 51.

[17] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entries 0745 and 1515, 24 Apr 51; Eighth Army PIR 286, 24 Apr 51; Eighth Army POR, 24 Apr 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51.

ion commander elected to await morning before attempting to clear the surrounding area. Meanwhile, as General Milburn committed his only reserve unit, air observers and agents working in the area along Route 1 above the Imjin reported enemy forces moving south toward the river. The North Korean *I Corps* appeared ready to open its supporting attack along the west flank of the main enemy drive.[18]

Well before daylight on the 25th General Milburn became convinced that the I Corps would have to give up the Kansas line. As suspected, the North Korean *I Corps* was joining the offensive, although its initial move ended abruptly when its *8th Division* attempted to cross the Imjin over the railroad bridge near Munsan-ni and was blown back with high losses from artillery fire and air attacks.[19] But the *190th* and *192d Divisions* attacking in strength just after midnight drove the ROK 1st Division back another mile before giving respite, widening still more the gap between the South Koreans and Glosters. The *189th Division* continued, if slowly, to pass through the gap.[20]

Before midnight the entire front of the 3d Division was under assault. On Hill 235, scarcely an hour after Colonel Carne redeployed the Gloster battalion on the crest of the hill, Chinese attacked up the more gentle ascents on the northwest and southeast. In repeated rushes, with the lulls between used to bring up reinforcements, the Chinese failed to survive heavy Gloster fire concentrated on the two approaches until daylight, when an assault from the northwest carried the 235 peak. But so few Chinese survived this assault that a small Gloster counterattack easily restored the peak position. While Chinese gunners and mortarmen kept the Glosters under fire, another assault force began forming on the northwestern slopes, only to be almost totally destroyed by a flight of F–80s answering an earlier Gloster call for air support. During what would become a long lull, the Chinese began again to bring more men forward.[21]

Other Chinese forces—from the *187th* and *188th Divisions* and possibly from the *189th*—meanwhile moved far enough through the gaps on either side of the isolated Glosters to deliver small arms and mortar fire on the assembly areas of the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 65th Infantry, the Belgian battalion, the Philippine 10th Battalion Combat Team, the British 45th Field Regiment, and the command post of the 29th British Brigade. Some forces of the *188th Division* coming down from Hill 675 reached Route 11 a mile and a half behind the Northumberland Fusilier and Royal Ulster Rifle Battalions while those two units were fully engaged in beating back frontal assaults by other forces of the *188th*.[22]

[18] 15th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; I Corps Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, Apr 51, p. 23; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entry 2330, 24 Apr 51.

[19] Heretofore lacking a truly effective capacity for radar-directed night attacks, the Fifth Air Force now had an MPQ radar detachment in support of each U.S. corps—one north of Seoul, one near Hongch'on, and one near Wonju—and the system now worked with B–29s as well as B–26s. See Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, pp. 328–30.

[20] I Corps Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, Apr 51, pp. 23–24; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Hq, FEC, History of the North Korean Army, 1952.

[21] Farrar-Hockley, *The Edge of the Sword*, pp. 52–64.

[22] 3d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; 3d Div G3 Jnl, Entries 158, 159, and 165, 24 Apr 51, and Entries 9, 20, 28, 30, 33, 40, and 50, 25 Apr 51.

By dark on the 24th there had been no enemy action against the 7th Infantry deployed athwart Route 33 at the right of the 3d Division. With the sector quiet, the 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, had no difficulty in replacing the 3d Battalion, 65th Infantry, at the center of the regimental front in midafternoon to allow the latter to join its regiment near the 29th British Brigade command post in preparation for the scheduled attack to relieve the Gloster battalion. But after unproductive opening attacks on the 65th Infantry and Philippine 10th Battalion Combat Team and a slow approach to line Kansas, the *29th Division* opened more effective assaults on the 7th Infantry between 2000 and midnight of the 24th.[23] Two regiments of the division attacking across the Hant'an River hit all three battalions of the regiment. Hardest hit was the 2d Battalion on the right flank, which by 0230 on the 25th was surrounded. On orders of the regimental commander, Colonel Boswell, the battalion gradually infiltrated south in small groups and reassembled some four miles below line Kansas around daylight. The 1st and 3d Battalions held their ground but remained under pressure throughout the night.[24]

In the eastern half of the corps sector, the remainder of the *29th Division*, the *179th Division*, and the *81st Division* opened and steadily intensified attacks on the 25th Division between dusk and midnight. Simultaneous with frontal assaults on the 35th Infantry at the left, forces of the *29th Division* apparently coming out of the adjacent sector of the 7th Infantry to the west drew close enough to place fire on the regimental command post and supporting artillery units. On the right, Chinese penetrated and scattered the 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry. Unable to restore the position, General Bradley pulled the 24th Infantry and 27th Infantry onto a new line about a mile to the south but gained no respite as the Chinese followed closely.[25]

In the 24th Division sector at corps right, two companies of Chinese infiltrated the positions of the 19th Infantry during the night. But a greater danger was posed by the *60th Division*, which, after again routing the ROK 6th Division, reached and attacked the right flank of the 21st Infantry. The 21st bent its line and tied it to the position of its reserve battalion on the flank. But the *60th*, if it should shift to the south past the refused flank and the blocking position set up by the battalion of the 5th Infantry, could slip into the division and corps rear area through the big opening created by the ROK 6th Division's second retreat.[26]

Because of this danger on his exposed right flank, the continuing and effective heavy pressure on the 25th Division, and the threat of a major enemy penetration through the wide gap between the ROK 1st Division and 3d Division, General Milburn at 0500 on

[23] The 7th Infantry later estimated that it had been hit by forces from two divisions. See 7th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51. If a second division was involved, it probably was the *34th* which also had participated in the initial attacks at line Utah.

[24] 3d Div, G2, Summary of Enemy Operations, 21–25 Apr 51, 9 May 51; 3d Div POR 160, 24 Apr 51, and 161, 25 Apr 51; 7th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51.

[25] I Corps Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, Apr 51, pp. 20–21; Barth, *Tropic Lightning and Taro Leaf in Korea*, pp. 80–81.

[26] I Corps Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, Apr 51, p. 19; 24th Div PIR 286, 24 Apr 51.

the 25th ordered a withdrawal to line Delta, which, as set out in previously prepared corps plans, lay four to twelve miles, west to east, below line Kansas. He instructed the 24th and 25th Divisions to begin their withdrawals at 0800 but directed the ROK 1st Division and 3d Division not to withdraw until the surrounded Gloster battalion had been extricated. He specifically instructed General Soule to get the Glosters out before withdrawing, "even if you have to counterattack." [27]

Withdrawal to Line Delta

East of the Imjin

With the Yongp'yong River at its back, the 25th Division faced a canalized withdrawal over two bridges in the southeastern corner of its sector, one on Route 3, the other at Yongp'yong town two miles to the west. Earlier, after the Chinese had captured Hill 664 three miles directly north of the Route 3 crossing, General Bradley had set the 3d Battalion, 27th Infantry, in a blocking position above the bridge. For the withdrawal he ordered all of the 27th Infantry to cover both river crossings while first the 24th Infantry and then the 35th Infantry pulled back, the 24th using the Route 3 bridge, the 35th using the crossing at Yongp'yong town. To cover the withdrawing 27th Infantry, Bradley deployed his attached Turkish brigade astride Route 3 five miles below the Yongp'yong River. Despite the difficulty of withdrawing while heavily engaged, Bradley's forces succeeded in breaking contact with small losses. By early evening the 27th Infantry and 35th Infantry were deployed on line Delta, left to right, with the Turkish brigade and 24th Infantry assembled close behind the line.[28]

In the 24th Division sector, General Bryan deployed the 5th Infantry astride secondary Route 3A three miles behind line Kansas to cover the withdrawal of the 19th and 21st Regiments. Attached to the 5th in support were its usual companion, the 555th Field Artillery Battalion, and Company D, 6th Medium Tank Battalion. Also directed by Bryan to join the covering force was the 8th Ranger Company, which, as an attachment to the 21st Infantry, had been patrolling to the east in search of Chinese coming out of the IX Corps sector and currently was in an isolated position atop Hill 1010 about a half mile off the right flank of the 21st. But before the Rangers could make their move, they were surrounded and attacked by forces of the *60th Division.* The 3d Battalion, 5th Infantry, which Bryan earlier had placed in a blocking position along his east flank, meanwhile observed Chinese moving south and west past its position.[29] The *60th Division* obviously had found and was moving into the open flank.

First the 19th Infantry, then the 21st Infantry, broke contact and withdrew

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[27] I Corps Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, Apr 51, p. 24; I Corps Withdrawal Plan "Golden" #1, 17 Apr 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entry 0500, 25 Apr 51; Rad, Eighth Army AG In no. CX 4329, CG I Corps to CG 3d Div et al., 25 Apr 51 (confirms oral orders); 3d Div G3 Jnl, Entry 40, 25 Apr 51. Quotation is from last source.

[28] I Corps Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, Apr 51, pp. 20, 26.

[29] Ibid., p. 24; 555th FA Bn Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; 6th Med Tk Bn Comd Rpt, S3 Nar, Apr 51; 21st Inf S3 Jnl, Entries 0421, 0650, 0750, and 0820, 25 Apr 51; Interv, Appleman with S2 (Maj Hamilton), 3d Bn, 5th RCT.

without difficulty. By 1830 both regiments were in position on line Delta and were deployed as before, the 19th on the left, the 21st on the right. Once on Delta, the 21st Infantry was engaged by Chinese moving in from the northeast but turned back these forces with no loss of ground. Later in the evening the 21st made contact with the ROK 6th Division, which General Hoge had managed to redeploy at the left of the IX Corps sector of the Delta line.[30]

Lt. Col. Arthur H. Wilson, Jr., who had recently replaced Colonel Throckmorton as the 5th Infantry commander, was forced to delay his withdrawal until the 8th Ranger Company, which was attempting to fight its way out of its encircled position, reached him. To assist the attempt, Wilson sent five tanks toward Hill 1010. En route, the tankers met and took aboard sixty-five Rangers, most of them wounded. They were all who had survived the breakout attempt.[31]

It was late afternoon before the tankers returned with the Rangers and Colonel Wilson got his forces in march order for withdrawing down Route 3A through the positions of the 19th Infantry and into an assembly area four miles behind line Delta. The 3d Battalion led the way south, followed by the 555th Field Artillery Battalion, 1st Battalion, 2d Battalion, and, as rear guard, Company D, 6th Medium Tank Battalion. A few mortar rounds exploded around the 3d Battalion as it cleared a defile about a half mile from the Delta front. Battalion members assumed that these were registration rounds fired by the 19th Infantry. Actually, they were the opening shots of a large Chinese force occupying the ridges along both sides of the road from the defile north for more than a mile. A crescendo of Chinese small arms, machine gun, recoilless rifle, and mortar fire brought the remainder of Colonel Wilson's column to an abrupt halt and began to take a toll of men, weapons, and vehicles.[32]

Hardest hit was the 555th Field Artillery Battalion. Its return fire, including direct fire from its howitzers, silenced the Chinese along the west side of the road; but the fire from obviously larger numbers of Chinese on the east side grew in volume and kept most of Wilson's column pinned down. Three attacks by forces of the 1st Battalion were broken up, as was an attempt by the 2d Battalion to deploy. An attack from the south by Company A, 6th Medium Tank Battalion, and a company from the 19th Infantry failed at the narrow lower end of the defile at a cost of two tanks and the infantrymen riding them.[33]

Searching for a way around the roadblock, rearguard tankers from Company D meanwhile found a track branching west off Route 3A a mile north of the defile and a connecting road leading south to be free of Chinese. Moving out under continuing

[30] I Corps Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, Apr 51, p. 25; 24th Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51.

[31] New York *Post*, 26 May 51; Interv, Appleman with S2 (Maj Hamilton).

[32] I Corps Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, Apr 51, p. 25: New York *Post*, 26 May 51; Interv, Appleman with S2 (Maj Hamilton); 555th FA Bn Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; 6th Med Tk Bn Comd Rpt, S3 Nar, Apr 51.

[33] 555th FA Bn Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Interv, Appleman with Lt Col Harry E. Stuart, CO, 555th FA Bn, 9 Aug 51; 6th Med Tk Bn Comd Rpt, S3 Nar, Apr 51; Interv, Appleman with S2 (Maj Hamilton); New York *Post*, 26 May 51.

fire, but not pursued by the Chinese, Wilson's forces followed the roundabout route and escaped without further losses, reaching the lines of the 19th Infantry shortly after dark. During the night, aircraft and artillery bombarded the weapons, vehicles, and equipment left behind: seven tanks, five from Company D, 6th Medium Tank Battalion, and two from the 5th Infantry's regimental tank company; eleven howitzers from the 555th Field Artillery Battalion; and a host of trucks, more than sixty from the 555th alone. The artillerymen also suffered the most personnel casualties. The initial count was one hundred killed, wounded, and missing, a figure somewhat reduced later as stragglers regained 24th Division lines over the next two days.[34]

Hill 235

No longer concerned with maintaining the 3d Division's line Kansas positions along the Imjin after receiving General Milburn's early morning withdrawal order, General Soule immediately canceled the attack by the 65th Infantry originally scheduled to start at 0630 to relieve the Gloster battalion and clear enemy forces from the Hill 675 area. The latest report from the 29th Brigade, in any case, indicated that the Glosters were holding their own, that they had "asked for some Arty but OK."[35] To rescue the Glosters, the main task seemed only to be to clear Route 5Y and escort the battalion to the rear. More worrisome to General Soule was a report that a large Chinese force (which would have had to be the *189th Division*) coming through the gap between the ROK 1st and 3d Divisions was bypassing the 3d Division on the left and moving southeast toward Route 33, the division's main line of communication. During the early morning Soule dispatched the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 65th Infantry, the Philippine 10th Battalion Combat Team, and the 3d Reconnaissance Company to take up positions athwart what appeared to be the line of march of the enemy force to prevent it from reaching the road. Since the Royal Ulster Rifle and Northumberland Fusilier Battalions seemed certain to have difficulty in withdrawing with Route 11 now interdicted by Chinese behind them, Soule left the 3d Battalion, 65th Infantry, in position west of the 29th Brigade's command post to help cover the two battalions when they came south. Brigadier Brodie strengthened the cover by deploying the Belgian battalion across Route 11 just north of his command post. Except that the 3d Battalion, 65th Infantry, might be diverted from its covering mission, Soule by daylight on the 25th had committed all reserves available to him except the division's 64th Tank Battalion and the 65th Infantry's tank company. Any force formed to rescue the Glosters would have to be from these units. Soule assigned that task as a joint venture to Brigadier Brodie and Colonel Harris, commander of the 65th Infantry.[36]

[34] 6th Med Tk Bn Comd Rpt, S3 Nar, Apr 51; Interv, Appleman with Stuart, 9 Aug 51; Interv, Appleman with Lt Edward P. Crockett, Plat Ldr, 5th Inf Regtl Tk Co; 555th FA Bn Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51.

[35] 3d Div G3 Jnl, Entry 28, 25 Apr 51.

[36] 3d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; 3d Div G3 Rpt, Nar of Opns, Apr 51; 65th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Dolcater, *3d Infantry Division in Korea*, p. 198; Rpt, CG 3d Inf Div, on actions of the Gloucestershire Battalion, 22–25 Apr 51, Annex 9, Reserves Available to CG, 3d Inf Div.

Shortly after giving Brodie and Harris responsibility for organizing the rescue mission, Soule allowed the 7th Infantry, which remained under attack by the *29th Division* and whose right flank would soon be completely uncovered by the withdrawal of the 25th Division, to begin its withdrawal. The 2d Battalion, already off the line, led the withdrawal, while the 3d Battalion pulled out of its left flank position and followed a trail leading southwest behind the covering 1st Battalion to reach Route 33 and continue south. Company A fought a difficult but highly effective rearguard action as the 1st Battalion disengaged near noon.[37]

Meanwhile, at 0800 Brigadier Brodie and Colonel Harris were still conferring at Brodie's command post to decide the composition of the rescue force. Concerned because the force was not yet on the way, Brig. Gen. A. D. Mead, assistant division commander, joined the conference at that time and emphasized the need for speed. Colonel Harris responded that he understood his mission perfectly and that, if left alone, he and Brodie would handle it.[38]

Major Huth, the British tank company commander who had participated in the unsuccessful attempt to reach the Glosters the day before, tried but failed to convince Colonel Harris that tanks would not be able to reach the Glosters unless accompanied by a strong infantry force. Harris' final decision, with which Brodie agreed, was that the task called for light tanks only. Capt. Claude Smith, whose 65th Infantry tank company thus was assigned the mission, wanted to use his entire company. But Harris believed that one platoon was all that could be profitably employed. Harris assured General Mead, however, that he was prepared to follow up with greater strength if necessary.[39]

The tank platoon, short one tank left behind for maintenance, started up Route 5Y after 0900. *(Map 34)* Apparently out of a belated interest in speed, the tankers moved out before an observer from the 10th Field Artillery Battalion, which was to have supported the operation, could join them. Nor were the tankers in communication with the regimental command post.[40] The single source of reports on the platoon's progress was a division observer periodically flying overhead.[41]

About the time that Captain Smith's tanks began advancing toward the Gloster battalion, General Kang, the ROK 1st Division commander, attempted a similar but somewhat stronger move, sending the 2d Battalion of his 12th Regiment and two platoons of Company C, 73d Heavy Tank Battalion, north to restore the right flank position lost by the 12th Regiment on the 24th and then to make contact with the Glosters. Under way

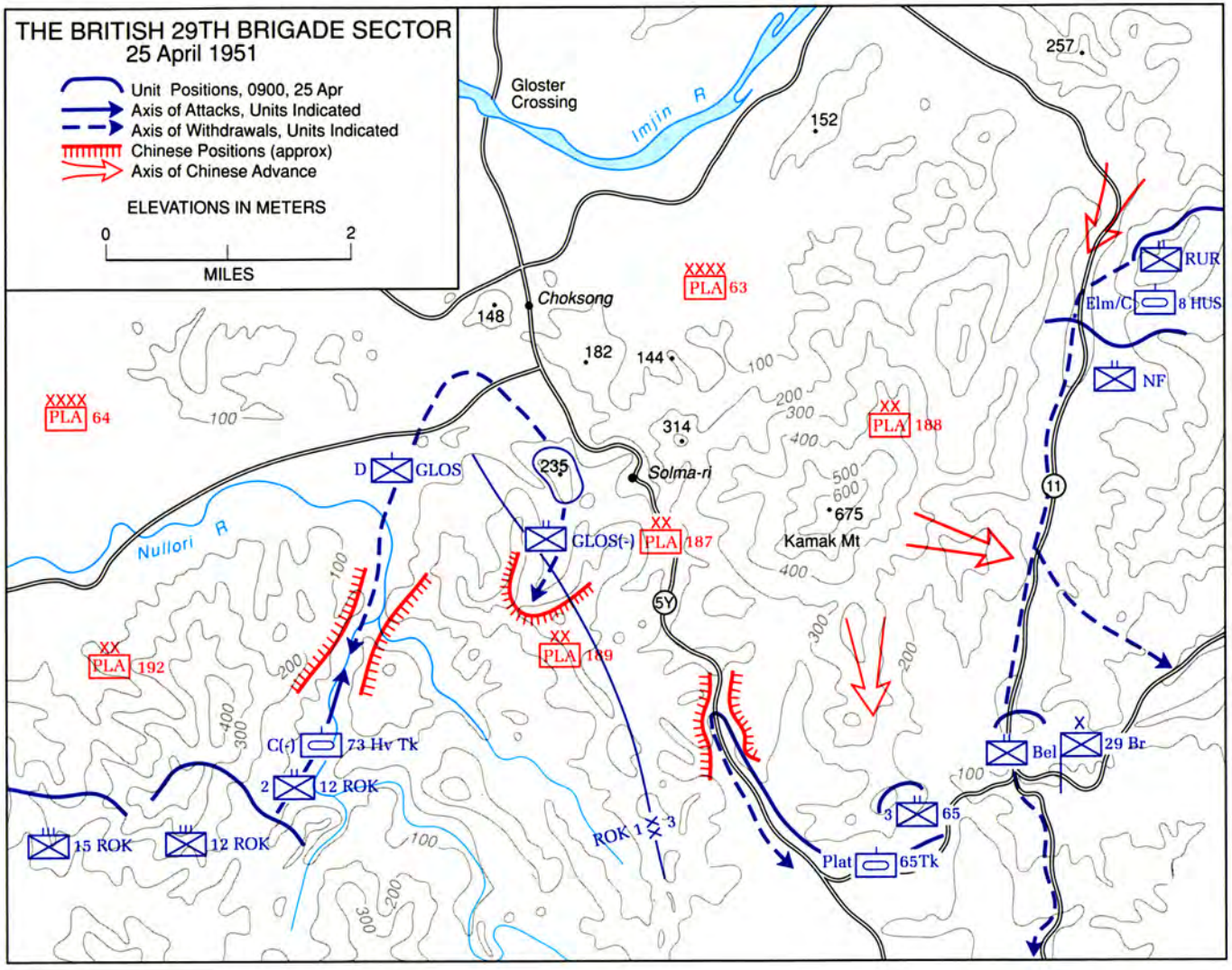
[37] 3d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; 3d Div POR 161, 25 Apr 51; 7th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Gugeler, *Combat Actions in Korea,* pp. 144–53 (revised edition, 1970). See the last for a detailed account and appraisal of Company A's rear-guard action.

[38] Memo, Brig Gen A. D. Mead for CG, 3d Inf Div, 7 May 51.

[39] Ibid.; Intervs, Appleman with Huth, Capt Claude Smith, CO, 65th Inf Tk Co, and 1st Lt Myron Dushkin, 65th Inf Tk Co.

[40] At the end of the slow planning session, Colonel Harris explained to General Mead that he had been unable to dispatch the tanks sooner because of the arrangements that had had to be made for communications and supporting fire. See Memo, Brig Gen A. D. Mead for CG, 3d Inf Div, 7 May 51.

[41] Intervs, Appleman with Smith and Lt Col Alvin L. Newbury, CO, 10th FA Bn.


THE BRITISH 29TH BRIGADE SECTOR
25 April 1951
Unit Positions, 0900, 25 Apr
Axis of Attacks, Units Indicated
Axis of Withdrawals, Units Indicated
Chinese Positions (approx)
Axis of Chinese Advance
ELEVATIONS IN METERS
0
2
MILES
Gloster Crossing
Imjin R
Choksong
Solma-ri
Kamak Mt
Nullori R
XXXX PLA 63
XXXX PLA 64
XX PLA 188
XX PLA 187
XX PLA 189
XX PLA 192
D GLOS
GLOS(-)
C(-) 73 Hv Tk
2 12 ROK
15 ROK
12 ROK
ROK 1
3
Plat 65Tk
3 65
Bel 29 Br
RUR
Elm/C 8 HUS
NF
148
182
144
314
235
675
152
257
100
200
300
400
500
600
5Y
11

MAP 34

before 0900, the ROK battalion and American tanks moved up the valley of the small Nullori River for perhaps a mile before Chinese forces from heights edging the valley opened fire and brought the advance to a halt. As of noon, the fire fight continued, with neither side gaining the deciding edge.[42] But although General Kang's attempt to reach the Glosters had been stopped, it would shortly prove not to have failed altogether.

The air observer following the progress of the 65th Infantry's tank platoon on Route 5Y meanwhile reported that the tanks had reached the Glosters and that they were on the way out. But the report was incorrect. The tankers had got into a fire fight far short of Hill 235, had used most of their ammunition, and, fearing they would be cut off when they sighted Chinese moving on their flanks, had withdrawn, reaching their company area between noon and 1300. Colonel Harris ordered another try by a different platoon, which, accompanied by an artillery observer and tactical air control party and escorted overhead by two flights of fighters and an observer, left about 1400. A mile out of the company area, the platoon was flagged to a halt by Major Huth, the British tank company commander, who convinced the platoon leader that the light tanks could not reach Hill 235. As Colonel Harris decided against any further attempt and withdrew his tanks, there was, in any case, little reason to try again. Hours before, almost immediately after the early morning planning conference with Colonel Harris, Brigadier Brodie had taken private steps to get the Glosters out. Though he had voiced agreement that the employment of a tank platoon was the practical solution to opening Route 5Y for the battalion, he apparently was unconvinced that the small armored force could succeed and about 0900 had ordered the Glosters to fight their way back. Brodie followed with orders to the Royal Ulster Rifles and Northumberland Fusilier Battalions to withdraw south over Route 11 through the covering Belgian battalion.[43] Once the Glosters, Royal Ulster Rifles, and Northumberland Fusiliers reached the 29th Brigade command post area, the brigade was to move back to the Delta line. But the withdrawals of all three battalions would take decidedly different courses.

From its outset at midmorning the withdrawal of the Royal Ulster Rifles and Northumberland Fusilier Battalions was a fight to the rear with Chinese storming down on Route 11 from the Hill 675 area. To escape the Chinese, most of the British troops turned east off Route 11 and made their way out over open country. Worse off were some two hundred wounded loaded on the backs and sides of eight Centurion tanks, which had no choice but to run the gauntlet. Several tanks were disabled, and most of their passengers were killed. Caught up in the fight, the Belgian battalion became scattered but held its ground. Late in the afternoon Brigadier Brodie finally succeeded in breaking contact and started

[42] I Corps Report on Action of Gloster Battalion, 29th British Brigade, 23, 24, 25 Apr 51, 3 May 51; 73d Hvy Tk Bn Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51.

[43] Interv, Appleman with Newbury; 3d Div G3 Jnl, Entries 90 and 128, 25 Apr 51. See also Intervs, Appleman with Smith; Sgt Young Gladden, Jr., 65th Inf Tk Co; Dushkin; Huth; and Brig Brodie, 10 Sep 51.



MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH 29TH INFANTRY BRIGADE REST *following their difficult withdrawal from Imjin River positions.*

his somewhat tangled forces, including the Belgians but not the Glosters, toward line Delta. As the 29th Brigade cleared, the 3d Battalion, 65th Infantry, briefly engaged Chinese near its blocking position, then broke away and followed the British brigade.[44] The isolated Gloster battalion meanwhile had attempted its breakout, the course of which was not yet clear to anyone in Brodie's headquarters or that of the 3d Division.

On Hill 235, during the continuing quiet that had settled over the Gloster position following the devastating air strike on the Chinese by the flight of F–80s, Colonel Carne had issued orders for the battalion's withdrawal about 0930. If he knew that the 65th Infantry tank platoon was then starting up Route 5Y toward him, he eschewed any attempt to move south to meet it. Off the left rear of the battalion was a valley leading upslope to a saddle about a mile southwest of Hill 235. Carne did not know the exact location of the 12th

[44] 3d Div G3 Jnl, Entries 52 and 93, 25 Apr 51; 3d Div, G3, Summary of 29th BIB Action, 22–25 Apr 51, 14 May 51; 3d Div, G2, Summary of Enemy Operations, 21–25 Apr 51, 9 May 51; Ely Jacques Kahn, *The Gloucesters: An Account of the Epic Stand of the Gloucestershire Regiment in Korea* (London: Central Office of Information, 1951), p. 11; Holles, *Now Thrive the Armourers*, pp. 166–67; Rpt, CG, 3d Inf Div, on actions of the Gloucestershire Battalion, 22–25 Apr 51, Annex 9, Reserves Available to CG, 3d Inf Div.

ROK Regiment's position, nor did he know that the 2d Battalion of the regiment and the two platoons of Company C, 73d Heavy Tank Battalion, were then attacking generally toward him. But he believed that moving southwest through the valley toward the right flank of the ROK 1st Division would be the quickest way to reach safety and, if the Glosters could make it through the saddle, that they would have a good chance of making it all the way. With the 45th Field Regiment providing artillery support on call, Company A was to lead the withdrawal about 1000, Company C and battalion headquarters and support troops were to follow, and Company D was to bring up the rear. When Carne announced that he would remain on Hill 235 with the severely wounded men (about fifty litter cases), the battalion surgeon, chaplain, and several enlisted medics volunteered to stay with him.[45]

Since Chinese had been observed in that area during the past two days, Company D commander Capt. M. G. Harvey considered the valley a risky route, particularly for his company, which would be bringing up the rear of the battalion. Even if Chinese were not on the heights bordering the valley, he reasoned, they might be near enough to spot the Gloster movement and set up a trap before Company D could clear the saddle. He preferred to try the unexpected, to move forward off the steep northeast side of Hill 235 where the Chinese had attempted no assault, follow Route 5Y for about a mile, swing west through a lateral valley around the hill mass through which the remainder of the battalion would attempt to pass, then turn south through another valley toward the ROK 1st Division's lines. As Company A led the rest of the battalion into the valley to the southwest, Captain Harvey gave his men, including a dozen members of the support company who had been operating with Company D, the choice of surrendering or going with him on the roundabout route. If a man went down, Harvey warned, he would be left behind. The entire group, about a hundred men, elected the escape attempt. If Colonel Carne knew of Harvey's plan, he did not object. All Glosters, in any case, would now be entirely on their own since, just as they began their withdrawal, Carne received word from brigade headquarters—the last his feeble radio would pick up—that the 45th Field Regiment was under too heavy fire to provide support.[46]

A few minutes after the Glosters moving into the valley to the southwest cleared Hill 235, Captain Harvey led his group off the north side of the hill. All men had taken off their distinctive berets to prevent easy identification by Chinese who might observe them. Moving alternately at a trot and fast walk, they encountered only two Chinese, whom they killed, on the northern leg of their route and none on the mile-long stretch to the west. At the point of turning south, Harvey offered his men a breather, but they refused. They were determined, he recalled later, "to come out or get bloody killed." Appearing overhead as they turned to enter the valley leading south was a Mosquito

[45] Farrar-Hockley, *The Edge of the Sword*, pp. 64–67.

[46] Rpt, CG, 3d Inf Div, on actions of the Gloucestershire Battalion, 22–25 Apr 51, Interv with Survivors; Interv, Appleman with Harvey, 10 Sep 51; Kahn, *The Gloucesters*, pp. 13–15; Farrar-Hockley, *The Edge of the Sword*, pp. 64–67.

plane whose pilot waggled wings in recognition and stayed overhead to guide the column toward the 12th ROK Regiment.[47]

About a mile into the valley, as Harvey's group entered a narrow stretch, thirty or more Chinese riflemen and machine gunners opened fire from the bordering ridges and chased the Glosters into the nearest cover, a muddy ditch about a foot deep. As they crawled through the ditch, the Mosquito pilot's call brought in fighter planes which worked over the ridges but scarcely dampened the Chinese fire. At intervals the ditch petered out, forcing Harvey and his men to dash forward to the next segment. In each instance, Glosters were hit.[48]

Negotiating a slight bend in the ditch, the Glosters were spurred on by the sight of American tanks a half mile or so down the valley engaged in a fire fight with Chinese on the flanking hills. Spotting the crawling troops a short time later, the tankers—the two platoons of Company C, 73d Heavy Tank Battalion—mistook the muddied, hatless Glosters for enemy and opened fire with machine guns and cannon. Six men were hit before the Mosquito pilot overhead could drop a note identifying the approaching troops.[49]

The tank company commander with several tanks set out immediately to meet the Glosters. With the wounded inside and others either trotting alongside or riding on the rear of the tanks, the two platoons sprayed the hills to either side with heavy machine gun fire as they escorted the survivors of Harvey's group to safety behind the 2d Battalion, 12th ROK Regiment. A total of forty—Captain Harvey, three other officers, and thirty-six men—were rescued.[50]

During the time that General Kang's infantry-tank group had moved up the Nullori valley and returned with the Glosters about 1400, his 11th and 15th Regiments had fought off hard attacks by forces, estimated at three regiments, of the *190th* and *192d Divisions*. As the Chinese attacks weakened and then faded out around 1630, Kang pulled his division back to line Delta, setting the tank destroyer battalion, 11th Regiment, and 15th Regiment on line and placing the 12th Regiment in reserve. To his east was the 65th Infantry, which after making no contact with any large Chinese force advancing toward Route 33 had moved on to the Delta line. General Milburn meanwhile released General Soule's 15th Infantry from corps reserve in exchange for the tattered 29th British Brigade. Soule set the 15th next to the 65th Infantry on line Delta and placed the 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, on the right flank of the 3d Division front while keeping the remainder of the 7th in division reserve.[51]

As the 3d Division occupied positions along line Delta, General Soule's only information on the condition and location of the remainder of the Gloster battalion was a noontime report from a

[47] Interv, Appleman with Harvey, 10 Sep 51; Kahn, *The Gloucesters*, pp. 13–15.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.; Rpt, CG, 3d Inf Div, on actions of the Gloucestershire Battalion, 22–25 Apr 51, Interv with Survivors.

[50] 73d Hvy Tk Bn Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Rpt, CG, 3d Inf Div, on actions of the Gloucestershire Battalion, 22–25 Apr 51, Interv with Survivors.

[51] I Corps Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, Apr 51, pp. 26–27; 65th Inf S3 Jnl, 25 Apr 51, Results of Events; 3d Div POR 161, 25 Apr 51; 15th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51.

division observer flying over the Hill 235 area. "At CT 182005," the observer reported, "approximately 225 29th BIB soldiers are located. They act as [if] they are lost. They walked to the end of the road, found a dead end—returned to their present positions and set [sic] down." [52]

The observer unwittingly had reported the capture of the Glosters in the southwest valley. The "road" he mentioned was a trail leading up to the saddle, the "dead end" the saddle itself. When the head of the Gloster column reached the saddle, Chinese machine gunners cupped around it opened fire, wounding several men but generally laying off the column. The fire informed the Glosters that they were trapped. On orders from their officers, the Glosters laid down arms. Chinese appearing from the heights above them, uncertain about what to do with so many captives, initially took the Glosters back down the trail and motioned to them to sit down.[53]

At the beginning of the Chinese offensive the Gloster battalion had numbered 28 officers and 671 men. In the Solma-ri area to support the battalion were 6 officers and 22 men of the 70th Battery, Royal Artillery, and 1 officer and 45 men of C Troop, 170th Mortar Battery, Royal Artillery. In its initial accounting of losses, 29th Brigade headquarters reported that 622 of these forces were "either KIA, WIA, or missing." Most of the reported casualties later proved captured. From the Gloster battalion itself, 21 officers and 509 men were taken captive, of whom 8 officers and 145 men had been wounded. Two officers and 24 men would die in captivity.[54] The high number of Glosters captured served to emphasize how thoroughly entrapped by Chinese Colonel Carne's forces had become.

When General Ridgway demanded a formal report on the loss of the Gloster battalion, General Van Fleet replied that in his opinion, "all reasonable and possible courses of action" had been attempted to save the unit. The failure of relief efforts he attributed to the strength and determination of the Chinese attacks, the Chinese capability to exploit early penetrations by infiltration and enveloping actions, and the limited reserves available to General Milburn, General Soule, and Brigadier Brodie with which to counter enemy successes.[55] While he believed that the Gloster position had had to be held as long as possible lest Chinese pour into the 3d Division and I Corps rear areas, Van Fleet privately faulted General Soule for tardiness in discovering how critical the Glosters' situation had become and thus for failing to make timely decisions on when and how to relieve the battalion.[56]

General Milburn found little fault with either Soule or Brigadier Brodie, although in a report to Van Fleet he drew particular attention to the confusion of instructions surrounding the

[52] 3d Div G2 Jnl, Entry 828, 25 Apr 51.

[53] Farrar-Hockley, *The Edge of the Sword*, pp. 64–67.

[54] Msg, Maj-Gen Anthony Farrar-Hockley thru British Embassy (Brig-Gen Watson) for author, 10 Aug 76; Ltr, Maj-Gen Anthony Farrar-Hockley to author, 16 Sep 76; I Corps Report on Action of Gloster Battalion, 29th British Brigade, 23, 24, 25 Apr 51, 3 May 51.

[55] Rad, C 61606, CINCFE to CG Eighth Army, 3 May 51; Ltr, CG Eighth Army to CINCFE, 26 May 51, sub: Report of Gloucestershire Battalion, 22–25 Apr 51.

[56] Interv, Appleman with Van Fleet, 15 Sep 51.

Philippine 10th Battalion Combat Team's unsuccessful attempt to reach the Glosters on 24 April. "It appears," he nevertheless told Van Fleet, "that every effort was made to reach the Gloster battalion when conditions over the remainder of the front are considered." [57]

In line with Van Fleet's private conclusions, General Soule admitted to not having been aware of the Glosters' true situation. Had he known the truth on 24 April, he said later, he would have taken command and pushed troops up Route 5Y to the battalion's position. At the time, he explained, he had believed that Brigadier Brodie had enough force in the Filipino battalion and supporting tanks to reach the Glosters, especially since Brodie did not ask for additional help while preparing to send the 10th Battalion Combat Team forward or while it was en route. Soule himself could not have taken a hand to prevent the withdrawal of the Filipino battalion since he was out of touch with Brodie's operation at the time, having gone to the sector of the hard-hit 7th Infantry.[58]

Brigadier Brodie took, as he put it, "50% responsibility" for failing to make clear to General Soule how serious the Gloster battalion's situation had become on 24 April. In Brodie's judgment, the 24th was the latest date on which the Glosters could have been rescued. This opinion accounted for his disinterest in the plan to send a tank platoon forward on the morning of the 25th and his consequent order to the Glosters to attempt to break out of their surrounded position. Brodie, in reviewing the action, was complimentary toward, not critical of, American efforts to help the Gloster battalion.[59] But behind his unwillingness to assume full responsibility for informing General Soule of the battalion's critical situation was perhaps a belief that Soule should have shown more initiative in finding out for himself.

General Ridgway assessed the operation as an example of the failure of a leader to know his men. Brigadier Brodie, Ridgway believed, should have known that the Gloster commander, Colonel Carne, was much given to quiet understatement and that his reports thus did not reflect the seriousness of the battalion's circumstances. Brodie himself should have determined the correct situation and should have sent or asked for help sooner. In sum, as Ridgway told Brodie personally, "the Gloster battalion should not have been lost." [60]

[57] Ltr, CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army, 15 May 51, sub: Report of Gloucestershire Battalion, 22–25 Apr 51.

[58] Interv, Appleman with Soule, 8 Sep 51.

[59] Ibid. with Brodie, 10 Sep 51.

[60] Interv, Mossman, Carroll, and Miller with Ridgway, 30 Nov 56.

CHAPTER XXIV

The Chinese Spring Offensive Battle for Seoul

General Milburn intended to make no stubborn or prolonged defense of line Delta. He considered it only a phase line to be occupied briefly in the I Corps' withdrawal to line Golden. He planned to mark out additional phase lines between Delta and Golden so that in each step of the withdrawal displacing artillery units would remain within range of the line being vacated and could provide continuous support to infantry units as they withdrew. Each move to the rear was to be made in daylight so that any enemy forces following the withdrawal could be hit most effectively with artillery fire and air strikes.[1]

Milburn ordered the next withdrawal at midmorning on the 26th after attacks opened during the night by the North Korean *I Corps* and *XIX Army Group* made inroads along the western portion of his Delta front. *(See Map 32.)* Hardest hit were the 11th Regiment of the ROK 1st Division astride Route 1 and the 65th Infantry at the left of the 3d Division. Chinese also entered a five-mile gap between the ROK 1st and 3d Divisions but made no immediate attempt to move deep. The next position to be occupied by Milburn's forces lay two to five miles below line Delta, generally on a line centered on and slightly above Uijongbu.[2]

General Hoge ordered conforming adjustments of the IX Corps line. The ROK 6th Division was to withdraw and tie in with the new right flank of the I Corps. Eastward, the British 28th Brigade was to reoccupy the hill masses previously held by the Canadians and Australians above Kap'yŏng; the 1st Marine Division was to pull back from line Kansas to positions straddling the Pukhan, running through the northern outskirts of Ch'unch'on, and following the lower bank of the Soyang River. Since the marines' withdrawal otherwise would leave the X Corps with an open left flank, General Almond was obliged to order the 2d and 7th Divisions away from the Hwach'on Reservoir and the west shoulder of the North Korean salient in the Inje area. The new line to be occupied by Almond's forces looped northeast from a junction with the 1st Marine Division along the Soyang to a point two miles below Yanggu, then fell off to the southeast

[1] I Corps Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, Apr 51, p. 28.

[2] Ibid., pp. 28–33; Rad, CIACT 4–15, CG I Corps to CG 3d Div et al., 26 Apr 51; Rad, CICCG 4–19, CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army, 26 Apr 51; Dolcater, *3d Infantry Division in Korea*, pp. 203–04.

to the existing position of the ROK 5th Division below Inje.[3]

Although the I Corps withdrawal, and thus the chain reaction eastward, was prompted by the heavy enemy pressure in the corps' western sector, there was evidence by 26 April that the main effort of the enemy offensive was beginning to falter. Enemy killed by infantry and artillery fire and air strikes on the I Corps front were estimated to number almost forty-eight thousand approximately the strength of five divisions. Intelligence information indicated that the stand of the Gloster battalion against forces of the *63d Army* and the early fumbling of the *64th Army* had upset the attack schedule of the *XIX Army Group* and that the group commander was committing the *65th Army* in an attempt to save the situation. But in this and other commitments of reserves, according to prisoner of war interrogations, enemy commanders were confused and their orders vague.[4]

With only the west sector of the army front under any serious threat, and that beginning to show signs of lessening, General Van Fleet on the 26th established an additional transpeninsular defense line that in the central and eastern sectors lay well north of line Nevada, the final line set out in the 12 April withdrawal plan. The new line incorporated the fortifications of line Golden arching above the outskirts of Seoul. Eastward, it bulged across the Pukhan River five miles above its confluence with the Han, then turned steeply northeast, crossing Route 29 ten miles below Ch'unch'on and cutting Route 24 fifteen miles south of Inje. Continuing to angle northeast, the line touched the east coast just above Yangyang. Implicit in Van Fleet's insistence on thorough coordination between corps during the withdrawal to the new line was that its occupation would be governed by the movement of the I Corps against the continuing enemy pressure on its front. Van Fleet's assignment of corps sectors along the line made the IX Corps responsible for defending the Pukhan and Han corridors; consequently, the 24th Division, currently located directly above that area, was to pass to IX Corps control on the 27th. When, contrary to custom, Van Fleet gave the line no name, it became known as No Name line.[5]

Of concern to Van Fleet after the I Corps pulled back from the Imjin was the possibility that enemy forces would cross the Han River estuary unseen west of Munsan-ni and sweep down the Kimpo peninsula behind Seoul, overrunning Inch'on, Kimpo Airfield, and the Seoul airport in the process. On 25 April he had asked the commander of the west coast group of Task Force 95 to keep the possible crossing site under surveillance, and on the 26th planes from the group's carriers began to fly over the area while in transit to and from close support targets. The cruiser *Toledo* meanwhile steamed for the

[3] Rad, IXACT–1355, CG IX Corps to CG 1st Marine Div, 26 Apr 51; Rad IXACT–1356, CG IX Corps to CGs 28th Brit Brig and ROK 6th Div, 26 Apr 51; X Corps OI 163, 26 Apr 51.

[4] I Corps Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, Apr 51, p. 38; Hq, USAFFE, Intel Dig, no. 96, 16–28 Feb 53, p. 27.

[5] Rad, GX–4–5200 KGOP, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 26 Apr 51; Rad, GX–4–5341 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CGs I and IX Corps, 26 Apr 51.



THE CRUISER USS TOLEDO IN ACTION

Inch'on area from the Sea of Japan to provide gunfire support.[6]

Enemy forces reaching the I Corps phase line after dark on the 26th attacked in each division sector except that of the 24th on the corps right. On the front of the 25th Division, Chinese concentrated an assault between two companies of the 27th Infantry, some reaching as far as a mile behind the line before regimental reserves contained them. A radar-directed bomb strike brought down at the point of penetration and ground fire delivered under light provided by a flare ship eliminated the enemy force.[7]

In a repetition of the pattern of enemy attacks on the I Corps' Delta front the previous night, the hardest assaults struck the ROK 1st Division and 65th Infantry at the left of the 3d Division's position west of Uijongbu. Telling artillery fire and air strikes helped contain penetrations of the 65th's line and force the Chinese to withdraw. Chinese attacking the 15th Regiment at the right of the ROK 1st Division's line forced a two-mile withdrawal before the South Koreans were able to block the advance. North Koreans attacking down Route

[6] Rad, GX–4–5130 KNLO, CG Eighth Army to CTG 95.1, 25 Apr 51; Rad, CTE 95.11 to CTG 95.1, 26 Apr 51; Rad, AG In no. CX–4480, CTG 95.1 to CG Eighth Army, 26 Apr 51; Field, *United States Naval Operations, Korea*, p. 346.

[7] I Corps Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, Apr 51, pp. 29–30.

1 against the 11th Regiment and against the tank destroyer battalion west of the road broke through the lines of both units and took a particularly high toll of tank destroyer troops before South Korean counterattacks supported by American tanks stopped the advance.[8]

At 0600 on the 27th, the 24th Division passed to IX Corps control, as had been directed by General Van Fleet, and what had been the boundary between the 24th and 25th Divisions became the new corps boundary. Shortly afterward, General Milburn ordered his remaining forces to withdraw to the next phase line, which would be the last occupied by the I Corps before it moved onto line Golden. West to east, the phase line lay one to seven miles above Golden, touching the Han near the village of Haengju located almost due north of Kimpo airfield below the river, cutting Route 1 and a minor road from the north near the village of Kup'abal-li, crossing Route 3 four miles south of Uijongbu, and also intersecting a minor road along the new corps boundary that below the phase line and line Golden joined Route 2 reaching Seoul from the east. Following suit, General Hoge ordered back the left of the IX Corps. The 24th Division, to which Hoge attached the ROK 6th Division and British 28th Brigade, was to take position adjoining the new I Corps line and stretching along the lower bank of the Pukhan toward the Ch'unch'on-Soyang River position of the 1st Marine Division.[9]

On the I Corps right, the two line regiments of the 25th Division had some difficulty in getting off the first phase line. The 27th Infantry ran into enemy groups that had got behind the regiment during the night, and Chinese closely following the 35th Infantry took that regiment under assault when it set up a covering position to help the 27th Infantry disengage. It was well into the afternoon before the two regiments could break away. General Bradley deployed the same two regiments on the second phase line. In preparation for further withdrawal, Bradley set the Turkish brigade in a covering position midway between the phase line and line Golden and assembled the 24th Infantry behind the Golden fortifications.[10]

On the 26th General Milburn had reinforced the 3d Division with the 7th Cavalry. In preparation for the withdrawal on the 27th, General Soule deployed the cavalry regiment at the left rear of the division as a precaution—which proved fortuitous—against a flanking attack by *XIX Army Group* forces who were continuing to press hard against the adjacent 15th Regiment of the ROK 1st Division. The cavalrymen fended off a Chinese attack from the northeast that lasted into the afternoon. Along the second phase line, General Soule meanwhile deployed his 7th and 15th Regiments at center and right and assembled the 65th Infantry in reserve. He later set the 7th Cavalry on line at the left.[11]

The continuing pressure kept the ROK 1st Division pinned in position

[8] Ibid., pp. 32, 34.

[9] Rad, GX–4–5341 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CGs I and IX Corps, 26 Apr 51; I Corps Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, Apr 51, p. 29; Rad, CIACT 4–172, CG I Corps to CG 3d Div et al., 27 Apr 51; Rad, IXACT–1366, CG IX Corps to CG 24th Div et al., 27 Apr 51.

[10] I Corps Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, Apr 51, p. 30.

[11] Ibid., p. 32; Rad, CIACT 4–167, CG I Corps to CGs 1st Cav Div and 3d Div, 26 Apr 51.

until late afternoon, then diminished enough to allow the South Koreans to begin the difficult task of disengaging while under attack. Enemy forces, however, failed to follow the withdrawal. Along the second phase line, General Kang deployed the 11th, 15th, and 12th Regiments west to east and set out screening forces well to the front.[12]

Enemy forces did not regain contact during the night. General Milburn nevertheless expected an eventual follow-up in strength and ordered his forces to occupy line Golden on the 28th. Again in chain reaction, Milburn's withdrawal order set in motion the move to No Name line by forces to the east.[13]

From the outset of the enemy offensive General Van Fleet had believed that a strong effort should be made to retain possession of Seoul, not only to gain the tactical advantage in maintaining a foothold above the Han River but also to prevent psychological damage to the Korean people. To give up the ROK capital a third time, he believed, "would ruin the spirit of the nation." [14] His determination to fight for the city lay behind his refusal to allow the Eighth Army simply to surrender ground in deep withdrawals and behind his order of 23 April directing a strong stand on line Kansas. Defeated in the latter effort, mainly by the failures of the ROK 6th Division, he had laid out No Name line in the belief that a successful defense of its segment athwart the Pukhan corridor would improve his chances of holding Seoul and that the corridor area could be used as a springboard to recapture the capital if the forces defending the city itself were pushed out.[15] In the central and eastern sectors, where enemy attacks had clearly lost their momentum by 26 April, the occupation of No Name would obviate relinquishing territory voluntarily, a cession that would occur if the forces in those sectors moved back to line Nevada as prescribed in the 12 April withdrawal plan.

Convinced by the morning of the 28th that the main enemy effort in the west was wearing out, Van Fleet informed corps commanders that he intended to "hold firmly" on No Name line. They were to conduct an active defense of the line, making full use of artillery in conjunction with armored counterattacks. Though members of his staff considered it a tactical mistake to risk having forces trapped against the north bank of the Han, Van Fleet insisted that there would be no withdrawal from the line unless extreme enemy pressure clearly imperiled Eighth Army positions, and then only if he himself ordered it.[16]

In case Van Fleet had to call a withdrawal from No Name line, the Eighth Army was to retire to line Waco, a move which would still hold the bulk of the army well above line Nevada. In the west, the new line designated by Van Fleet followed the Nevada trace along the lower bank of the Han; in the central and eastern areas, it lay nine to eighteen miles below No Name line. "For planning purposes only," Van

[12] I Corps Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, Apr 51, p. 34.

[13] Rad, CICCG 4–22, CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army, 28 Apr 51; Rad, CIACT 4–179, CG I Corps to CG 1st Cav Div et al., 28 Apr 51.

[14] Quotation from USAWC Research Paper, "A Will to Win," based on Intervs, Col Bruce F. Williams with Van Fleet, 6 Apr 73, p. 26.

[15] Interv, Appleman with Van Fleet, 15 Sep 51.

[16] Ibid.; Rad, GX–4–5638 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA et al., 28 Apr 51.

Fleet issued instructions for occupying line Waco late on the 28th.[17]

As I Corps forces began their withdrawal to line Golden at midmorning on the 28th, North Koreans in regimental strength were sighted massing near Haengju, the Han River village above Kimpo airfield, apparently in preparation for crossing the river. The massed fire of two artillery battalions and 8-inch fire from the cruiser *Toledo*, now stationed just off Inch'on, inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy group and forced the survivors to withdraw. A Chinese battalion attacking the 7th Cavalry below Uijongbu early in the morning but soon breaking contact after failing to penetrate and patrols investigating the positions of the 25th Division around noon were the only other enemy actions along the corps front during the day.[18]

The ROK 1st Division, which had scarcely more than a mile to withdraw, reached line Golden early in the day. Assigned a narrow sector from the Han to a point just short of Route 1, General Kang was able to hold his 12th Regiment and tank destroyer battalion in reserve. The 11th and 15th Regiments manning the Golden fortifications were able to use a battalion each in outpost lines, organizing these units about two miles to the northwest. Behind the 3d Division, the 1st Cavalry Division occupied Golden positions between and including Routes 1 and 3. General Milburn ordered General Soule to return the 7th Cavalry to the 1st Cavalry Division, to assemble the 3d Division less the 65th Infantry in Seoul in corps reserve, and to prepare counterattack plans. Milburn attached the 65th Infantry to the 25th Division so that General Bradley, using the 65th and his own reserve, the 24th Infantry, could man the eastern sector of the Golden line while the remainder of his division was withdrawing.[19]

As deployed for the defense of Seoul by evening of the 28th, the I Corps had six regiments on line and the same number assembled in and on the edges of the city. Below the Han to meet any enemy attempt to envelop Seoul were the British 29th Brigade at the base of the Kimpo peninsula in the west and the Turkish brigade on the east flank. With adequate reserves, fortified defenses, and a narrower front that allowed heavier concentrations of artillery fire, the corps was in a position far stronger than any it had occupied since the beginning of the enemy offensive.[20]

In contrast, there was further evidence that the enemy's offensive strength was weakening. The most recent prisoners taken had only one day's rations or none at all. Interrogation of these captives revealed that local foraging produced very little food and that resupply had collapsed under the Far East Air Forces' interdiction of enemy rear areas. The steady air attacks also had seriously impeded the forward movement of artillery. Confusion and disorganization among enemy forces appeared to be increasing. Command-

[17] Rad, GX–4–5749 KGOP, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 28 Apr 51.

[18] I Corps Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, Apr 51, pp. 30–34; Rad, CIACT 4–179, CG I Corps to CG 1st Cav Div et al., 28 Apr 51; Rad, AG In no. CX–5246, COMNAVFE to CINCFE, 29 Apr 51.

[19] I Corps Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, Apr 51, pp. 30, 33–34; Dolcater, *3d Infantry Division in Korea*, pp. 204, 206.

[20] I Corps Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, Apr 51, p. 35 and Map 7, following p. 38.

ers were issuing only such general instructions as "go to Seoul" and "go as far to the south as possible." On one occasion, according to prisoners, reserve forces ordered forward moved south under the impression that Seoul already had fallen. One factor in the deterioration was a high casualty rate among political officers—especially at company level—on whom the Chinese Army depended so heavily for maintaining troop motivation and discipline.[21]

Obviously willing, if growing less able, to continue the attack on Seoul, the North Korean *8th Division* assisted on its left by Chinese in what appeared to be regimental strength struck the outpost line of the ROK 1st Division shortly before midnight on the 28th. Accurate defensive fire, especially from tanks, artillery, and the guns of the *Toledo*, broke up the attack before enemy assault forces could get through the outpost line and reach the main South Korean positions. Tank-infantry forces sent out by General Kang after daylight followed and fired on retreating enemy groups for two miles, observing between nine hundred and a thousand enemy dead along the route.[22]

The *8th Division*'s attack proved to be the only serious enemy attempt to break through the Golden fortifications. Another effort appeared to be in the offing during the day of the 29th when patrols and air observers reported a large enemy buildup on the front of the 25th Division, but heavy artillery fire and air attacks delivered after dark broke up the enemy force.[23] Division patrols searching the enemy concentration area after daylight on the 30th found an estimated one thousand enemy dead. Across the corps front, patrols moving as much as six miles above line Golden on the 30th made only minor contacts. On the basis of the patrol findings, General Milburn reported to General Van Fleet that the enemy forces on his front were staying out of artillery range while regrouping and resupplying for further attacks.[24] Actually in progress was the beginning of a general enemy withdrawal.

In dropping back to No Name line, Eighth Army forces since 22 April had given up about thirty-five miles of territory in the I and IX Corps sectors and about twenty miles in the sectors of the X and ROK III Corps. Logistical planning completed in anticipation of the enemy offensive had kept line units well furnished with all classes of supplies during the attacks and at the same time had prevented any loss of stocks stored in major supply points during the withdrawal. Gearing removal operations to the phased rearward movements, service forces had shifted supplies and equipment southward to predetermined locations from which line units could be readily resupplied without

[21] Ibid., pp. 35, 38; George, *The Chinese Communist Army in Action*, p. 10.

[22] Rad, CICCG 4–23, CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army, 29 Apr 51; Rad, AG In no. CX 5260, CTF 95 to COMNAVFE et al., 29 Apr 51; I Corps Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, Apr 51, p. 36.

[23] A number of published works on the war report that six thousand enemy attempted to ferry the Han and attack down the Kimpo peninsula to outflank Seoul on 29 April and that air attacks defeated the effort. The official records do not support these accounts. The authors may have been referring to the North Korean effort to cross the river at Haengju on the 28th.

[24] I Corps Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, Apr 51, pp. 36–37; Rad, CICCG 4–24, CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army, 30 Apr 51.

risking the loss of supply points to advancing enemy forces.[25]

Steady rail movements and back loading aboard ships had all but cleared Inch'on of supplies by the 30th, and LSTs were standing by to take aboard the 2d Engineer Special Brigade and ten thousand South Koreans who had been operating the port.[26] Against the possibility that Inch'on would have to be given up, General Ridgway on the 30th took steps to forestall a repetition of the heavy damage done to the port when it was abandoned in January, damage that had served only to hinder use of the port after it was recaptured. Ridgway instructed General Van Fleet not to demolish port facilities if it became necessary to evacuate Inch'on again but to leave it to UNC naval forces to prevent the enemy from using the port.[27]

Among U.S. Army divisions, casualties suffered between 22 and 29 April totaled 314 killed and 1,600 wounded. In both number and rate, these losses were scarcely more than half the casualties suffered among the divisions engaged for a comparable period of time during the Chinese offensive opened in late November.[28]

Among a variety of estimates, an Eighth Army headquarters report for the eight-day period from evening of the 22d to evening of the 30th listed 13,349 known enemy dead, 23,829 estimated enemy dead, and 246 taken captive. This report included information obtained daily from U.S. and allied ground units only. At UNC headquarters in Tokyo, the estimate was that enemy forces suffered between 75,000 and 80,000 killed and wounded, 50,000 of these in the Seoul sector. Other estimates listed 71,712 enemy casualties on the I Corps front and 8,009 in the IX Corps sector. Although none of the estimates was certifiable, enemy losses were unquestionably huge.[29]

Notwithstanding the high enemy losses, General Van Fleet cautioned on 1 May that the enemy had the men to attack again "as hard as before or harder."[30] The total strength of Chinese forces in Korea as of that date was believed to be about 542,000 and that of North Korean forces to be over 197,000. The 1 May estimate in General Ridgway's headquarters credited the enemy with having 300,000 men currently in position to attack, most of these on the central front.

[25] Eighth Army, "Logistical Problems and Their Solutions," pp. 105–06.

[26] Also jamming Inch'on in hopes of being evacuated by sea were some two hundred thousand refugees. Most of these had come from Seoul during the past week, leaving only about a hundred thousand inhabitants in the capital city.

[27] Eighth Army, "Logistical Problems and Their Solutions," p. 107; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51; Rad, CX 61384, CINCFE to CG Eighth Army, 30 Apr 51.

[28] Reister, *Battle Casualties and Medical Statistics*, p. 30.

[29] Eighth Army G3 PORs, 22–30 Apr 51; *Facts on File*, vol. XI, no. 548, 27 Apr–3May 51, p. 137; I Corps Rpt, The Communist First Phase Spring Offensive, Apr 51, p. 38; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Apr 51.

[30] *Facts on File*, vol. XI, no. 548, 27 Apr–3 May 51, p. 137.

CHAPTER XXV

Battle Below the Soyang

Intent on confronting enemy forces with the most formidable defenses yet, General Van Fleet on 30 April ordered the length of No Name line fortified like its line Golden segment around Seoul. Fortifications were to include log and sandbag bunkers, multiple bands of barbed wire with antipersonnel mines interspersed, and 55-gallon drums of napalm mixed with gasoline set out in front of defensive positions and rigged for detonation from the bunkers.[1] Van Fleet also wanted provision made for counterattacking quickly once the enemy had been turned back.

Van Fleet expected the enemy's next principal effort to come either in the west, as had the main force of the April attacks, or on his central front. Judging the Uijongbu-Seoul, Pukhan River, and Ch'unch'on-Hongch'on corridors to be the most likely axes of enemy advance, he shifted forces by 4 May to place most of his strength and all U.S. divisions in the western and central sectors and aligned the I, IX, and X Corps so that each was responsible for one of these avenues. Deployed around Seoul, the I Corps blocked the Uijongbu approach with the ROK 1st, 1st Cavalry, and 25th Divisions on line and the 3d Division and British 29th Brigade in reserve. The IX Corps, its sector narrowed by a westward shift of its right boundary, now had the British 28th Brigade, 24th Division, ROK 2d Division, ROK 6th Division, and 7th Division west to east on No Name line and the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team in reserve for defense against an enemy strike down or out of the Pukhan River valley.[2] In the left portion of the X Corps sector, the 1st Marine Division and the 2d Division, less the bulk of the 23d Infantry in corps reserve, covered the Ch'unch'on-Hongch'on axis. Though the concentration of strength in the western and central areas left the remainder of the front comparatively thin, Van Fleet believed that the six ROK divisions in the east—the 5th and 7th in the right portion of the X Corps sector, the 9th and 3d in the ROK III Corps sector, and the Capital and 11th in the ROK I Corps sector—could hold the line since opposing North Korean forces were

[1] These improvised flamethrowers, called fougasses, threw out a mass of flame some ten yards wide and up to forty yards long.

[2] Since no attempt had been made to put the Hwach'on Dam out of commission during the few days that the 1st Korean Marine Corps Regiment occupied that area, Van Fleet meanwhile had asked Task Force 77 to destroy at least two sluice gates to bring the water level so low that its release would cause no serious flooding of the Pukhan. A dive-bombing attack launched from the *Princeton* on 30 April by AD Skyraiders carrying one-ton general purpose bombs produced a six-foot hole in one gate. Returning the following day with torpedoes set for surface run—the only time this ordnance would be used in the war—six of eight Skyraiders scored hits that removed one gate and destroyed the lower half of another.

weak and since the terrain barriers of the higher Taebaeks favored defense.[3]

The Search for the Enemy

Along with his 30 April instructions for the defense of No Name line, Van Fleet ordered intensive patrolling to locate and identify enemy formations as they continued to move out of contact. Patrols searching three to five miles above the front during the first two days of May, however, encountered no major enemy force except at the I Corps left where ROK 1st Division patrols found the North Korean *8th Division* deployed astride Route 1. To deepen the search in the west and central areas, Van Fleet ordered patrol bases set up five to six miles out along a line reaching east as far as Route 24 in the X Corps sector. Each division fronted by this line was to establish a regimental combat team in a base position organized for perimeter defense. Patrols operating from the bases could work farther north with full fire support, and the forward positions would deepen the defense in the sectors where Van Fleet expected to be most heavily attacked. While the fortification of No Name line continued, the front east of Route 24 was to be advanced six to fifteen miles to line Missouri, both to restore contact and to clear a stretch of Route 24 and a connecting secondary road angling east to the coast for use as a supply route by the ROK divisions defending the sector. Van Fleet also directed a foray to destroy North Korean forces in the I Corps' west sector after the *8th Division* stopped short the 12th Regiment of the ROK 1st Division's attempt to establish a patrol base up Route 1 on 4 May.[4]

The six ROK divisions in the east opened the advance toward line Missouri on the 7th. Along the coast, ROK I Corps forces met almost no opposition, and on the 9th the ROK 11th Division's tank destroyer battalion scooted some sixteen miles beyond the Missouri line to occupy the town of Kansong, where Route 24 ended in a junction with the coastal highway. Forces of the ROK 5th Division on the left flank of the advance in the X Corps zone reached line Missouri the same day. The other four divisions, though still as much as ten miles short of the line on the 9th, had made long daily gains against scattered delaying forces. In the west, the bulk of the ROK 1st Division advancing up Route 1 between 7 and 9 May levered North Korean forces out of successive positions and finally forced them into a general withdrawal. Setting the 15th Regiment in a patrol base six miles up Route 1, General Kang pulled his remaining forces back into his No Name fortifications.[5]

From other bases in the I, IX, and X Corps sectors, patrols doubled the depth of their previous reconnaissance but had no more success in making firm contact than had patrols working from No Name line. Available intelligence in-

[3] Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, May 51.

[4] Rad, GX–5–114 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA et al., 1 May 51; Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, May 51; Rads, CICCG 4–26 and CICCG 5–3, CG I Corps to CG Eighth Army, 2 and 3 May 51, respectively; Rad, GX–5–340 KGOP, CG Eighth Army to CGs I, IX, and X Corps and C/S ROKA, 4 May 51; Rad, GX–5–591 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps, 4 May 51.

[5] Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, May 51; Eighth Army POR, 7 May 51; Rad, X 19577, CG X Corps to CG Eighth Army, 7 May 51; Eighth Army POR, 8 May 51; Rad, X 19608, CG X Corps to CG Eighth Army, 9 May 51; Eighth Army POR, 9 May 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51.



THE NAVY AD SKYRAIDER

formation indicated that the *64th, 12th, 60th*, and *20th Armies* were completely off the west and west central fronts for refurbishing and that each of the four armies still in those sectors—the *65th, 63d, 15th*, and *27th*—had only one division forward as a screen while remaining divisions prepared to resume the offensive. Since there were no firm indications that the resumption was an immediate prospect, however, General Van Fleet on 9 May issued plans for returning the Eighth Army to line Kansas. In the first phase of the return the I, IX, and X Corps were to attack, tentatively on the 12th, toward line Topeka running from Munsan-ni east through Ch'unch'on, then northeast toward Inje. The ROK III Corps and ROK I Corps in the east meanwhile were to continue their attack to line Missouri, a step which would carry them above the Kansas line.[6]

Van Fleet decided against the Topeka advance on the 11th after changes in the intelligence picture indicated that enemy forces were within a few days of reopening their offensive. Air observation of enemy troops where none previously had been seen suggested forward movements under cover of darkness, reports told of large enemy reconnaissance patrols, and both agents and prisoners alleged an early

[6] Eighth Army G3 and G2 SS Rpts, May 51; Rad, GX–5–1483 KGOP, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 9 May 51.



THE HWACH'ON DAM UNDER ATTACK *by Navy AD Skyraiders using torpedoes.*

resumption of the offensive. Extensive smoke screens rose north of the 38th parallel ahead of the IX Corps and above the Hwach'on Reservoir in the X Corps sector. Drawing Van Fleet's particular notice were reports that five armies—the *60th, 15th, 12th, 27th,* and *20th*—were massing west of the Pukhan for a major attack in the west central sector. In further instructions for defense, Van Fleet ordered the No Name fortifications improved and directed General Hoge to give special attention to the Pukhan corridor, where the heaviest enemy buildup was reported. Hoge was to place the bulk of the IX Corps artillery on that flank. "I want to stop the Chinese here and hurt him," Van Fleet told Hoge. "I welcome his attack and want to be strong enough in position and fire power to defeat him." [7] Lavish artillery fire, in particular, was to be used. If gun positions could be kept supplied with ammunition, Van Fleet wanted five times the normal day of fire expended against enemy attacks. As calculated by his G–4, Colonel Stebbins, the "Van Fleet day of fire" could be supported for at least seven days, although transportation could become a problem since Stebbins could not haul other supplies while handling

[7] Eighth Army CG and C/S Jnl, May 51.

that amount of ammunition.[8] Rations and petroleum products already stocked in corps sectors, however, would last for more than seven days.[9]

Immediate army reserves for the advance to line Topeka were to have been the 3d Division, to be withdrawn from the I Corps, and the Canadian 25th Infantry Brigade, which had reached Korea on 5 May.[10] Having undergone extensive training at Fort Lewis, Washington, the brigade would be ready to join operations after brief tune-up exercises in the Pusan area. Though the Topeka advance was off, Van Fleet ordered the Canadians to move north, beginning on 15 May, to Kumnyangjang-ni, twenty-five miles southeast of Seoul, and prepare to counter any enemy penetration in the Pukhan or Seoul-Suwon corridors. The 3d Division was still to pass to army reserve and organize forces capable of reinforcing or counterattacking in the I, IX, or X Corps sectors in at least regimental combat team strength on six hours' notice. Beginning on the 11th, the 15th Regimental Combat Team assembled near Ich'on, at the intersection of Routes 13 and 20 thirty-five miles southeast of Seoul, ready to move on call into the X Corps sector; for operations in support of the IX Corps, the 65th Regimental Combat Team assembled near Kyongan-ni, twenty miles southeast of Seoul and directly below the Pukhan River corridor; and the 7th Regimental Combat Team assembled in Seoul for missions in the I Corps sector.[11]

The six ROK divisions on the eastern front were to stay forward of No Name line but were not to make further attempts to occupy line Missouri. In the X Corps sector, the ROK 5th and 7th Divisions, whose forces had all but reached the Soyang River southwest of Inje, were to fortify their present positions. The ROK III Corps and ROK I Corps were to set their four divisions in fortified defenses between the lower bank of the Soyang south of Inje and the town of Kangson-ni, five miles north of Yangyang on the coast, after conducting spoiling attacks on 12 May in the two principal communications centers ahead of them, Inje and Yongdae-ri, the latter located on Route 24 fifteen miles northeast of Inje. The

[8] *Van Fleet Day of Fire per Tube*

105-mm. howitzer	300 rounds
155-mm. howitzer	250 rounds
155-mm. gun	200 rounds
8-inch howitzer	200 rounds
75-mm. howitzer	250 rounds

[9] Rad, GX–5–1776 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CGs I, IX, and X Corps, 11 May 51; Eighth Army PIR 302, 10 May 51; Eighth Army G2 and G3 SS Rpts, May 51; X Corps PIRs 226, 10 May 51, and 227, 11 May 51; IX Corps G2 Jnl, Sum, 11 May 51; Eighth Army CG and C/S Jnl, May 51; Eighth Army Arty SS Rpt, Jun 51.

[10] Arriving on 6 May was the Imperial Ethiopian Expeditionary Force to Korea, composed of volunteers from the Ethiopian imperial bodyguard and consisting of an infantry battalion and a superfluous force headquarters. Also known as the Kagnew battalion, the force had had only rudimentary combat training and arrived without weapons and equipment. The Ethiopians were scheduled to spend eight weeks at the U.N. center. Another May arrival would be the 1st Battalion, King's Shropshire Light Infantry, which under the British rotation system would replace the 1st Battalion, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, in the British 28th Brigade. Due to reach Japan in late May for a month of training with equipment bought from the United States before moving to Korea was the staff of a sixty-bed mobile surgical hospital from Norway.

[11] Rad, GX–5–1483 KGOP, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 9 May 51; Fox, "Inter-Allied Co-operation During Combat Operations," pp. 26, 29–30, 47; Wood, *Strange Battleground*, pp. 94–95; Rad, GX–5–1450 KGOP, CG Eighth Army to CGs I, IX, and X Corps and CG 3d Div, 9 May 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 9 and 12 May 51; Dolcater, *3d Infantry Division in Korea*, p. 207.

reconnaissance company of the ROK 9th Division already had entered Inje without a fight during the afternoon of the 11th and dispersed an enemy force about a mile beyond the town before retiring on the 12th, but other forces of the two South Korean corps were prevented by distance and moderate resistance from reaching the objectives of their attacks in the one day allotted for them.[12]

Light contact along the remainder of the front revealed little about enemy dispositions, but the composite of reports from air observers, agents, civilians, and prisoners made clear by 13 May that major Chinese forces had begun to shift eastward from the west and west central sectors. Steady rain and fog all but eliminated further air observation on 14 and 15 May; poor visibility also hampered ground patrols; and a IX Corps reconnaissance-in-force by the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team up the valley northeast of Kap'yong toward what was believed to be a large concentration of enemy forces had to be canceled shortly after it started on the 15th because of the rain and poor road conditions. As much as could be determined by 16 May was that the eastward shift probably extended to the Ch'unch'on area.[13]

A few reports tracing the shift indicated that some Chinese units would move beyond Ch'unch'on. According to a Chinese medical officer captured northeast of Seoul on 10 May, the *12th Army* and two other armies were scheduled to leave the west central area late on the 10th, march east for four days, then attack the 2d Division and the ROK divisions on the eastern front. Another captive taken on the 13th in the same general area said that the *15th Army* was to march east for three days and attack the 2d Division in conjunction with North Korean attacks on the ROK front.[14] Large enemy groups reported by X Corps observers to be moving east as far as Yanggu on the 11th and 12th were believed to be Chinese, and a deserter from the engineer battalion of the *80th Division, 27th Army*, picked up on the 13th in the Ch'unch'on area stated that his battalion had been bridging the Pukhan. The X Corps G–2 believed it most likely, however, that the forces moving east of the Pukhan as far as Yanggu were from the *39th Army* or *40th Army*, both of which had been in the east central sector for some time. In any event, he considered major Chinese operations on the eastern front to be impracticable. Given the logistical difficulties the Chinese experienced in supporting offensive operations even in the Seoul area, where the distance to their rear supply bases was shortest and where the roads were more numerous and in better condition than anywhere else, he doubted that they would commit a large force in the eastern mountains where a supply line could not be maintained and where living off the land would be al-

[12] Rad, GX–5–1863 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA, 11 May 51; Rad, GX–5–2149 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG X Corps, 13 May 51; Rad, X 19645, CG X Corps to CGs 5th ROK Div and 7th ROK Div, 12 May 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 11 and 12 May 51; Eighth Army POR, 12 May 51.

[13] Eighth Army G2 SS Rpt, May 51; "Weather in the Korean Conflict," vol. II, pp. XIII-7 – XIII-9; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; Eighth Army PIR 307, 15 May 51.

[14] The completeness and high degree of accuracy of two Chinese documents captured on 19 May, one an order of battle of UNC ground forces dated 29 April 1951, the other a map of their dispositions dated 6 May 1951, revealed the success of enemy intelligence.

most impossible. The Eighth Army intelligence staff as of 16 May had no corroborating evidence of the reported movement east of the Pukhan and even had some doubt that the Chinese shift extended as far east as Ch'unch'on.[15]

According to the consensus of current estimates of enemy dispositions as of the 16th, the North Korean *I Corps* on the west had spread forces eastward toward Route 33, taking over ground previously occupied by the *XIX Army Group*. The *65th Army* astride Route 33 north of Uijongbu and the *63d Army* in the adjacent ground to the east formed the new front of the *XIX Army Group*. Reports placed the *64th Army* northwest of the *65th*. West to east, the *60th*, *15th*, and *12th Armies* were believed to occupy the new front of the *III Army Group* from a point above the Pukhan River in the vicinity of Kap'yong eastward almost to Ch'unch'on. More tentatively located, the *20th* and *27th Armies* of the *IX Army Group* were reported to be off the front in the area north of Ch'unch'on and the group's *26th Army* possibly in the same vicinity. The *XIII Army Group* apparently was still on the east central front, its *40th Army* astride Route 17 just above Ch'unch'on and the *39th Army* next to the east with its bulk between the Hwach'on Reservoir and the Soyang River and light forces occupying a bridgehead below the Soyang between Ch'unch'on and the river town of Naep'yong-ni some ten miles upstream to the northeast. On the basis of these dispositions, General Van Fleet continued to believe that the main enemy effort would come in the west central sector, probably toward the Han River corridor, and would be made by five armies, the *60th*, *15th*, *12th*, *27th*, and *20th*. He also anticipated strong attacks toward Seoul over Route 1 and through the Uijongbu corridor as well as another on the Ch'unch'on-Hongch'on axis.[16]

The Offensive Resumed

The actual extent of the Chinese shift from the west had been indicated by the few reports of planned and ongoing movements beyond the Pukhan. By 16 May Peng Teh-huai had moved five armies into the area along the Soyang River between Ch'unch'on and Inje behind screening forces of the *39th Army* and the North Korean *III Corps*. The *60th Army* and *15th Army* of the *III Army Group* were in the area between Ch'unch'on and Naep'yong-ni. At and immediately beyond Naep'yong-ni was the *12th Army*, organic to the *III Army Group* but now attached to the *IX Army Group*. Farthest east, the *27th Army* and *20th Army* of the *IX Army Group* were clustered in the vicinity of Kwandae-ri just west of Inje.[17]

Peng planned to launch his main attack on a southeastward course below the Naep'yong-ni–Kwandae-ri stretch of the Soyang. His reason for shifting the main effort into the higher Taebaeks despite the portended logistical problems may have surfaced when Chinese captured in March, April, and

[15] X Corps G2 Section Rpt, "Battle of the Soyang River," 30 Jun 51; X Corps PIRs 225, 9 May 51, 228, 12 May 51, and 229, 13 May 51; Eighth Army PIR 307, 15 May 51.

[16] Eighth Army G2 SS Rpt, May 51; Eighth Army PIR 307, 15 May 51; X Corps PIRs 226, 10 May 51; 227, 11 May 51, and 231, 15 May 51.

[17] X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Map 1B, Enemy Redeployment, May 51; Hq, USAFFE, Intel Dig no. 1, 1–31 Dec 52, and no. 99, 16–31 Jan 53; Hq, FEC, History of the North Korean Army.

early May were asked about the worth of *People's Liberation Army* weapons, training, and tactics. Almost unanimously the captives considered the army's armament, preparations, and precepts to be inadequate for the conditions of battle in Korea. Depreciating the "man over weapons" doctrine, they conceded that men in superior numbers could defeat an enemy superior in other respects only if the enemy's superiority was not too great.[18] Such a realization by the enemy high command could have influenced the decision to move the main effort: perhaps Peng chose to attack through some of the most difficult ground on the front because the rugged ridges and sparse road net would reduce to some degree the U.N. Command's advantage of superior mobility, firepower, and air power.

As revealed by the captives taken on 10 and 13 May, the objective of the main effort—to be launched during the evening of the 16th by the *15th, 12th,* and *27th Armies*—was to sever the six ROK divisions on the eastern front from the remainder of the Eighth Army, to annihilate them, and to destroy the 2d Division.[19] In support of the main effort, the North Korean *V Corps* was to attack out of the Inje area in the ROK III Corps sector, and the North Korean *II Corps*, which had moved down from Hoeyang where it had been refurbishing since late March, was to attack along the east coast and atop the Taebaeks against the ROK I Corps. On the west flank of the main attack, the *60th Army*, less its *181st Division*, which had been attached to the *12th Army* to reinforce the main effort, was to conduct a holding attack against the 1st Marine Division. The *XIX Army Group*, now stretched out from the Kap'yong area west to Route 33 above Uijongbu, and the North Korean *I Corps*, astride Route 1, were to make similar attacks in the IX Corps and I Corps sectors.[20]

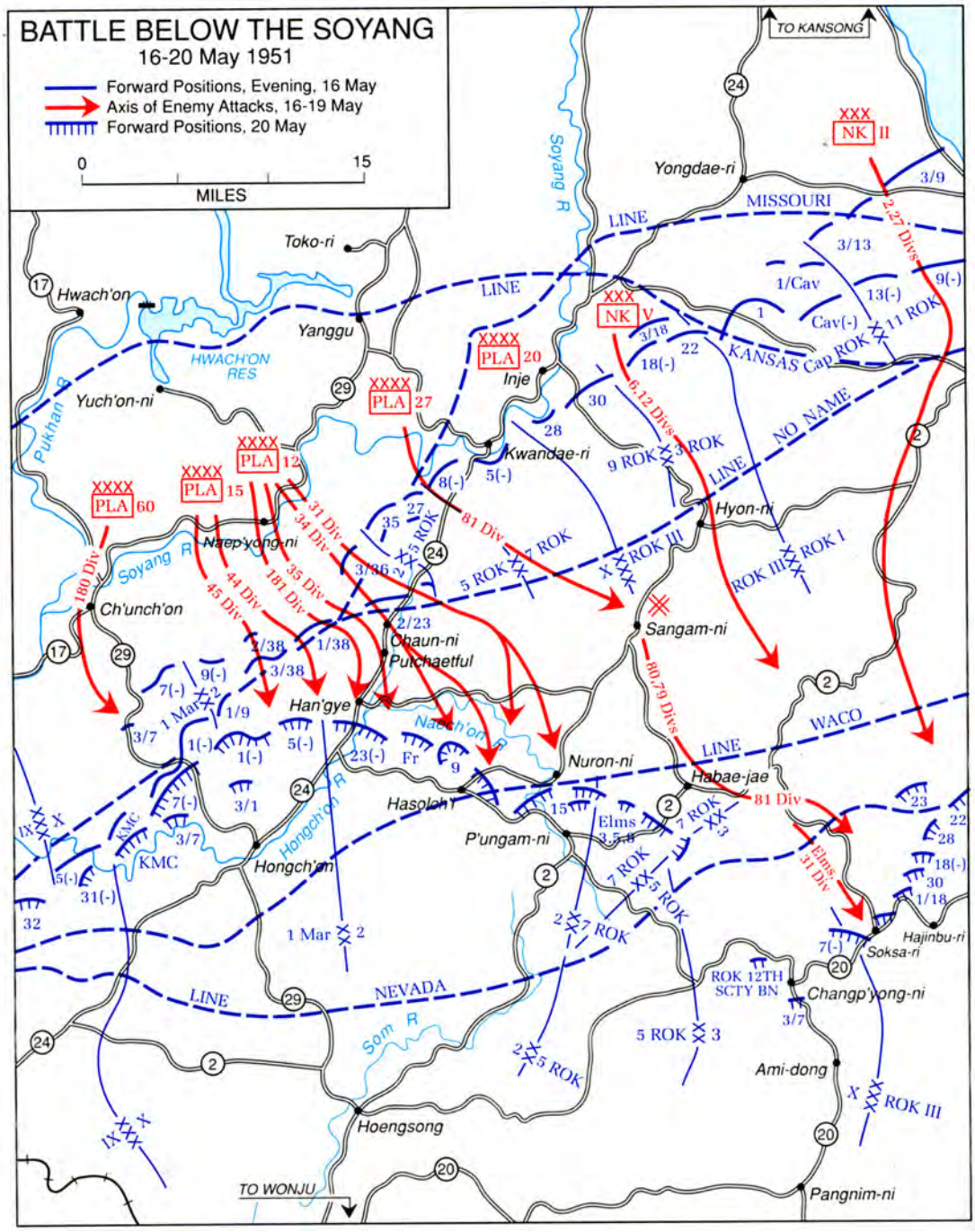
ROK Forces Give Way—Again

Crossing the Soyang northwest of Kwandae-ri with its *81st Division* in the van, the *27th Army* opened against the ROK 5th and 7th Divisions with hard blows centered at the seam between the two divisions that almost immediately began to dislodge the line regiments. *(Map 35)* General Almond authorized the two divisions to withdraw to No Name line around midnight. A successful withdrawal by the artillery of both divisions down Route 24 into the sector of the 2d Division may have caused erroneous early morning reports that the two divisions were regrouping on No Name line. Later reports revealed a familiar story of infantry units scattered by enemy attacks while they were attempting to disengage, broken communications, loss of control, a search for missing troops, and the reorganization of those that could be found. Reordered forces of the ROK 5th Division were set out in echelon to the southeast along the 2d Division's right flank. By noon on the 17th the only infantry units

[18] See George, *The Chinese Communist Army in Action*, pp. 168–75.

[19] Other than the statements of these captives and similar statements of others taken during the offensive, available enemy sources do not disclose the terrain or other tactical objectives set for the main attack.

[20] X Corps Special Rpt, "Battle of the Soyang River"; X Corps G2 Section Rpt, "Battle of the Soyang River," 30 Jun 51; X Corps PIR 243, 27 May 51; Hq, USAFFE, Intel Dig no. 96, 16–28 Feb 53; Hq, FEC, History of the North Korean Army.


BATTLE BELOW THE SOYANG
16-20 May 1951
Forward Positions, Evening, 16 May
Axis of Enemy Attacks, 16-19 May
Forward Positions, 20 May
0
15
MILES
TO KANSONG
Soyang R
Yongdae-ri
XXX NK II
3/9
MISSOURI LINE
2,27 Divs
3/13
1/Cav
13(-)
9(-)
Toko-ri
Hwach'on
Yanggu
HWACH'ON RES
LINE
XXX NK V
3/18
18(-)
22
1
Cav(-)
11 ROK
KANSAS Cap ROK
XXXX PLA 20
Inje
XXXX PLA 27
6,12 Divs
30
28
Kwandae-ri
5(-)
8(-)
9 ROK
3 ROK
NO NAME LINE
Yuch'on-ni
Pukhan R
XXXX PLA 12
XXXX PLA 15
XXXX PLA 60
Hyon-ni
31 Div
34 Div
35 Div
81 Div
35
27
5 ROK
Naep'yong-ni
3/36
5 ROK
4 ROK
ROK III
ROK III
ROK I
180 Div
Soyang R
44 Div
45 Div
181 Div
Ch'unch'on
2/23
Chaun-ni
Pulchaetful
Sangam-ni
2/38
1/38
3/38
9(-)
7(-)
1 Mar
1/9
3/7
Han'gye
80,79 Divs
WACO LINE
Nuron-ni
Habae-jae
1(-)
5(-)
23(-)
Fr
9
Naech'on R
Hasoburi
81 Div
15
Elms
3,5,8
7 ROK
23
22
28
18(-)
30
1/18
Hajinbu-ri
Soksa-ri
P'ungam-ni
Hongch'on R
Hongch'on
KMC
3/7
3/1
7(-)
5(-)
31(-)
32
1 Mar
2
7 ROK
5 ROK
Elms
31 Div
7(-)
ROK 12TH SCTY BN
Changp'yong-ni
3/7
LINE
NEVADA
Som R
5 ROK
3
2,7 ROK
2,5 ROK
Ami-dong
ROK III
Hoengsong
TO WONJU
Pangnim-ni

MAP 35

of the ROK 7th Division that had been located were two battalions of the reserve 3d Regiment which were in position and engaged six miles behind No Name line near the village of Sangam-ni on the primitive road whose stretch northeast to Hyon-ni and then Northwest to Inje was the single route serving the ROK III Corps sector. Engaging the 3d Regiment were forces of the *81st Division,* whose main body had slashed southeast through the ground abandoned by the ROK 7th Division to block the road just above Sangam-ni.[21]

The 30th Field Artillery Battalion of the ROK 9th Division discovered the roadblock the hard way while displacing as a result of orders from ROK Army forward headquarters calling the ROK III Corps and the ROK I Corps back to No Name line. Though the two corps had held up well under attacks by the *6th* and *12th Divisions* of the North Korean *V Corps* and the *27th* and *2d Divisions* of the North Korean *II Corps,* General Almond's midnight action allowing the ROK 5th and 7th Divisions to retire to No Name line had led the ROK Army headquarters to follow suit on the morning of the 17th. As the two ROK III Corps divisions drew back to No Name positions centered above Hyon-ni, staying scarcely a step ahead of pursuing North Korean forces, their artillery battalions (the 30th followed in column by the 11th of the ROK 3d Division) moved below Hyon-ni toward Sangam-ni. The Chinese blocking force waited until the 30th, filled a narrow stretch of road twisting through a steep-sided defile in the heart of its position, then blanketed the artillerymen with fire. In the scramble out of the trap, only the tailend battery saved its guns and vehicles. By evening the 11th Battalion and the crippled 30th Battalion returned north to firing positions in the Hyon-ni area. General Yu meanwhile sent the corps reserve, a regiment of the ROK 9th Division, south from Hyon-ni to deal with the block, but its efforts were futile against the stronger Chinese force. With the west flank left open by the collapse of the ROK 7th Division, the ROK III Corps was in danger of being enveloped, or, with the Chinese *81st Division* continuing to block the road to the rear and the North Korean *6th* and *12th Divisions* still pushing in from the north, of being caught in a costly squeeze.[22]

The 2d Division—Again

With the right flank of the 2d Division no more than sketchily protected by ROK 5th Division units, General Ruffner's forces also faced the prospect of being enveloped. Indeed, if any American division seemed destined to be repeatedly involved in hard defensive battles, it was the 2d. And, as in its difficult engagement along the Ch'ongch'on River in late November, the division was again to be threatened from the east after ROK forces gave way while it contended with strong Chinese attacks from the north.

General Ruffner had manned the left and center of the division's fifteen-mile sector south of Naep'yong-ni with the

[21] X Corps G2 Section Rpt, "Battle of the Soyang River," 30 Jun 51; X Corps G3 Jnl, Entries J–8 and J–41, 17 May 51; X Corps PIRs 232, 16 May 51, and 233, 17 May 51; X Corps PORs 232, 16 May 51, and 233, 17 May 51; Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, May 51.

[22] Eighth Army POR, 16 May 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 16 May 51; Eighth Army POR, 17 May 51; Eighth Army PIR 309, 17 May 51; Eighth Army Arty SS Rpt, Jun 51.

9th and 38th Regiments and had reconstituted Task Force Zebra, the tank-infantry group that had performed well in late April, to occupy the line at the right. The French battalion, the only division reserve, was at Han'gye on Route 24, about five miles behind the Zebra line, deliberately set there by Ruffner to reinforce quickly the somewhat thin task force position.

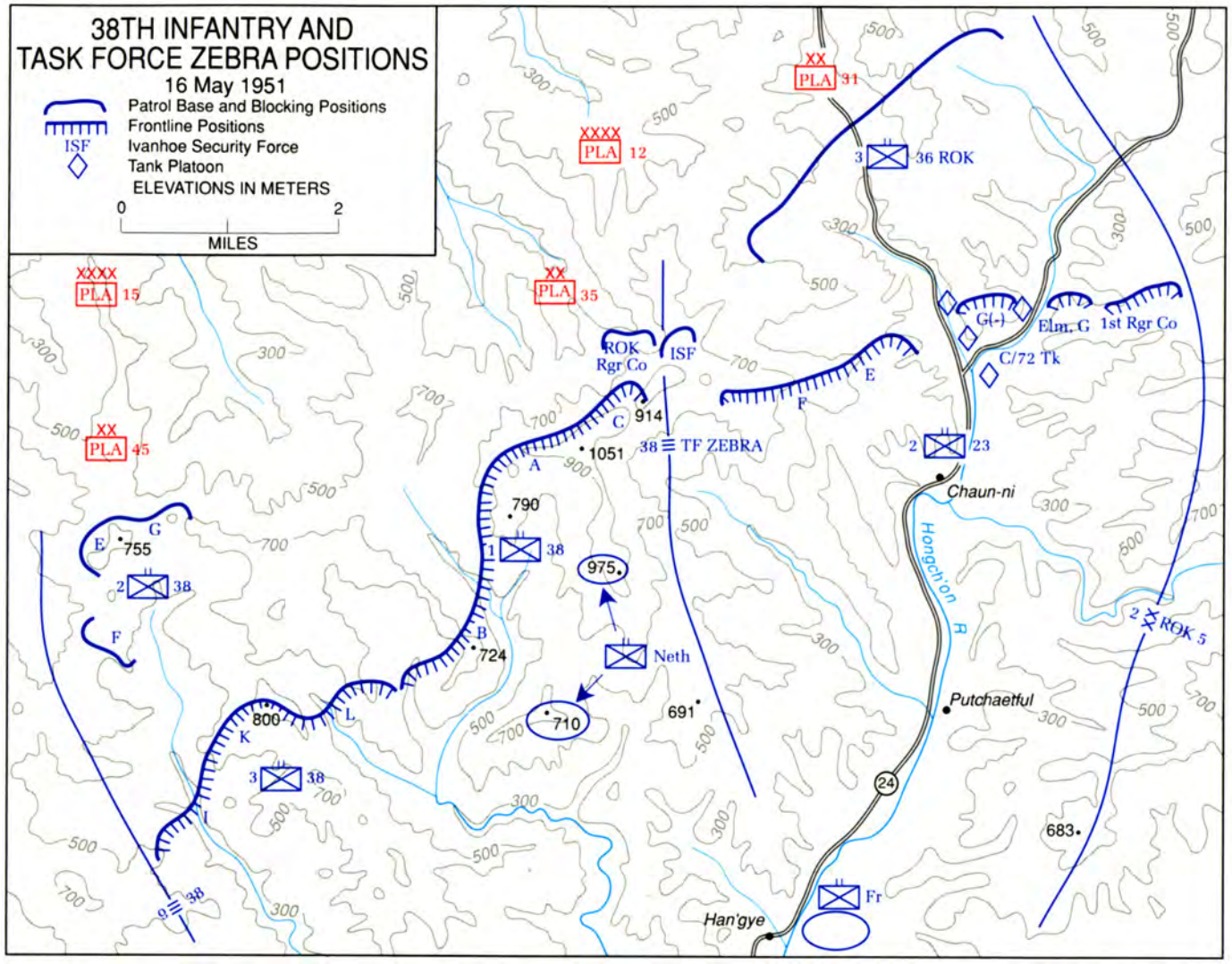
Under earlier orders to send daily patrols to the Soyang in the area immediately east of Ch'unch'on, the 9th Infantry had deployed one battalion on No Name line and two in patrol bases. On the highest ground in the division sector, two battalions of the 38th Infantry occupied a string of prominent heights along No Name line, the 3d at the left, the 1st at the right. *(Map 36)* Two miles out on the west, the 2d Battalion manned a patrol base that blocked ridgeline and valley approaches to the 3d Battalion's position. Above the right flank of the 1st Battalion, a provisional company of South Korean rangers held a blocking position on a ridge offering enemy forces a good approach down the boundary between the 38th Infantry and Task Force Zebra. Colonel Coughlin, commander of the 38th, had set the attached Netherlands battalion on Hills 710 and 975 behind the 1st Battalion with instructions to be prepared to counterattack anywhere in the 1st's sector.[23]

Task Force Zebra, led as before by Lt. Col. Elbridge L. Brubaker, commander of the 72d Tank Battalion, now included all but one company of the tank battalion; the 2d Battalion, 23d Infantry; the 1st Ranger Company; the Ivanhoe Security Force (a provisional company of South Korean troops originally organized for division rear area security missions); and the 3d Battalion, ROK 36th Regiment, attached from the ROK 5th Division. The ROK battalion occupied a patrol base along the trace of the Missouri line and the Ivanhoe Security Force a forward blocking position adjacent to the 38th Infantry's ROK rangers on the west flank. On No Name line, the 2d Battalion of the 23d Infantry, Company C of the tank battalion, and the ranger company stood athwart both Route 24 angling in from the northeast through the Hongch'on River valley and a minor road running down a valley from the northwest and joining Route 24 just behind the task force position. West to east on ridges commanding the two roads were Companies F, E, and G and the rangers. The tanks stood behind barricades of wire and minefields blocking both valleys, though not the roads, which had been left free of obstacles to allow patrols to pass through. Company B of the tank battalion, in reserve, and the trains and command post of the 2d Battalion, 23d Infantry, were at the valley village of Chaun-ni, on Route 24 two miles behind the lines. Colonel Brubaker's command post was farther down Route 24 at the village of Putchaetful.[24]

Jarring daylight probes of the Zebra patrol base and sharp patrol skirmishes close to the lines of the 38th Infantry were forerunners of attacks by one division of the *15th Army* and two divisions

[23] 9th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51.

[24] X Corps Special Rpt, "Battle of the Soyang River"; 2d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; AA Rpt, 8th Hist Det, "Battle of Soyang," Jun 51.


38TH INFANTRY AND
TASK FORCE ZEBRA POSITIONS
16 May 1951
Patrol Base and Blocking Positions
Frontline Positions
ISF
Ivanhoe Security Force
Tank Platoon
ELEVATIONS IN METERS
0
2
MILES
XXXX PLA 15
XX PLA 45
XXXX PLA 12
XX PLA 35
XX PLA 31
3 36 ROK
ROK Rgr Co
ISF
C
914
1051
38 ≡ TF ZEBRA
A
790
1 38
975
B
724
Neth
691
710
800
K
L
3 38
I
9 ≡ 38
E
755
G
2 38
F
E
F
G(-)
Elm. G
1st Rgr Co
C/72 Tk
2 23
Chaun-ni
Hongch'on R
2 ROK 5
Putchaetful
683
24
Fr
Han'gye

MAP 36

of the *12th*. In the *12th Army*'s attack, launched about dusk, the press of *35th Division* forces along the 38th Infantry–Task Force Zebra boundary jammed the Ivanhoe Security Force and adjacent company of ROK rangers back against Company F, 23d Infantry, before defensive fires smothered the assault. On the *12th*'s east wing, the *92d Regiment, 31st Division*, attacking the Zebra patrol base expelled and disorganized the 3d Battalion, ROK 36th Regiment. South Koreans streamed through the main Zebra line until midnight, most of them down the northwest valley defended by the 3d Platoon of Company C, 72d Tank Battalion. French troops at Han'gye collected the disordered groups as they continued down Route 24 and assembled them for reorganization and screening for enemy infiltration.[25]

Shortly after midnight, fifty or sixty Chinese leading a column of the *92d Regiment* in pursuit of the South Koreans charged through the opening in the northernmost of two wire aprons strung across the valley. Forced off the road by fire from the tankers, the Chinese deployed to the left and right, exploding mines and setting off trip flares. The larger body of enemy to the rear deployed under the light of the flares, and successive lines of skirmishers attempted to break the wire and reach the tanks. The 3d Platoon, reinforced by the 2d Platoon, shot down waves of charging troops while artillery fire walked up the valley above the wire. When the Chinese gave up the effort shortly before dawn, enemy bodies hanging in the wire, sprawled in the minefields, and lying on the road and high ground to the north numbered about four hundred fifty.[26]

First to feel the sting of hard attack in the 38th Infantry's sector was the 2d Battalion. Concentrating on Company E on Hill 755 at the center of the patrol base, a force from the *45th Division, 15th Army*, though delayed and hurt while breaching minefields and wire entanglements, drove off the company with the second wave of its assault. About 0230, as the attack spread to Company F on the left flank of the split position, Colonel Coughlin ordered the patrol base force to withdraw behind the 3d Battalion. Apparently spent by the effort to take Hill 755 and blanketed by covering artillery fire, the Chinese made no immediate attempt to follow the withdrawal.[27]

At the right of the 1st Battalion, platoons of Companies A and C occupying Hills 1051 and 914 and a saddle between turned back a series of attacks opened at dusk by small units of the *35th Division* in concert with the assaults that drove back the two provisional ROK companies along the 38th Infantry–Task Force Zebra boundary. But following these apparent tests of the defenses, a full attack by the division's *103d Regiment* about 0200 shoved Company A forces out of the saddle, opening the way for a sweep behind the 1st Battalion or for a deep penetration down a valley leading southeast to

[25] X Corps G2 Section Rpt, "Battle of the Soyang River," 30 Jun 51; 38th Inf S2 Jnl, Sum, 16 May 51; 2d Div POR 611, 16 May 51; 2d Div PIRs 205, 16 May 51, and 206, 17 May 51; AA Rpt, 8th Hist Det, "Battle of Soyang," Jun 51.

[26] AA Rpt, 8th Hist Det, "Battle of Soyang," Jun 51.

[27] 38th Inf S2 Jnl, Sum, 16 and 17 May 51; 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; X Corps Rpt, "Operations of the 9th, 23d, 38th Inf RCTs, 16 May–2 June 1951"; X Corps G2 Section Rpt, "Battle of the Soyang River," 30 Jun 51.

Route 24 at Putchaetful, well behind the positions of Task Force Zebra. Colonel Coughlin kept the gap under mortar and artillery fire for the rest of the night and ordered the Netherlands battalion to send a company north from Hill 975 at first light to close it. General Ruffner directed the French battalion to send a company up the valley from Putchaetful to clean out any Chinese who sifted through the mortar and artillery barrages.[28]

Moving from Hill 975 toward Hill 1051 on the near side of the saddle, the Dutch company lacked the numbers to push through Chinese who by daylight closed in around a platoon of Company A on the 1051 crest. The remainder of the Netherlands battalion, under Colonel Coughlin's order, joined its forward company about 0930, but, finding that Hill 1051 had fallen to the Chinese, the Dutch commander, Lt. Col. William D. H. Eekhout, held up his advance while he softened the height and the saddle beyond with artillery. French troops meanwhile advancing up the valley northwest of Putchaetful engaged enemy forces less than two miles above Route 24. An estimated five hundred Chinese had worked their way into the valley. That more were on the way became clear when a Chinese-speaking radioman with the Netherlands battalion at midmorning intercepted a Chinese order to "send all troops east of Hill 1051." That neither sender nor recipient of the order was identifiable made estimating the strength of the forces involved impossible, but the Chinese obviously planned to exploit the breakthrough. Expecting that the Dutch attack to close the gap would start shortly, General Ruffner ordered the French to assist by reinforcing the drive up the valley; he urged speed so that the gap would be eliminated before the Chinese could pour troops through.[29]

Before the Dutch and French were able to move, "literally thousands" of Chinese, according to 38th Infantry estimates, were passing through the gap by 1100. Groups moving along the far edge of the saddle widened the opening by forcing a platoon of Company C off Hill 914. Chinese killed or wounded by artillery pounding the saddle and the area below it marked the paths of the larger number veering east toward the front of Task Force Zebra and of the remainder heading down the valley toward the French. Viewing this scene from the vicinity of Hill 1051, Colonel Eekhout continued to hold up the Dutch attack.[30]

After the opening Chinese attacks and South Korean withdrawals had exposed the division's east flank and bared the Task Force Zebra front, General Ruffner had asked General Almond to return the remainder of the 23d Infantry from corps reserve for use in thickening the Zebra position. Almond released the regiment about 1130 after the Chinese strength on the Zebra front began to build. Taking command of the front, including all Zebra forces and the French battalion, at

[28] 2d Div POR 611, 16 May 51; 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; 38th Inf S2 Jnl, Sum, 17 May 51; 38th Inf PIR 115, 17 May 51; 2d Div CofS Jnl, Entries 9 and 19, 17 May 51.

[29] 2d Div POR 612, 17 May 51; 38th Inf POR 115, 17 May 51; X Corps Rpt, "Operations of 9th, 23d, 38th Inf RCTs, 16 May–2 Jun 51"; 2d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; 2d Div CofS Jnl, Entries 22, 30, 35, and 38, 17 May 51; 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51.

[30] 2d Div CofS Jnl, Entries 40, 41, 42, and 44, 17 May 51.

1430, Colonel Chiles concentrated the 2d Battalion in the left half of the sector, put in the 3d Battalion on the right, and placed the 1st Battalion in reserve just above Han'gye. Except for exchanging fire with Company F on the left flank, the Chinese moving onto the front were inactive throughout the afternoon, but their number continued to grow as the Netherlands battalion, though Colonel Coughlin on orders from General Ruffner instructed it to attack at 1300, failed to advance.[31]

General Ruffner sensed from the Dutch failure to move that Colonel Coughlin "was looking half way over the shoulder" instead of concentrating on the essential task of closing the gap.[32] Ruffner again ordered the Dutch to attack, this time at 1500, and started forward by helicopter to direct the attempt himself, but his craft crashed on a hilltop near the 1st Battalion command post. Neither Ruffner nor his pilot was seriously injured, but Ruffner was stranded well beyond the time set for opening the attack. Hiking to the battalion command post to meet a rescue helicopter sent out by the division surgeon, he returned to his headquarters after receiving assurances that the Dutch had jumped off on time. There he learned that Chinese on and around Hill 1051 had stymied the Dutch and that Chinese on the far side of the gap had shoved Company C completely out of position and forced its remnants back to the position of Company F, 23d Infantry. Ruffner now considered two courses open to him—to commit greater strength against the enemy penetration or to set troops along its southwest shoulder, a move which, with the French battalion blocking the valley in the 23d Infantry sector, would, if somewhat thinly, seal off the penetration. He opted for the second course. By evening he had the Netherlands battalion on the way to occupy Hill 975 and thus extend the right flank of Company A, 38th Infantry, now on Hill 790 about a mile below Hill 1051, and had the 2d Battalion of the 38th moving up to defend a ridge curving southeast of Hill 975 to Hill 691.[33]

In search of reserves to back up his hard-pressed central forces, Ruffner at midmorning had asked General Almond's permission to pull the two patrol base battalions of the 9th Infantry out of the left sector, which was obviously outside the zone of the enemy's main attack. Almond instructed him to plan the move but deferred a final decision until he (Almond) could determine how the removal of the two battalions would affect the dispositions of the 1st Marine Division. Almond raised the matter with General Van Fleet during the afternoon while apprising the army commander of the corps situation and bidding for reinforcement. Given the course of enemy attacks and the enemy units so far identified, Almond believed that Peng Teh-huai was attempting to turn the right flank of the X Corps with the *27th Army*, would wait until the *27th* seriously threatened the flank, then would make his main effort down the Ch'unch'on-Hongch'on axis with the *III*

[31] 2d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; X Corps Rpt, "Operations of the 9th, 23d, 38th Inf RCTs, 16 May–2 Jun 51"; 23d Inf POR 230, 17 May 51; 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51.

[32] 2d Div CofS Jnl, Entry 48, 17 May 51.

[33] Ibid., Entries 67–71, 17 May 51; 2d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; 38th Inf S2 Jnl, Entries 51 and 62, 17 May 51; X Corps Rpt, "Operations of the 9th, 23d, 38th Inf RCTs, 16 May–2 Jun 51."

Army Group. Captives taken during a local but stiff four-hour nighttime attack on a battalion of the 7th Marines occupying a forward blocking position on Route 29 had identified the *180th Division* of the *60th Army*, indicating that the full *III Army Group* was in position for an attack such as Almond anticipated. Almond doubted that the X Corps could hold against an enemy move of this design unless the corps' hard-hit center and tattered right were strengthened. In immediate reinforcement he asked for a regimental combat team to help stabilize his right flank and for one heavy and two medium artillery battalions to increase long range fire on enemy concentration areas.[34]

To enable the 2d Division to place more of its strength in the threatened areas, General Van Fleet moved the IX Corps–X Corps boundary four miles east. In the resulting shift of units, the 7th Division on the IX Corps right was to take over part of the 1st Marine Division's sector, and marines were to relieve the 9th and 38th Regiments, freeing them for employment farther east. Van Fleet also ordered the ROK III Corps and ROK I Corps back to line Waco, which he had delineated in his withdrawal plan of 28 April, some twelve to eighteen miles south of No Name line. Allowing the ROK III Corps no option, he ordered General Yu to eliminate the enemy roadblock at Sangam-ni so that all vehicles and weapons could be evacuated. On the X Corps right, General Almond was to organize positions angling southeast to a juncture with the ROK III Corps on the Waco line above the village of Habae-jae.[35]

Reinforcements ordered to the X Corps sector by Van Fleet included the ROK 8th Division, which was to move north, initially to Chech'on, as soon as security battalions and national police could take over its antiguerrilla mission in southern Korea. An earlier arrival would be the 3d Division less its 7th and 65th Regimental Combat Teams. Geared for a move to the X Corps sector since 11 May, the leading battalion of the 15th Regimental Combat Team made the seventy-mile trip from its assembly area southeast of Seoul to Hoengsong by midmorning of the 17th. The remainder of the force, which included the division's medium artillery battalion, completed the move early on the 18th. Also sent east by Van Fleet were a battery of 155-mm. guns and a battery of 8-inch howitzers, both taken from the IX Corps. These additions gave Almond a total of five battalions and four batteries of medium and heavy artillery.[36]

In shifting marines east into the 2d Division's sector, Almond initially ordered the relief of the 9th Infantry by noon on the 18th. Maj. Gen. Gerald C. Thomas, the new commander of the 1st Marine Division, made the move by pulling the 7th Marines back from their forward patrol base and blocking posi-

[34] 2d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; 2d Div CofS Jnl, Entries 34 and 39, 17 May 51; Rad, X 19711, CG X Corps to CG Eighth Army, 17 May 51; 1st Marine Div Hist Diary, May 51; X Corps G2 Section Rpt, "Battle of the Soyang River," 30 Jun 51.

[35] Eighth Army POR 872, 17 May 51; Eighth Army G3 SSR, May 51; Rad, GX–5–2977 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA and CG X Corps, 17 May 51.

[36] Rad, GX–5–2974 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA, 17 May 51; Rad, GX–5–2964 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG 3d Div, 17 May 51; Dolcater, *3d Infantry Division in Korea*, p. 208; Rad, GX–5–2972 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CGs IX and X Corps, 17 May 51.

tions to relieve the 1st Marines on No Name line at the division's right, then by sidestepping the 1st Marines onto the 9th Infantry's front. The 5th Marines, on the division's left flank, later were to swing roundabout into the 38th Infantry's sector after being replaced by forces of the 7th Division.[37]

Meanwhile, late on the 17th Almond authorized both divisional and corps artillery units to quintuple their ammunition expenditure (the Van Fleet day of fire) and directed them to concentrate fire on likely avenues of enemy approach within three thousand yards of defensive positions. Ammunition expenditure would increase dramatically, reaching 41,350 rounds and 1,187 tons on 18 May and even higher amounts afterward. As had been predicted by the Eighth Army G–4, sufficient ammunition to support the heavy expenditure was maintained at the army supply point serving the X Corps, but not without difficulty. The supply point stocks of two days of fire at the Van Fleet rate dwindled to one and could not be raised above that amount. The high consumption also strained corps and unit transportation in hauling ammunition from the army supply point at Wonju to the base corps dump at Hongch'on, a round trip of over sixty miles, and from Hongch'on to artillery units. But resupply at the guns did remain adequate.[38]

The use of MPQ radars to direct bombers in close support missions at night, a technique employed only sparingly until April, also reached a peak, particularly in guiding B–29 sorties.[39] On 17 May General Stratemeyer directed that no fewer than twelve of the medium bombers be committed to the nightly support. Typical of one night's effort was a drop of three hundred fifty 500-pound proximity-fuzed general purpose bombs on twenty targets selected by X Corps headquarters, all of them enemy troop concentrations, some within four hundred yards of the front. Casualty estimates by follow-up patrols and the statements of captives attested to the precision of the radar guided attacks.[40]

In the 2d Division sector, the main nighttime targets of air and artillery attack—most observed in their approach well before dark on the 17th—were fresh enemy columns coming in on the positions of the 38th Infantry, passing through the gap, and moving east across the front of the 23d Infantry. Crowding the front of the 3d Battalion, 38th Infantry, forces of the *135th Regiment, 45th Division,* broke the wire and penetrated the line, but with losses too high to be able to withstand counterattacks. Sweeps to clear rear areas and a final counterattack to drive out Chinese who had occupied some of the bunkers restored the battalion's position early on the 18th.[41]

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[37] X Corps OI 174, 17 May 51; Montross, Kuokka, and Hicks, *The East-Central Front,* pp. 125–26.

[38] X Corps OI 174, 17 May 51; X Corps Arty Rpt, "Battle of the Soyang River: An Analysis of Artillery Support, X Corps Sector, 1 May–29 May 1951," 30 Jul 51; Eighth Army, "Logistical Problems and Their Solutions"; X Corps G4 SS Rpt, May 51.

[39] For an account of the development and use of this technique, see Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea,* pp. 328–30, 338–40.

[40] Rads, AX 9248 OP–OP2 and AX 9249 OP–OP2, CG FEAF to CG BOMCOM et al., 17 May 51; Rad, AX 7713, CG FEAF to C/S USAF, 20 May 51; Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea,* p. 340.

[41] 2d Div PIR 207, 18 May 51. For a detailed account of the defensive operations of the 3d Battalion, 38th Infantry, especially of Company K, on 18–19 May, see Gugeler, *Combat Actions in Korea,* pages 166–81.

To the east, the course of battle meanwhile verged on the calamitous and chaotic for Chinese and 2d Division forces alike. From late afternoon traffic on the artillery net Colonel Coughlin estimated the strength of the new influx of enemy forces in the gap area to be three thousand. Early evening reports from the Netherlands battalion on Hill 975 tended higher. The Dutch reported Chinese in waves of a thousand each crossing the saddle between Hills 1051 and 914 and walking upright through the artillery bombardment rather than in the crouch that soldiers tend to assume when moving under heavy fire. Those not hit were simply stepping over the fallen to continue moving down the valley. On the receiving end of the Chinese stream, the 23d Infantry commander, Colonel Chiles, reported to General Ruffner that bombing attacks and artillery barrages rolling up the valley were carpeting the defile with enemy casualties.[42]

The estimates of enemy strength and losses were not far off the mark. Coming through the fire-beaten gap and valley was the *181st Division*, the *60th Army* unit now attached to the *12th Army*. Its leading units had the French battalion under attack by dark. Sharply hit from the front and flanked on the left after two hours under assault, the French withdrew a mile south to hills edging Route 24 just above Putchaetful. The battalion gained respite from attack for the remainder of the night, but its withdrawal opened the left flank of the 23d Infantry and gave the Chinese free access to Route 24 between Putchaetful and Chaun-ni. Small enemy groups infiltrating Chaun-ni about 0330 harassed the command posts of the 2d and 3d Battalions, 23d Infantry, and Company C, 72d Tank Battalion, and blew up a loaded ammunition truck before pulling back into the high ground west of the village. Of larger moment, the bulk of the enemy division filled the hills bordering Route 24 on the west between Chaun-ni and the French battalion. Forces on the south reengaged the French while detachments slipping out of the hills about daylight mined the road a half mile below Chaun-ni and at a second point farther south within view of the French.[43]

Along the front of the 23d Infantry, Chinese abused Company F on the left flank with fire and assault until about midnight, then broke contact and moved east. The reach of an apparent general enemy movement east and then south had been indicated earlier when the ROK 5th Division units echeloned along the right flank of the 23d reported heavy pressure and, with General Almond's approval, withdrew behind a lateral stretch of the Hongch'on River almost due east of Chaun-ni. Leading the southeastward swing was the *31st Division*, sliding east onto the front of the 23d Infantry was the *35th Division*, and approaching from the northwest to join the move was the *34th Division*, which, when inserted between the *31st* and *35th Divisions* on the 18th, would fully commit the *12th Army*. The 4th Platoon of Company C, 72d Tank Battalion, moved out to the immediate

[42] 2d Div CofS Jnl, Entry 78, 17 May 51; 38th Inf S2 Jnl, Sum, 17 May 51; 2d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51.

[43] X Corps Rpt, "Operations of the 9th, 23d, 38th Inf RCTs, 16 May – 2 Jun 51"; 23d Inf ISUM, 172200 May 51; 23d Inf S3 Jnl, Entries 58 and 84, 17 May 51; 23d Inf ISUM 181000 May 51; 2d Div PIR 207, 18 May 51; AA Rpt, 8th Hist Det, "Battle of Soyang," Jun 51.

right rear of the 3d Battalion following the South Korean withdrawal, but a wide expanse of ground along the right of the regiment remained open. With an uncovered flank inviting envelopment by the enemy forces sweeping it on the east and its withdrawal route blocked by the *181st Division*, the 23d Infantry by daylight on the 18th was in a situation similar to that of the ROK III Corps.[44]

The situation in the sectors of the 1st and 2d Battalions, 38th Infantry, by morning of the 18th was equally critical. Between these two battalions, the position of the Netherlands battalion on Hill 975 had crumbled of its own accord early the previous evening when most of the Dutch troops, after witnessing the flow of Chinese through the gap, streamed off the height. "They have seen so many Chinamen and [so much] firing today," Colonel Coughlin explained to General Ruffner, and they "think that if our air and artillery can't stop them then there's not much they can do." [45] Though their commander, Colonel Eekhout, regained control quickly, Colonel Coughlin, at General Ruffner's instruction, sent the battalion into an assembly near Hang'ye for rest and reorganization and stretched out the forces of Company A and F to man the vacated position.[46]

Repair of the line at Hill 975 was still under way when *44th Division* forces broke it farther west with a hard punch at the juncture of Company B and Company A. Chinese coming through lapped around Company B on Hill 724 and piled up on Hill 710 behind Companies A and F. Company E, sent west from the Hill 975–Hill 691 ridge by Coughlin to plug the new gap, bogged down in encounters at Hill 710, while Chinese moving south off 710 surrounded and attacked the command posts of the 1st and 2d Battalions collocated at the foot of the height and blocked the regimental supply road a mile farther south. In what turned out to be an overreaction to the deeper enemy incursion, Coughlin ordered back both Company E from Hill 710 and Company G from the 975–691 ridge and sent a platoon of his tank company and a detachment of Dutch troops up the supply road to clear the command post area. With little help needed from the rifle companies, the tank-infantry team eliminated the enemy roadblock and opened a way out for the beleaguered command post group by morning of the 18th.[47]

None of the three forward companies was under heavy pressure at daylight, but Company B remained surrounded, and Companies A and F were isolated by the Chinese behind them. To the east, the 23d Infantry was strained by heavy morning attacks, especially Company F on the left flank and Company I on the right. As the attacks began to lash the 23d, General Ruffner convinced General Almond that the 23d and the adjoining three companies of the 38th had to withdraw immediately if they were to withdraw

[44] 23d Inf S3 Jnl, Entries 40, 44, and 47, 17 May 51; 23d Inf ISUM, 172200 and 181000 May 51; 2d Div CofS Jnl, Entry 90, 17 May 51; X Corps G2 Section Rpt, "Battle of the Soyang River," 30 Jun 51; X Corps Rpt, "Operations of the 9th, 23d, 38th Inf RCTs, 16 May–2 Jun 51"; AA Rpt, 8th Hist Det, "Battle of Soyang," Jun 51.

[45] 2d Div CofS Jnl, Entry 89, 17 May 51.

[46] Ibid.; 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51.

[47] 2d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; 38th Inf PIR 116, 18 May 51; 38th Inf S2 Jnl, Sum, 18 May 51; 2d Div CofS Jnl, Entries 2, 3, 6, 9, 11, and 16, 18 May 51.

in good order. Almond instructed Ruffner to establish a line running from the still solid position of Coughlin's 3d Battalion in the Hill 800 complex southeast through Han'gye to Hill 693 six miles beyond Route 24. To meet General Van Fleet's earlier order that the X Corps tie in with the ROK III Corps on line Waco, Almond extended the line another thirteen miles to the vicinity of Habae-jae; along the extension he planned initially to set up blocking positions using available units of the ROK 5th, 3d, and ROK 7th Divisions.[48]

In earlier moves to deepen the defense in the 38th Infantry sector, General Ruffner during the night had shifted the 3d Battalion, 9th Infantry, east to positions behind Colonel Coughlin's 3d Battalion and shortly before daylight had ordered the 2d Battalion of the 9th to move roundabout and come up on the right in the ground just west of Han'gye. Upon relief by the 1st Marines around noon the 9th's remaining battalion was now to insert itself between the 3d and 2d as the regiment developed defenses along the divisions modified line between Hill 800 and Route 24. During the shift of battalions, which would continue well into the afternoon, the 3d Battalion and later the 2d were to send forces forward to break the ring of Chinese around Company B of the 38th and clear Hill 710 behind Companies A and F to assist their withdrawal. Once the three companies were back, the 38th Infantry, less its 3d Battalion, was to become division reserve.[49]

For the 23d Infantry, assigned to occupy the new line east of Route 24, the chief problem in getting back to the line was the road block below Chaun-ni. Threatened in particular by the block were the trains of the 2d and 3d Battalions, Company C of the 72d Tank Battalion, and two platoons of the heavy mortar company, all located in and around Chaun-ni with no alternate withdrawal route for wheeled vehicles. To the clear the road for the trains, Colonel Chiles organized a two-pronged attack, the 3d Battalion to make sure that the east side of the road was clear, the 2d Battalion to take on the task of forcing back the Chinese occupying the heights bordering the road on the west. Company C of the 72d Tank Battalion was to bring up the rear, fending off the Chinese still pressing the line if they attempted to follow the disengagement. Two platoons of tanks from Company B of the 72d were to assist the attack of the 2d Battalion from firing positions in the river bottom east of the road opposite the Chinese blocking position.[50]

The Chinese let the 3d Battalion go when it disengaged, but heavy tank fire, time on target artillery fire, and air strikes were needed to keep enemy forces off the tail of the 2d Battalion as it peeled off the line in a column of companies. Reaching the Chaun-ni area by early afternoon, the 3d Battalion occupied hills opposite the roadblock while the 2d Battalion attempted to

[48] 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; 23d Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; 2d Div CofS Jnl, Entries 3, 5, 6, 8, and 10, 18 May 51; X Corps OI 175, 18 May 51.

[49] 2d Div CofS Jnl, Entries 84, 91, and 92, 17 May 51; 9th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, Opns (S3), May 51; 9th Inf POR 151, 18 May 51; 2d Div OI 71, 18 May 51; 2d Div CofS Jnl, Entries 2, 3, 9, and 11, 18 May 51; 2d Div POR 613, 18 May 51; X Corps Rpt, "Operations of the 9th, 23d, 38th Inf RCTs, 16 May – 2 Jun 51."

[50] 2d Div OI 71, 18 May 51; 23d Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; AA Rpt, 8th Hist Det, "Battle of Soyang," Jun 51.

shove the Chinese away from the road. Holding the advantage of superior numbers on commanding ground, the Chinese within an hour convinced Colonel Chiles that his forces could not clear the enemy position, at least not with any dispatch. The danger of being rolled up from the north meanwhile was growing as Chinese coming into the area vacated by the 3d Battalion joined the attempt to follow the rearward move. Electing a faster, if riskier, course, Chiles ordered the trains to run by the roadblock with two platoons of tanks from Company C as escort. The 2d Battalion in the meantime was to cross the road at Chaun-ni and withdraw with the 3d.[51]

During the morning the intelligence officer of the 72d Tank Battalion at Putchaetful had received a French report that Chinese had mined the road, and he had relayed the report to an enlisted man at the command post of the 2d Battalion of the 23d at Chaun-ni. At that point the information had somehow gone astray. A costly consequence of the communications lapse came when the convoy of wheeled vehicles interspersed among tanks traveling in fourth gear attempted its run. A mine in a field planted a half mile below Chaun-ni disabled the lead tank, trucks piled up behind, and enemy fire from the hills and draws to the west chased drivers and tank crews as they dropped down a twenty-foot embankment off the east shoulder of the road and splashed across the Hongch'on River to reach cover behind the tanks of Company B in the stream bed. The second tank in column shoved the abandoned trucks off the road and safely bypassed the knocked-out tank but lost a track in the minefield near the French position. Observing both explosions from Chaun-ni, a staff officer of the 2d Battalion ordered the remainder of the convoy to move east off the road just below the village and follow the stream bed south. The tanks churned in behind those of Company B, but under small arms, machine gun, and mortar fire ranging in from the west, panicky truck drivers drove helter-skelter into the hills beyond the stream bed. Some vehicles caught fire; ammunition trucks exploded; others eventually were halted by one or another accident of terrain. Leaving the hillside and draws looking like a disorganized salvage yard, drivers and riders joined the withdrawal of the 2d and 3d Battalions.[52]

Stragglers and abandoned communications equipment, weapons, and personal gear dotted the track of the two battalions as they made a tiring march under flanking fire from the west for part of the way and under drenching rainstorms that broke about 1830. By midnight both units were behind the 1st Battalion, which during the afternoon had occupied the first ridge east of Route 24 on the new defense line. The 3d Battalion filled lower ground between the ridge and the road while the 2d Battalion and the French battalion, which had disengaged from the Chinese roadblock force as the two battalions east of the road had come abreast, assembled to the rear for the remainder of the night.[53]

[51] 2d Div POR 613, 18 May 51; AA Rpt, 8th Hist Det, "Battle of Soyang," Jun 51; 23d Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; 23d Inf POR 231, 18 May 51.

[52] AA Rpt, 8th Hist Det, "Battle of Soyang," Jun 51; 2d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51.

[53] 23d Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; 23d Inf POR 231, 18 May 51.

To the north, a final mishap occurred along Route 24 as the two remaining tank platoons of Company C brought up the rear of the withdrawal. Ordered by the company commander to leave the road at Chaun-ni and follow the stream bed south, as Company B already had done, one platoon missed the turnoff point and came upon the disabled tank a half mile below town. Unable to turn around in the narrow road space between the embankment on the east and steep slopes on the west and faced with the danger of mines to the south, the tankers chose the nearly vertical twenty-foot drop on their left. Two tanks snapped drive shafts in the plunge.[54]

The two immobilized tanks raised Company C's tank losses since 16 May to five. The trains of Company C, the 2d and 3d Battalions, and half the heavy mortar company—more than a hundred fifty vehicles, many with heavy weapons, ammunition, or other gear aboard—had been left behind and by dark were being picked over by Chinese. Casualties suffered by the 23d Infantry and its attachments totaled 72 killed, 158 wounded, and 190 missing. In return for these losses in men and equipment, the regiment exacted an estimated 2,228 killed and 1,400 wounded and took 22 prisoners from the Chinese *31st, 35th,* and *181st Divisions.*[55]

West of Route 24, the withdrawal of the three companies of the 38th Infantry also took unexpected turns. By late afternoon the 9th Infantry reinforced by the Dutch battalion and Company G of the 38th had occupied positions between Hill 800 and Route 24 but had not cleared a way through the Chinese around Company B and behind Companies A and F. In a new plan for getting the three units out, Colonel Coughlin turned to the old technique of the rolling artillery barrage, coupling it to an umbrella of circling aircraft. For ten minutes ahead of the withdrawal, set for 1800, seven battalions of artillery—a mix of light, medium, and heavy guns—were to fire across the front of the companies, then at 1800 were to place concentrations on Hill 710 and to box in the three companies as they shifted east and withdrew down the 975–691 ridge. A liaison plane overhead was to control the delivery of air strikes and adjustment of the box as the companies moved and also was to relay all other communications.[56]

A sudden, severe thunderstorm breaking twenty minutes after the start of the withdrawal drove all planes back to their bases and thus not only eliminated air support but also forced the artillery to stop firing the protective barrage and interrupted radio contact between Coughlin's headquarters and the withdrawing units. Small groups filtering through the lines of the 9th Infantry during the remainder of the night were an indication of the final disruption caused by the storm. Head counts on the morning of the 19th were two officers and eighty-one men for Company A, no officers and seventy-four men for Company B, and no officers and eighty-one men for Company F. Casualties had reduced the other companies of both the 1st and 2d Bat-

[54] AA Rpt, 8th Hist Det, "Battle of Soyang," Jun 51.

[55] Ibid.; X Corps Rpt, "Operations of the 9th, 23d, 38th Inf RCTs, 16 May–2 Jun 51"; Eighth Army G3 SSR, May 51.

[56] 9th Inf Comd Rpt, Opns (S3), May 51; 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51.

talions to similar figures. Officer losses in the 2d Battalion were especially high, among them the battalion commander, battalion executive officer, battalion operations officer, and two company commanders.[57]

The Battle Shifts East

The X Corps line shaped by the withdrawals and shifts on the 18th amounted to a deep salient with the 3d Battalion, 38th Infantry, at its apex in the Hill 800 complex and the 1st Marine Division presenting a solid face toward Ch'unch'on on its northwest shoulder. Along its upper northeast shoulder, the 9th Infantry and 23d Infantry carried the line from the Hill 800 mass beyond Han'gye to a point about three miles short of Hill 683, which General Almond had set as the eastern limit of the 2d Division's new sector. The 683 height had fallen to the Chinese, however, when the ROK 5th Division forces that had taken position along the Hongch'on River east of Chaun-ni were driven back and disorganized during the day by the *34th Division.* Units regrouped by nightfall—a mix of three battalions of infantry from the 35th and 36th Regiments and a company of engineers—were clustered around the village of Hasolch'i located on a lateral mountain track two miles south of Hill 683. Pulling out of contact at the southern end of the *81st Division's* roadblock at Sangam-ni early in the day, the bulk of the 3d Regiment engineer battalion and the tank destroyer company of the ROK 7th Division now defended the X Corps' east flank from positions just below the village of P'ungam-ni, six miles southeast of Hasolch'i. Of the 7th's other forces, about seven hundred had been corralled far to the south in Chech'on; another group had been found at the village of Soksa-ri, located on Route 20 over fifteen miles southeast of P'ungam-ni in the ROK III Corps sector.[58]

South Korean troops straggling into the area just north and east of Soksa-ri by nightfall attested to the misfortunes of the ROK 3d and 9th Divisions when they had attempted to withdraw to line Waco. In starting the move down the road from Hyon-ni, the ROK III Corps commander, General Yu, had ordered the 9th Division to take the lead and deal with the Chinese roadblock at Sangam-ni while the 3d Division, bringing up the rear, handled any North Korean attempts to roll up the column from the north. By midmorning Yu's forces were caught in the predictable squeeze, the *81st Division* holding its Sangam-ni position against the 9th Division's efforts to reduce it while forces of the North Korean *6th Division* and *12th Division* closed in on the 3d Division in the Hyon-ni area. Both ROK divisions broke away in disorder into the heights east of the road, leaving behind all remaining artillery pieces and more than three hundred vehicles.[59] Natural lines of drift through the mountains channeled the disorganized troops southeast toward Soksa-ri.

[57] 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; 9th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; 2d Div CofS Jnl, Entry 8, 19 May 51; X Corps Rpt, "Operations of the 9th, 23d, 38th Inf RCTs, 16 May–2 Jun 51."

[58] X Corps POR 234, 18 May 51; X Corps Special Rpt, "Battle of the Soyang River."

[59] An officer from the North Korean *6th Division* captured later claimed that twelve hundred South Koreans and much materiel were captured in the Hyon-ni area. See OB Info, North Korean Army, Charts 4 and 9.

Out of radio contact with his forces since early morning but informed of their southeasterly movement by air observers, General Yu air-dropped to some groups orders assigning them to line Waco positions. He also set up straggler lines in the Soksa-ri area but by nightfall had regained control of forces in little more than battalion strength.[60]

While Yu struggled to reorder his two divisions and deploy them on the Waco line, General Almond ordered additional modifications of the X Corps front to straighten and shorten the line and to shift 2d Division forces farther east into the weakly defended sectors of the ROK 5th and 7th Divisions. The 5th Marines, now scheduled to take over the western portion of the 2d Division's sector during the afternoon of the 19th, were to occupy positions centered some three miles south of Hill 800 which would eliminate the bulge manned by the 3d Battalion, 38th Infantry, in the Hill 800 mass and the two adjoining battalions of the 9th Infantry. Unaware that the 800 complex would be handed over, the *45th Division* meanwhile suffered unnecessarily in nightlong attempts to take it. Successive assault waves of the fresh *133d Regiment* were shattered, mainly by heavy concentrations of artillery fire. On the crest of Hill 800, where the Chinese centered most of their charges, the men of Company K, 38th Infantry, in fact did little fighting themselves but simply sat inside their bunkers and allowed the Chinese to enter their lines, then called down a blanket of artillery fire. The Chinese pulled back about daylight on the 19th, leaving behind some eight hundred dead.[61]

The new line of the 2d Division, to be occupied on the 19th, cut Route 24 just below Han'gye on the west and reached across lateral ridges eastward, into what had become enemy territory, through Hill 683 to the village of Nuron-ni, three miles above P'ungam-ni. General Ruffner assigned the 23d Infantry to the central sector centered on Hill 683. Given the 15th Regimental Combat Team of the 3d Division by Almond as a replacement for the 38th Infantry's going into corps reserve, Ruffner ordered the 15th initially to occupy the P'ungam-ni area as a preliminary to moving forward to the Nuron-ni sector of the line. Both the 9th Infantry and the 15th Regimental Combat Team thus faced the prospect of having to fight to gain the line they were to defend, but, once the two regiments were on the line, the 2d Division would hold good positions looking down into the valley of the Naech'on River, a westward flowing tributary of the Hongch'on.[62]

To help strengthen the X Corps' eastern sector, Van Fleet at midnight on the 18th ordered the remainder of the 3d Division eastward from the Seoul area, the 7th Regimental Combat Team to move on the 19th, the 65th Regimental Combat Team on the 20th. General Almond directed the division, less its 15th Regimental Combat Team, which was to remain attached to the 2d Division, to protect the X Corps' east flank

[60] Eighth Army G3 SSR, May 51; Eighth Army Arty SSR, Jun 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entries 0920, 1030, and 1615, 18 May 51.

[61] X Corps OI 177, 19 May 51; 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; 38th Inf PIR 117, 20 May 51; Gugeler, *Combat Actions in Korea*, p. 180.

[62] X Corps OI 177, 19 May 51; 2d Div POR 614, 19 May 51.

from enemy attacks out of the sector of the muddled ROK III Corps. General Soule was initially to concentrate forces at Pangnim-ni, located on Route 20 fifteen miles south of Soksa-ri, then reconnoiter and set up blocking positions in the Soksa-ri area.[63]

From Hoengsong, where 3d Division headquarters had set up on moving east with the 15th Regimental Combat Team, Soule moved a tactical command post group to the Pangnim-ni area early on the 19th and sent his reconnaissance company up Route 20 to patrol as far as Hajinbu-ri, five miles east of Soksa-ri. The company found the road clear and made contact with ROK III Corps troops in the Hajinbu-ri area. On its return run during the afternoon, the company left a platoon in Soksa-ri to watch a mountain road reaching the village from Sangam-ni and Habae-jae to the northwest, then moved on to Changp'yong-ni, six miles southwest of Soksa-ri. There the 3d Battalion of the 7th Infantry, first to arrive from the west, blocked Route 20 and mountain trails coming in from the northwest. Reaching the area after dark, the remainder of the 7th Infantry assembled at Ami-dong, five miles south of Changp'yong-ni.[64]

At the right of the 2d Division fifteen miles to the northwest, the 15th Regimental Combat Team attacked through the ROK 3d Regiment at 1100 to seize P'ungam-ni and high ground a mile and half to the northwest along the trail leading to Nuron-ni on the modified No Name line another two miles to the north. Moving against light resistance, the combat team consolidated positions on its objective after dark. As the 15th moved beyond the village, the ROK 3d Regiment and smaller units of the ROK 7th Division in the area advanced through light to moderate opposition to positions north and northeast of P'ungam-ni, the latter along a trail leading to Habae-jae.[65]

At the new left of the 2d Division along Route 24, the *181st Division* wheeling out of its roadblock near Chaun-ni reengaged the 23d Infantry just above Han'gye shortly before dawn and kept the 1st and 3d Battalions pinned in position until counterattacks, artillery fire, and air strikes called in under gradually clearing skies finally forced a release about noon. The two battalions occupied positions straddling Route 24 on the new line below Han'gye by early evening. While the 2d Battalion moved east to a centrally located reserve position along the lateral track leading to Hasolch'i, the attached French battalion attempted to take position on the regimental right and make contact with a unit of the ROK 36th Regiment located northwest of Hasolch'i in the sector to be occupied by the 9th Infantry. But Chinese stoutly defending an intervening height prevented the French from closing ranks with the South Koreans.[66]

It was well after dark before the 9th Infantry completed its eastward shift into its new sector above Hasolch'i. First to arrive, the 1st Battalion moved

[63] Rads, GX–5–3166 KGOO and GX–5–3174 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 18 and 19 May 51, respectively; X Corps OI 177, 19 May 51.

[64] Dolcater, *3d Infantry Division in Korea*, pp. 208–09; X Corps POR 235, 19 May 51.

[65] Dolcater, *3d Infantry Division in Korea*, p. 208; 2d Div POR 614, 19 May 51; Eighth Army POR, 19 May 51.

[66] 2d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; 2d Div POR 614, 19 May 51; 2d Div PIR 208, 20 May 51; 23d Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; 23d Inf ISUM, 19 May 51.

up on the right of the ROK 35th Regiment into positions northeast of Hasolch'i looking down into the valley of a small stream that fed the Naech'on River. The 2d Battalion took position behind the forces of the ROK 36th Regiment to await daylight before relieving the South Koreans and extending westward toward the French battalion. With a similar objective the 3d Battalion assembled near Hasolch'i to await morning before moving up on the right of the 1st Battalion to close the gap between the 9th Infantry and the 15th Regimental Combat Team in the P'ungam-ni area.[67]

The ROK III Corps sector remained a scene of tangled and scattered forces throughout the 19th, troops trickling into collecting points along Route 20, some of both the 3d and 9th Divisions taking up random positions about five miles above the road. None, despite General Yu's air-dropped orders the day before, stopped on line Waco some seven miles farther north. The one fortunate circumstance was an absence of enemy contact. In marked contrast, the ROK I Corps all but completed an orderly withdrawal to the Waco line, both its divisions moving along the coast, the Capital in the lead and the 11th, though not in contact, prudently bounding south by regiment in bringing up the rear. Leading the way west along line Waco, the 26th Regiment of the Capital Division refused the corps' inland flank left open by the ROK III Corps.[68]

In the array of enemy forces east of Route 24 by nightfall on the 19th, the full *IX Army Group* stood opposite the X Corps' new eastern front between Han'gye and Soksa-ri. Though the group remained generally on a southeastward course, its attached *12th Army* was turning more to the south on the front of the 2d Division with four divisions abreast: the *181st* already was in the Han'gye area; the *35th* was approaching next to the east; the *34th* was entering the area above Hasolch'i, where its leading forces had stopped the French battalion at the right of the 23d Infantry; and the bulk of the *31st* now was located above P'ungam-ni after being forced out of the village by the 15th Regimental Combat Team. Making a fast march to the southeast of P'ungam-ni, the *93d Regiment* of the *31st Division* was nearing Soksa-ri on Route 20. Using the mountain road running southeast from Sangam-ni through Habae-jae to Soksa-ri as its axis, the *27th Army* also was headed for the Soksa-ri area, advancing with its three divisions in column, the *81st* still in the van after helping to rout the ROK III Corps, the *79th* and *80th* trailing in the vicinity of Habae-jae. Behind the *27th Army*, the *20th Army*, in group reserve, was beginning to move southeast from the Kwandae-ri area along the Soyang River. Coming from the Hyon-ni area on a line of march projecting to Hajinbu-ri were the *6th* and *12th Divisions* of the North Korean *V Corps*, and moving toward Hajinbu-ri on a parallel course just to the east were the *2d* and *27th Divisions* of the North Korean *II Corps*, which, after failing in frontal attacks against the ROK I Corps, had shifted west in an apparent attempt to envelop the South Koreans.[69]

[67] 2d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; 9th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; 9th Inf PORs 152, 19 May 51, and 153, 20 May 51.

[68] Eighth Army G3 SSR, May 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 19 May 51; Eighth Army PORs, 19 and 20 May 51.

[69] Eighth Army G2 SS Rpt, May 51; Eighth Army PIR 310, 18 May 51; X Corps G2 SS Rpt, May 51; X

Enemy action decidedly had slackened on the X Corps front during the afternoon of the 19th after the *181st Division* gave up its attack on the 23d Infantry in the Han'gye area. But, with Chinese continuing to mass ahead of the 2d Division, the slack appeared to be mostly a result of attempts to move fresh units forward to take over the assault. And though the pell-mell withdrawal of the ROK III Corps had taken its scrambled forces out of contact, the passage of Chinese in strength southeastward through Habae-jae and beyond presaged heavy action along Route 20. It seemed that enemy forces would not only quickly revive their drive against the X an ROK III Corps but, with strong Chinese reserves and North Korean divisions on the move, that they would increase it.

Corps G2 Section Rpt, "Battle of the Soyang River," 30 Jun 51; X Corps PIRs 235, 19 May 51, and 237, 21 May 51; Hq, FEC, History of the North Korean Army; OB Info, North Korean Army, Charts 9 and 15; Eighth Army POR, 19 May 51.

CHAPTER XXVI

The Counteroffensive

On 18 May, after Chinese had reached P'ungam-ni, then the deepest point of enemy penetration, and as the substantial sweep of Chinese around the 2d Division into the sectors of the collapsing ROK units had become apparent, General Ridgway suggested that General Van Fleet attempt to relieve the pressure on his forces in the east by attacking in the west to threaten enemy lines of communication in the Iron Triangle. Ridgway recommended a two-division attack moving on the Route 33 axis toward Ch'orwon. He thought such an attack would have a good chance of succeeding since intelligence indicated that only four Chinese armies occupied the forty-mile sector of the front west of Ch'unch'on and since Peng Teh-huai would need at least a week or ten days to shift any material part of his mass from the east to oppose the advance. Nor had enemy forces on the western front shown much aggressiveness. Enemy attacks had forced back some patrol base and outpost units and had tested the main line in both the I Corps and IX Corps sectors, but these attacks had been isolated affairs, not coordinated actions in a concerted holding operation.[1]

Judging enemy forces in the east central area to be clearly overextended after he reconnoitered the front on 19 May, Ridgway enlarged his concept to take advantage of their vulnerability and ordered Van Fleet to attack across the entire front. Agreeing that these forces could be trapped, Van Fleet laid out an operation that he believed could produce decisive results if the attack moved fast enough. Though stabilizing the line in the east remained a problem, he now viewed that task with no great alarm even though enemy forces were deepening and strengthening their penetration. If for no other reason, he expected their logistical difficulties in the mountains to slow if not stop their advance within a matter of days; they would have created only a "long bag" that could closed behind them by rapid drives to block their main routes of resupply and withdrawal. Van Fleet's plan called for the I Corps, IX Corps, and part of the 1st Marine Division at the left of the X Corps to advance on 20 May toward the Munsan-ni–Ch'unch'on segment of line Topeka. Once the Topeka segment was occupied, strikes to start closing the bag were to be made toward the Iron Triangle, one up Route 3 to secure a road center in the Yongp'yong River valley some twenty miles above Uijongbu, another up Route 17 beyond Ch'unch'on to seize the complex of road junctions

[1] Rad, C 62789, CINCFE to CG Eighth Army, 18 May 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51.

at the west end of the Hwach'on Reservoir.[2]

Stabilizing the Line

If General Van Fleet was certain that the line in the east would stabilize, when and where were still hard questions late on the 19th. There were several reasons to doubt that the 2d Division could stand on the Han'gye–Nuron-ni line in the X Corps sector. *(See Map 35.)* The line was fifteen miles long, there were gaps, and Chinese still occupied some of the important ground. General Almond consequently ordered the 2d Division to withdraw further and the 1st Marine Division to adjust its neighboring positions in accommodation. In anticipation of penetrations of X Corps lines, Almond also acquired the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team from the IX Corps for use as a fire brigade in counterattacks.[3]

The passage of *27th Army* units through the Habae-jae area and, farther north, the movement of *20th Army* forces in the same southeasterly direction also raised the possibility that the Chinese intended to sweep east along Route 20 behind the ROK III Corps, turn the east flank of the X Corps, or both. The *93d Regiment* of the *31st Division* reinforced this possibility when the regiment announced its arrival in Soksa-ri by driving the platoon of the 3d Division's reconnaissance company out of town during the night of the 19th and by stopping a battalion of the 7th Infantry that attempted to regain the town on the 20th. The *81st Division* of the *27th Army* also revealed its approach on the 20th by engaging the 23d Regiment of the ROK 3d Division about five miles north of Soksa-ri.[4]

Yet even as the *IX Army Group* appeared to be bringing up reserves and disposing forces for continuing its drive, there were indications that the offensive was losing impetus. Under a pummeling by B–29s, which dropped a hundred seventy tons of proximity-fused bombs ahead of the 2d Division during the night of the 19th, the *12th Army* developed only one attack of any size by daylight, this by a *34th Division* force of about five hundred men against Company C, 9th Infantry, northeast of Hasolch'i. Ground fire, air strikes, and a climactic counterattack by Company A virtually wiped out the force. At the division's left, large groups of Chinese approaching the 23d Infantry at a trot out of the Naech'on River valley about midday on the 20th wavered under mortar and artillery fire and air attacks and turned back before reaching the regiment's line. Put on the run were formations from the *181st Division*, whose forces earlier had so stoically endured a heavy air and artillery pounding while passing through the gap in the 38th Infantry's lines near Hill 1051. Rear rank forces of the *12th Army* moving up in battalion-size groups meanwhile provided deeper targets for aircraft and artillery as they approached

[2] Rad, G (TAG) 172 KCG, Ridgway (Personal) for Collins, 20 May 51; Interv, Appleman with Van Fleet, 15 Sep 51; Rads, GX–5–3172 KGOP, GX–5–3229 KGOP, and GX–5–3290 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 18 May and last two 19 May 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 19 May 51.

[3] X Corps PIR 235, 19 May 51; X Corps OI 179, 20 May 51; Rad, GX–5–3464 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CGs IX and X Corps, 20 May 51; 2d Div CofS Jnl, Entry 25, 20 May 51.

[4] X Corps PIR 235, 19 May 51, PIR 236, 20 May 51, POR 236, 20 May 51, and PIR 237, 21 May 51; Dolcater, *3d Infantry Division in Korea*, p. 211.

and entered assembly areas in preparation for night attacks. Kept under heavy artillery fire and precise B–29 bomb runs, none of these forces came in on the 2d Division during the night of the 20th.[5]

Now confident that the 2d Division could occupy and hold the Han'gye–Nuron-ni line, General Almond late on the 20th canceled his earlier withdrawal order and turned to a greater concern of easing the threat of envelopment from the east either by a shallow swing around the ROK 7th Division forces below P'ungam-ni or by a deeper drive through the 3d Division sector in the Soksa-ri area. Reducing the deeper threat somewhat was the arrival of the 65th Infantry, which allowed General Soule to strengthen his blocks and recapture Soksa-ri on the 21st. ROK 8th Division forces also had reached Chech'on, from where they could be moved up quickly to reinforce the X Corps' east flank defenses. In the P'ungam-ni area, reassembled forces of the 5th and 7th Regiments of the ROK 7th Division provided additional protection against a Chinese strike out of the Habae-jae area, protection which Almond further deepened and widened with the bulk of the still somewhat decrepit 38th Infantry. To relieve the threat in both the P'ungam-ni and Soksa-ri areas, Almond ordered an attack on the 22d to seize and block enemy movement through Habae-jae by Task Force Yoke, a group of infantry, tanks, and artillery units that he constituted under the command of Col. Lawrence K. Ladue, the deputy corps commander.[6]

The force of enemy attacks declined all across the X Corps front on the 21st but grew stronger in the ROK III Corps sector and at the left of the ROK I Corps. ROK 9th Division forces between Soksa-ri and Hajinbu-ri fell below Route 20 under attacks by the Chinese *81st Division* while ROK 3d Division units above Route 20 northeast of Hajinbu-ri began to collapse under North Korean *V Corps* assaults. Near Yuch'on-ni, four miles east of Hajinbu-ri, the 20th Regiment of the ROK 11th Division holding positions facing north and northwest athwart Route 20 to prevent an enemy sweep behind the bulk of the ROK I Corps on line Waco was hit hard by forces of the North Korean *II Corps*. The enemy pressure continued at all points of attack into the evening.[7]

Despite the enemy action in the Hajinbu-ri–Yuch'on-ni area and continuing reports of reserves moving south, General Van Fleet was convinced, as he reported to General Ridgway, that "the enemy's initial punch in the eastern and central eastern section is shot."[8] To keep enemy forces from slipping out of the bottom of their long bag in the Hajinbu-ri area, Van Fleet late on the 21st directed the ROK III Corps to make no further withdrawals and to restore defensive

[5] 2d Div POR 615, 20 May 51; 9th Inf POR 153, 20 May 51; 9th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; 23d Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; 23d Inf S3 Jnl, Entries 83 and 92, 20 May 51; 2d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; 2d Div PIRs 208, 20 May 51, and 209, 21 May 51.

[6] 2d Div Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; X Corps PIRs 236, 20 May 51, and 237, 21 May 51; Dolcater, *3d Infantry Division in Korea*, p. 211; X Corps POR 237, 21 May 51; 2d Div POR 616, 21 May 51; X Corps OI 180, 21 May 51.

[7] X Corps G3 SS Rpt, May 51; X Corps PIR 237, 21 May 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 21 May 51; Eighth Army POR, 21 May 51, and PIR 313, 21 May 51.

[8] Memo, Lt Col Paul F. Smith, Eighth Army Liaison Officer, to Gen Ridgway, 22 May 51.

positions north of Route 20. The ROK I Corps meanwhile was to fall back from line Waco to positions that would secure Route 20 between Yuch'on-ni and Kangnung on the coast. Anxious to close the top of the bag, Van Fleet enlarged and substantially altered the concept of the counterattack opened on the 20th. The main effort was now to be directed toward seizing the road centers, with the front otherwise being advanced only as necessary to protect the main effort. The I Corps, as under Van Fleet's earlier order, was to seize the road hub in Yongp'yong River valley. His new order shifted the IX Corps–X Corps boundary east as of 23 May to give the IX Corps the Hongch'on-Ch'unch'on-Hwach'on road and the road center on the western side of the Hwach'on Reservoir as its main objective. The X Corps was to open a general advance on the 23d to seize the road complex in the Yanggu-Inje area east of the reservoir.[9]

Even as Van Fleet ordered the ROK III Corps to regain positions above Route 20, the ROK 3d and ROK 9th Divisions again tumbled back under enemy attacks that by early afternoon of the 22d completely dispersed both divisions and overran their command posts. KMAG advisers notified Van Fleet that the commanders of both divisions and the principal staff members of the ROK 9th Division had disappeared. The ROK 3d Division commander, Brig. Gen. Kim Jong Oh, at first believed to have been either killed or taken captive, was located along with many members of the division on the 23d some fifteen miles southeast of Hajinbu-ri. Under the direction of the KMAG adviser, troops of the ROK 9th Division meanwhile assembled seven miles southwest of Hajinbu-ri. With the commander, Brig. Gen. Choi Suk, still unlocated, General Yu placed the deputy corps commander in charge.[10]

Accounting for the chaos as much as the force of enemy attacks were General Yu's never having regained full charge of the ROK III Corps after his two divisions were scattered at the Sangam-ni roadblock and his having lost all control of them when they were attacked at Hajinbu-ri. Convinced by the continuing failure of the corps that Yu and his staff could not conduct operations successfully, General Van Fleet late on the 22d ordered the ROK III Corps headquarters inactivated, the ROK 3d Division transferred to the ROK I Corps, the ROK 9th Division given to the X Corps, and the X Corps made responsible for the former ROK III Corps sector. He also ordered the ROK Army forward headquarters off the front and placed the ROK I Corps under his own direct command.[11]

In the Yuch'on-ni area, North Korean *II Corps* forces early on the 22d cut Route 20, turned their attack east, and dispersed the 20th Regiment of the ROK 11th Division. Given the stout enemy effort in the Hajinbu-ri–Yuch'on-ni region over the past two

[9] Rad, GX–5–3699 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA, 21 May 51; Rad, GX–5–3721 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG I Corps et al., 21 May 51.

[10] Rad, GX–5–3812 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CINCFE, 22 May 51; Eighth Army POR, 22 May 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entries 1707, 1735, and 1755, 22 May 51, and Entry 1032, 23 May 51.

[11] Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Entry 1755, 22 May 51; Interv, Appleman with Van Fleet, 15 Sep 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 22 May 51; Rad, GX–5–3849 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CG X Corps and C/S ROKA, 22 May 51; Rad, GX–5–3910 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA and Chief KMAG, 22 May 51; Rad GX–5–4404 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA and CG ROK I Corps, 25 May 51.

days, the approach of reserves, and no evidence that enemy forces were having serious logistical problems, the Eighth Army intelligence officer, in contrast to General Van Fleet's sensing that the enemy offensive had lost its momentum, predicted a continuation in force along and below Route 20. The location and course of enemy forces below Hajinbu-ri convinced Colonel Tarkenton that they would attempt a deep southwestward push toward P'yongch'ang and Yongwol along Route 20 as a preliminary to the seizure of the Chech'on road and rail hub; the eastward enemy drive appeared to be aimed at enveloping Kangnung.[12]

General Van Fleet countered the threat to Kangnung with new orders to the ROK I Corps, then still drawing back from line Waco to positions above Route 20 between Yuch'on-ni and the coast under his orders of the 21st. General Paik was to organize strong positions facing west astride Route 20 to block any eastward enemy drive along the road, but if he could not hold a continuous line above Route 20 with his west flank refused, he was to set his forces in perimeter around the Kangnung road center.[13]

But as Van Fleet dispatched these orders near midnight on the 22d, the composite of recent and current reports from the front confirmed a general enemy withdrawal. Now three days into their advance, the I Corps and the IX Corps had found contact progessively more difficult. The first indications of enemy withdrawal on the X Corps front had appeared late on the 21st. Evidently withdrawal orders had taken longer to reach the deeper enemy forces in the Hajinbu-ri–Yuch'on-ni area, forces who began moving back after dark on the 22d.[14]

Crippling losses, particularly in the *12th Army* and *15th Army*, had forced Peng Teh-huai to abandon his offensive. The inability of these weakening armies to mount effective attacks against the adjusted X Corps positions after 19 May had endangered the enemy forces farther east since the failure to advance astride Route 24 meant that the Chinese and North Koreans moving to and below Route 20 in the Hajinbu-ri–Yuch'on-ni sector were simply taking themselves farther and farther out on a limb.[15] Though fresh reserves were available, the casualties among the assault echelons had been exceptionally heavy, largely as a result of the Van Fleet rate of artillery fire and round-the-clock air attacks, and Peng apparently decided against subjecting his reserves to the same punishment and extreme losses.

Peng called for a rapid, almost precipitate, withdrawal, with covering forces fighting only light delaying actions except where strong blocks were needed to keep withdrawal routes open. The previous general disposition of forces was to be restored, the Hwach'on Reservoir again marking the division between Chinese and North Korean sectors and also marking generally the northern limit of the withdrawal.

[12] Eighth Army POR, 22 May 51, and PIR 314, 22 May 51.

[13] Rad, GX–5–3910 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to C/S ROKA and Chief KMAG, 22 May 51.

[14] Eighth Army PIR 315, 23 May 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; Rad, X 19780, CG X Corps to CG Eighth Army, 22 May 51.

[15] Eighth Army PIR 315, 23 May 51; X Corps G2 Section Rpt, "Battle of the Soyang River," 30 Jun 51.

For the Chinese armies south and southeast of the reservoir, plans for getting past the lake were designed to avoid a jam-up of troops when they reached that obstacle. The *20th* and *27th Armies* of the *IX Army Group* were to withdraw around the east end of the reservoir, then move along its northern bank to the west end. Leading the way, the *20th Army* was to set up a blocking position between Hwach'on town and the reservoir. The *27th Army*, on coming out of the Hajinbu-ri area with its rear covered by the North Korean *II* and *V Corps*, was to concentrate behind the *20th*. The North Korean rear guards were to set up defenses east of the reservoir, the *V Corps* between the reservoir and the near outskirts of Inje, the *II Corps* from Inje eastward.[16]

The *III Army Group*, with the *12th Army* returned to its control, was to withdraw around the west end of the reservoir. From below Ch'unch'on, the *60th Army*, less its *81st Division* still with the *12th Army*, was to fight a delaying action along Route 17 to hold the road open for the *15th* and *12th Armies* as they withdrew northwest, passed through the ground below the reservoir, and moved through Hwach'on town into the Iron Triangle. The rearguard *60th Army*, on passing behind the *20th Army* at Hwach'on, was to follow.[17]

West of the Pukhan River, the three armies of the *XIX Army Group* were to withdraw generally northwestward, pulling away from the I Corps and the IX Corps toward areas located on either side of the upper reaches of the Imjin River and in the Iron Triangle. Northwest of Seoul, the North Korean *I Corps* was initially to withdraw behind the lower Imjin and was eventually to move west beyond the Yesong River for rest and rebuilding.[18]

Counterattack

With the objective of reaching the main bodies of enemy forces, including reserves, before they could organize for defensive action, General Milburn and General Hoge had made speed the keynote of the counterattacks opened by the I and IX Corps on 20 May. In setting his three divisions on courses for line Topeka some fifteen miles above his Seoul defenses, Milburn aimed the ROK 1st Division toward Munsan-ni, the 1st Cavalry Division north through Uijongbu and up Route 33, and the 25th Division north along Route 3 toward the road hub in the Yongp'yong River valley. *(Map 37)* Hoge had established an intermediate line, Georgia, whose central trace lay just above the lateral stretch of the Pukhan River dammed on the west to form the Chongpyong Reservoir and along the upper bank of the Hongch'on River emptying into the reservoir from the east. A rapid advance to the Georgia line, Hoge had believed, would allow his four divisions (the 24th, ROK 2d, ROK 6th, and 7th, west to east) to reach enemy reserves.[19]

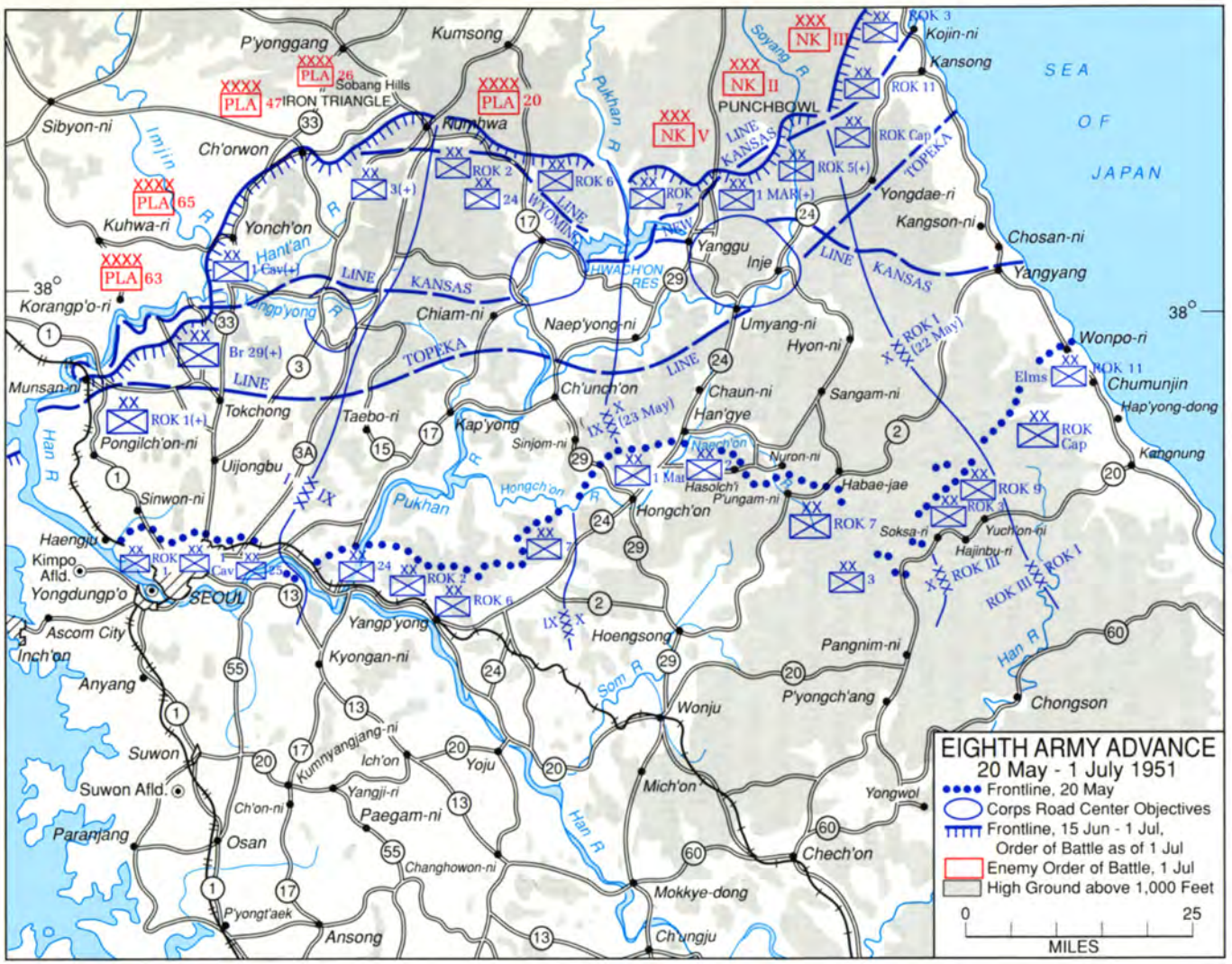
Milburn's forces had gained ground rapidly, especially the ROK 1st Division,

[16] USAFFE Intel Dig, no. 99, 16–31 Jan 53; X Corps G2 Section Rpt, "Battle of the Soyang River," 30 Jun 51; Hq, FEC, History of the North Korean Army.

[17] USAFFE Intel Dig, vol. I, no. 1, 1–31 Dec 52; X Corps G2 Section Rpt, "Battle of the Soyang River," 30 Jun 51.

[18] USAFFE Intel Dig, no. 96, 16–28 Feb 53; Hq, FEC, History of the North Korean Army.

[19] I Corps OI 5, 19 May 51; Rad, IXACT 1515 (IX Corps Opn O 20), CG IX Corps to CG ROK 2d Div et al., 19 May 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51.


P'yonggang
Kumsong
Sobang Hills
IRON TRIANGLE
Sibyon-ni
Ch'orwon
Kumhwa
Imjin R
Pukhan R
Soyang R
PUNCHBOWL
Kojin-ni
Kansong
SEA OF JAPAN
Kuhwa-ri
Yonch'on
Hant'an R
Yongdae-ri
Kangson-ni
Chosan-ni
Yangyang
Korangp'o-ri
38°
Yangp'yong
Chiam-ni
Naep'yong-ni
Yanggu
Inje
Umyang-ni
Hyon-ni
Wonpo-ri
Munsan-ni
Tokchong
Taebo-ri
Ch'unch'on
Chaun-ni
Sangam-ni
Elms
Chumunjin
Hap'yong-dong
Pongilch'on-ni
Kap'yong
Sinjom-ni
Han'gye
Nuron-ni
Kangnung
Uijongbu
Sinwon-ni
Hongch'on R
Habae-jae
Haengju
Kimpo Afld.
Yongdungp'o
SEOUL
Hongch'on
Soksa-ni
Yuch'on-ni
Hajinbu-ri
Ascom City
Inch'on
Yangp'yong
Hoengsong
Pangnim-ni
Anyang
Kyongan-ni
Som R
P'yongch'ang
Chongson
Wonju
Suwon
Kumnyangjang-ni
Ich'on
Yoju
Mich'on
Yongwol
Suwon Afld.
Yangji-ri
Paegam-ni
Ch'on-ni
Paranjang
Osan
Chech'on
Changhowon-ni
Mokkye-dong
P'yongt'aek
Ansong
Ch'ungju
PLA 47
PLA 26
PLA 20
PLA 65
PLA 63
NK II
NK III
NK V
ROK 3
ROK 11
ROK Cap
ROK 5(+)
1 MAR(+)
ROK 2
ROK 6
ROK 7
3(+)
24
1 Cav(+)
Br 29(+)
ROK 1(+)
ROK 1
ROK 9
ROK 3
ROK III
3
1 Mar
LINE KANSAS
LINE WYOMING
LINE TOPEKA
LINE NEW
HWACH'ON RES
IX (23 May)
X (22 May)
ROK I (22 May)
EIGHTH ARMY ADVANCE
20 May - 1 July 1951
Frontline, 20 May
Corps Road Center Objectives
Frontline, 15 Jun - 1 Jul,
Order of Battle as of 1 Jul
Enemy Order of Battle, 1 Jul
High Ground above 1,000 Feet
0
25
MILES

MAP 37

which entered Munsan-ni at midmorning on the 21st, and all three divisions were on or near the Topeka line by evening of the 23d. But the attack had amounted to a futile chase as the North Korean *I Corps* and *63d Army* backed away far faster than the I Corps advanced. Tank and tank-infantry forces probing well to the front of the main body of the 25th Division consistently failed to make solid contact and raised doubt that the Yongp'yong River valley road hub more than ten miles ahead of the division could be taken in time to block enemy movements through it.[20]

Despite light resistance, the IX Corps attack from the outset had been more cautious than aggressive. After a short advance on the 20th, General Hoge sharply reprimanded his division commanders for failing to push their attacks, but gains on the 21st were even shorter. Attempting again to accelerate the advance, Hoge directed his forces to employ pursuit tactics and move no less than six miles on the 22d, a distance that would carry them two to three miles beyond the Georgia phase line—far enough, if done speedily enough, Hoge believed, to break through covering forces and make contact with the main bodies of withdrawing Chinese. The attack on the 22d, however, took his four divisions no farther than the Georgia line.[21]

In new attack orders for the 23d, Hoge made zone adjustments, obliged to do so on his right by General Van Fleet's orders moving the corps boundary east as the X Corps joined the counterattack. The 7th Division, after advancing in its present zone for most of the day, was to relieve 1st Marine Division forces straddling Route 29 and prepare to attack on the Ch'unch'on-Hwach'on axis toward the road complex at the west end of the Hwach'on Reservoir. On his left, Hoge switched the zones of the 24th and ROK 2d Divisions and ordered General Bryan to send a task force northeast up Route 17 to seize Kap'yong while the remainder of his division followed astride the road. The ROK 2d Division, shifting to the corps left flank after Bryan's forces passed through it en route to Kap'yong, was to attack northwest along secondary Route 15 toward Taebo-ri.[22]

Still trying to animate his forces, Hoge again directed pursuit tactics and authorized them to bypass enemy groups up to company in size. His divisions advanced easily on the 23d against an accelerating withdrawal by the *64th* and *63d Armies*, but few units gained more than five miles. In the deepest move, General Bryan's task force of tanks and the 1st Battalion of the 21st Infantry captured Kap'yong after meeting only a smattering of opposition along Route 17.[23] Hoge nevertheless now had two American divisions positioned for advances over roads converging near the lower edge of his road center objective, the 7th below Ch'unch'on and the 24th at Kap'yong, whence a secondary valley road left Route 17 and ran northeast to rejoin it near the village of Chiam-ni.

General Almond's plan for the X Corps' counterattack on the 23d

[20] I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51.

[21] IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; Rads, IXCCG 103 and IXACT 1527, CG IX Corps to CG 24th Div et al., 20 and 21 May 51, respectively.

[22] IX Corps Opn O 21, 22 May 51.

[23] Ibid.; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; IX Corps POR 665, 23 May 51; IX Corps G2 Daily Sum, 23 May 51; Rad, IXCCG 106, CG IX Corps to CG Eighth Army, 23 May 51.



7TH INFANTRY DIVISION TROOPS IN THE CH'UNCH'ON AREA, 24 MAY 1951

amounted to an enlargement of limited attacks launched the day before. In the Soksa-ri area, the 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, had driven cross-country against hard resistance to a position commanding the lower end of a pass on the Soksa-ri–Habae-jae road about midway between the towns. Almond ordered the 3d Division to point its general attack at the remainder of the two-mile pass and, farther north, at a road junction some four miles due east of Habae-jae where the Soksa-ri–Habae-jae road connected with another road winding northeast through the higher Taebaeks to Yangyang on the coast. The seizure of these objectives, ordered before the withdrawal of enemy forces from the Soksa-ri–Hajinbu-ri area became apparent, was aimed at blocking the two best roads behind the Chinese. Almond reinforced the 3d Division by attaching the ROK 8th Division, now fully assembled in Chech'on, and also gave the ROK 9th Division (received as a result of the ROK III Corps' inactivation) to General Soule along with the responsibility for the additional ground assigned to the X Corps in the Hajinbu-ri area. About to attack with the approximation of a corps, Soule planned to send his 7th and 65th Regiments toward the pass and road junction, bring the damaged ROK 9th Division back into action in the Hajinbu-ri area, and keep the untried ROK 8th Division in reserve.[24]

[24] X Corps Opn O 22, 22 May 51; X Corps POR 238, 22 May 51; X Corps OI 183, 22 May 51; Dolcater, *3d Infantry Division in Korea*, p. 211.

Task Force Yoke, the mix of forces (the 2d Battalion, 38th Infantry; the bulk of the ROK 3d Regiment; all but two companies of the 72d Tank Battalion; a platoon of the 15th Infantry's tank company; a battery of the 300th Field Artillery Battalion; and a tactical air control party) organized by General Almond under the deputy corps commander, Colonel Ladue, had attacked through the lines of the ROK 7th Division in the P'ungam-ni area to seize the Habae-jae road junction. A combination of mean terrain, heavy, if spotty, resistance, and a foot-dragging performance by the South Korean troops had stopped Ladue three miles short of his objective.[25] For the general attack, Almond elected to replace the Yoke forces with Task Force Able, built around the 15th Regimental Combat Team, which was to be detached from the 3d Division and operate under corps control. Once the Able force had taken Habaejae and the 3d Division coming up from the south had captured the road junction four miles to the east, the task force was to be dissolved and the 15th Infantry was to join the operations of its own division.[26]

In what amounted to the beginning of one of two major spearheads of the corps counterattack, Almond in the afternoon of the 22d had sent the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team up Route 24 to take the high ground around Han'gye. Passing through the 23d Infantry, General Bowen's forces, with a battalion of the 5th Marines and two battalions of the 9th Infantry moving forward on their flanks, had driven to their objective easily against light opposition. In the counterattack, the main effort was to be made on the Route 24 axis. The 2d Division, with the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team attached, was to drive on Inje, the 1st Marine Division to advance on Yangugu. Almond's concept was that the two spearheads would trap the enemy forces east of Route 24 and lay them open to destruction by corps forces advancing on th right.[27]

In the drive on Yangugu, the opening attack of the 1st Marine Division along the west side of Route 24 carried the 1st and 5th Regiments into the extremely rough ground rising toward Hill 1051. In a gain of about four miles, exhausting climbs and descents felled more marines than did encounters with rearguard forces of the backpedaling *15th Army*. A highlight of the attack was the recovery of eleven wounded men of the 2d Division by 5th Marine forces advancing within a mile of Hill 1051.[28]

For the 2d Division's move on Inje, General Rufner assigned the main effort to the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team. With Company B of the 72d Tank Battalion attached, General Bowen's combat team was to take over the zone of the 23d Infantry, which General Almond had ordered into corps reserve, and attack up Route 24, initially (as Almond also had directed) to seize a bridge site on the Soyang at Umyang-ni, six miles southwest of the Inje road center. On a parallel course

[25] The operation had a regrettable postscript. Colonel Ladue died two days later of an apparent heart attack.

[26] X Corps OI 180, 21 May 51; X Corps POR 238, 22 May 51; X Corps Opn O 22, 22 May 51; 2d Inf Div CofS Jnl, Entries 15, 18, 23, 26, and 27, 22 May 51.

[27] X Corps OI 182, 22 May 51; X Corps POR 238, 22 May 51; X Corps Opn O 22, 22 May 51; X Corps Special Rpt, "Battle of the Soyang River."

[28] 1st Marine Div Hist Diary, 23 May 51; 1st Marine Div POR 280, 23 May 51.

at the division's right, the 38th Infantry was to advance along the mountain road running northeast from P'ungam-ni to Hyon-ni and then turning northwest to Inje. The 9th Infantry was to sweep the division's central area.[29]

With the entire *12th Army* attempting to withdraw north between Route 24 and the P'ungam-ni–Hyon-ni road, 2d Division forces advancing in that area on the 23d encountered only feeble delaying actions. Somewhat stouter but not immovable blocking positions confronted the 38th Infantry on the right, where the *80th Division* of the *27th Army* apparently was trying to hold open the Habae-jae–Sangam-ni segment of the road coming up from Soksa-ri. Yet Ruffner's opening attack was no great surge forward. Average gains of four miles matched those of the 1st Marine Division and took the 2d Division only as far as its nearest intermediate terrain objectives in the high ground confining the Naech'on River on the north and northeast.[30]

As originally constituted for the attack to seize the Habae-jae road junction, Task Force Able included the 15th Regimental Combat Team, the bulk of the ROK 3d Regiment, and a battery of the 300th Field Artillery Battalion, the last two units coming from the disbanded Task Force Yoke. With characteristic attention to custom making assault forces, General Almond reshaped the force late on the 22d, passing the South Koreans back to the ROK 7th Division, which was to go into corps reserve, pulling the 3d Battalion of the 15th Infantry and returning it to 3d Division control, and adding the headquarters and a company of the 2d Division's 72d Heavy Tank Battalion. It was midafternoon before Lt. Col. Thomas R. Yancey, the 15th Regimental Combat Team and task force commander, could organize the Able force and open the attack. The late start and rugged terrain, more than enemy opposition, held Yancey's gains on the 23d to little more than a mile, well short of Habae-jae.[31]

In the 3d Division zone, the 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, occupied the remainder of the pass north of Soksa-ri on the 23d while General Soule maneuvered other units of his "corps" forward for the advance toward the road junction east of Habae-jae. The 65th Infantry took position west of the 7th Infantry while the ROK 9th Division brought up the rear in reserve. All contacts during the day were with North Korean rear guards covering the Chinese *81st Division* and *93d Regiment, 31st Division,* as they withdrew to Habae-jae.[32]

It was obvious, especially in the I and IX Corps zones, that a head start and fast marches so far had allowed the main enemy bodies to withdraw well out of the reach of the counterattack. General Van Fleet was nevertheless confident that his forces, because of the light opposition to their advance, still had a better than even chance of blocking the enemy's main withdrawal routes and on the 24th pressed Milburn,

[29] 2d Inf Div Opn O 31, 22 May 51; X Corps Opn O 22, 22 May 51.

[30] 2d Inf Div PIR 211, 23 May 51; Eighth Army PIR 315, 23 May 51; 2d Inf Div POR 618, 23 May 51.

[31] X Corps Opn O 22, 22 May 51; X Corps OI 183, 22 May 51; 2d Inf Div POR 618, 23 May 51; X Corps POR 239, 23 May 51.

[32] Dolcater, *3d Infantry Division in Korea,* p. 212; X Corps Special Rpt, "Battle of the Soyang River"; X Corps POR 239, 23 May 51; X Corps G2 Section Rpt, "Battle of the Soyang River," 30 Jun 51.

Hoge, and Almond to quicken the pace of their attacks to seize their road center objectives. Van Fleet saw a particularly good opportunity to trap and destroy forces of the North Korean *II, III,* and *V Corps* and Chinese *12th, 20th,* and *27th Armies* in the area east of Route 24 with a squeeze play by the X Corps and the ROK I Corps. Once General Almond had captured the Yangu-Inje area, he was to mount an attack northeast along Route 24 to the coast in concert with a northwestward drive by General Paik's forces. Success would depend on the speed of the two-pronged advance, especially on a rapid attack by the X Corps to block enemy avenues of escape.[33]

General Milburn attempted to hurry the I Corps with orders for a top-speed move to line Kansas. Driving up Route 3 ahead of the general advance, the 89th Heavy Tank Battalion and a battalion of the 27th Infantry blocked the road hub on 25 May, and all three of Milburn's divisions reached the Kansas line on the 27th. But the attack, as from the outset, was a fruitless pursuit. Easily outstripping Milburn's forces, all major enemy formations on the I Corps front had withdrawn above the 38th parallel in the east and across the Imjin in the west.[34]

The IX Corps objective on 24 May was the Topeka line, which in the 7th Division's new zone on the east wing lay just above Ch'unch'on. Aiming to ease the division's attack and thus accelerate its coming move on the Hwach'on road center, General Hoge ordered General Ferenbaugh to lead with a fifteen-mile armored drive up Route 29 into Ch'unch'on. Following Ferenbaugh's instructions that the 32d Infantry operating in the area straddling the road send a strong tank-infantry patrol to develop enemy defenses in Ch'unch'on and check the Soyang River above town for crossing sites, the commander of the 32d shaped a small task force from the attached 7th Reconnaissance Company, a platoon of the regimental tank company, and a squad of engineers to be led by the reconnaissance company commander, Capt. Charles E. Hazel. Hardly the force that General Hoge had envisioned—but then he had not been specific about its makeup—Task Force Hazel set out under orders simply to reconnoiter the Ch'unch'on area and return to regimental lines.[35]

Eight miles below Ch'unch'on the Hazel force came under heavy small arms and machine gun fire from hills around the village of Sinjom-ni, where Route 29 began climbing to Wonch'ang pass cutting through the southern rim of the Ch'unch'on basin. The *60th Army* had set a regiment in blocking positions along with winding stretch of road from Sinjom-ni through the pass but had not employed antitank weapons. His battalion not yet displaced far enough forward to be within range, the artillery observer with Captain Hazel was unable to adjust fire onto the hills. After searching return fire on the hillsides by Hazel's gunners found few marks,

[33] Rad, C 63228, CINCFE to JCS, 24 May 51; Rad, GX–5–4206 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CGs I, IX, and X Corps, 24 May 51; Rad, GX–5–4218 KGOO, CG Eighth Army to CGs X Corps and ROK I Corps, 24 May 51.

[34] Rad, CIACT 5–285, CG I Corps to CGs 25th and 1st Cav Divs, 24 May 51; I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; I Corps G2 Section, Narrative of Enemy Operations, 24–27 May 51.

[35] The account of this task force operation is based on 3d Hist Det, AAR, "Task Force Hazel," copy in CMH.

Hazel ordered back the members of his force riding in thin-skinned jeeps and half-tracks and continued up the road with eleven tanks. Once through the twisting pass under a hard but harmless pelting by rifle and machine gun fire, the armored column barreled into the Ch'unch'on basin and drove into the center of town late in the afternoon. Fanning out in twos and threes, Hazel's tankers searched the city and both sides of the Soyang, killing, capturing, or routing about a hundred Chinese and punishing a large force discovered running off the back side of Hill 302 hugging Ch'unch'on on the northeast. In a scramble to get away from the probing tanks, the Chinese made no attempt to return fire.

As his tank crews cleared Ch'unch'on, Captain Hazel received orders from his regimental commander to remain in town for the night. Two platoons of the regimental tank company were to reinforce him and bring along a resupply of rations, gasoline, and ammunition. Hazel took his force to the airstrip at the western edge of town where the flat ground allowed good fields of fire. While circling his tanks into a tight perimeter, he was asked by regiment if General Ferenbaugh was with him. The division commander, his aide, and escorts had started up Route 29 in two jeeps some time earlier to contact Hazel's force, but there had been no word from the general since late afternoon. Hazel knew nothing of Ferenbaugh's whereabouts but could have correctly guessed that he had run into trouble at Sinjom-ni.

Ferenbaugh and his group had come under the guns of the Chinese blocking force about 1630. Enemy fire swept the jeep carrying the escorts, leaving two dead and a third wounded sprawled in the road, and chased the general, his aide, and driver to cover and concealment among rocks and foliage on a hillside to the east. A division psychological warfare team en route to Ch'unch'on to broadcast a surrender appeal came on the scene three hours later and turned back to the lines of the 32d Infantry, where they reported the ambush to 1st Lt. Ivan G. Stanaway, a platoon leader of the regimental tank company then lining up his platoon on the road to join Task Force Hazel. Taking his tanks forward immediately, Lieutenant Stanaway picked up the wounded escort and determined where the general was. Stanaway's crews found space to turn around and parked as close to the hillside as possible. There, under a peppering of small arms and machine gun fire, they buttoned up and waited until full dark, when Ferenbaugh and the men with him worked their way one at a time to Stanaway's tank and got in through the escape hatch. The three reached safety behind the 32d Infantry's lines around 2100.

Amid—and perhaps because of—the anxiety caused by the disappearance of General Ferenbaugh, Task Force Hazel shortly before dark received withdrawal orders relayed from division headquarters. With the Sinjom-ni–Wonch'ang pass stretch of the road bordered by Chinese, the prudent move was to pull the force below the enemy blocking position for resupply. Hazel again worked his column through enemy fire in the pass without harm except to prisoners riding atop the tanks, all but one of whom were hit. Hazel lost two tanks farther down the road, one that its crew put out of commission

when it ran out of fuel, another that tumbled off the road into a deep gully in the darkness. At 32d Infantry headquarters Hazel learned that his force, enlarged as arranged earlier, was to return to Ch'unch'on the next morning with a battalion of the 17th Infantry, coming out of division reserve, following to clear the Chinese out of the pass and join the task force in town.

Though not the operation General Hoge had in mind, Hazel's foray on the 24th had accomplished more than simply run some Chinese out of town: Hazel's reinforced column returned to Ch'unch'on early on the 25th without encountering Chinese along the road or in town.[36] Air observers scanning the ground above Ch'unch'on after daylight found over ten thousand Chinese jamming Route 17 and the secondary roads and trails leading to it. To the west and northwest of town they sighted another large mass of Chinese, which they estimated in the thousands, moving through the ground between Route 17 and the Kap'yong–Chiam-ni road. Assuming that the tanks of Task Force Hazel entering Ch'unch'on on the 24th were the point of a large attack force following, the main Chinese bodies had begun to swarm north during the night, with escape through Hwach'on town their chief interest.[37]

Artillery fire and air strikes flogging the Chinese with telling effect from midmorning on added to the disorder of their withdrawal. By 0930 General Ferenbaugh had the full 17th Infantry motorized and en route to Ch'unch'on, whence about noon the regiment attacked north as the pursuit force following the Chinese cramming Route 17 and as the right arm of an encircling move to bottle the Chinese sighted to the west and northwest of town. Reaching around these forces on the west was the 21st Infantry moving up the Kap'yong–Chiam-ni road in the 24th Division zone. The juncture of the two regiments in the Chiam-ni area would place the cork in the bottle, and by dark the two forces were within six miles of doing so. Earlier, at noon, air observers located forces of the *12th* and *15th Armies* coming out of the X Corps zone. The observers reported some ten thousand to twelve thousand troops and numerous vehicles and artillery pieces moving in long columns through the ground below the Hwach'on Reservoir and heading northwest toward Hwach'on town. Artillery and an entire fighter group lashed these columns while General Hoge moved to strengthen his attack to seize the Hwach'on town–Hwach'on Reservoir road center and block their escape. Hoge's orders, issued early on 26 May, called for the bulk of the ROK 6th Division, which was being pinched out of its central zone by the converging at-

[36] As the task force reentered Ch'unch'on, the pilot of a division observation plane scouting the ground a short distance southeast of town saw a sign, "POW 19," spelled with wallpaper strips and, underneath, "rescue," spelled with shell cases. Dropping a note about the sighting to the Hazel force, the pilot guided three tanks assembled by Captain Hazel to the sign, where the tankers picked up nineteen Americans, eighteen enlisted marines and one enlisted Army man. All had been taken prisoner on 30 November 1950 at the Changjin Reservoir and kept with their captors until being left behind when the Chinese withdrew from the Ch'unch'on area.

[37] 3d Hist Det, AAR, "Task Force Hazel"; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; IX Corps G2 Hist Rpt for May 51, 14 Jun 51; Rad, IXCCG 108, CG IX Corps to CG Eighth Army, 25 May 51.

tacks of the 17th and 21st Regiments, to move to the corps east flank and advance with the 7th Division to seize the road center. Leaving the 19th Regiment in the central zone to attack directly toward Chiam-ni until pinched out, General Chang assembled the remainder of his division in the Ch'unch'on area in preparation for a move up on the right of the 7th Division on the 27th.[38]

The spearheading 17th and 21st Regiments joined forces near Chiam-ni early on the 26th while in the general IX Corps advance the 19th Regiment of the ROK 6th Division pushed north through scattered resistance and reached positions within three miles of Chiam-ni. Three regiments thus penned the Chinese between Route 17 and the Kap'yong–Chiam-ni road in a rough triangle formed by the two roads and the South Korean line. Heavy, low-hanging clouds held aircraft on the ground all day, but artillery fire pummeled the Chinese continuously. While concentrating on pocketing the enemy group, the 17th Infantry sent a tank-infantry patrol up Route 17 toward Hwach'on. Four miles below town the patrol discovered the rear of the Chinese force observed passing through that area the day before. The score for the day was thus one prize cornered and another, somewhat larger, lost.[39]

In the first of several attempts to break out of the trap below Chiam-ni, Chinese unknowingly attacked troops more accustomed to administrative and service duties than to close combat. As the 21st Infantry completed its advance to Chiam-ni, the regimental headquarters company and the medical company set up a joint perimeter away from any of the rifle companies three miles southwest of Chiam-ni. Some three hundred Chinese attacking northwest after midnight against the arc of the perimeter manned by the medical company were thrown back with heavy casualties. Survivors withdrew to nearby high ground and sprayed the perimeter with machine gun fire, lifting it from time to time through the night as more Chinese moved forward to attack. Each assault was turned back in close fighting. The 5th Infantry, arriving from the south about daylight, broke up the last force of Chinese to approach the perimeter. The defending forces lost two killed and twenty wounded during the repeated attacks. Enemy losses were three hundred killed, an estimated two hundred fifty wounded, and four hundred fifty taken captive.[40]

Other Chinese groups in battalion strength attempted to punch their way north out of the trap during the early morning of the 27th but were knocked back by the forces blocking the way in the Chiam-ni area. After these failures there were no more organized efforts to escape, only confused clumps of Chinese moving around in search of a way out. While the 17th and 21st Regiments turned north to join the general corps advance, mop-up operations by the 5th Infantry and 19th Regiment of the ROK 6th Division raised the prisoner

[38] IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; IX Corps G2 Daily Activities Rpt, 25 May 51; IX Corps PORs 668 and 669, 25 May 51; 7th Inf Div POR 233, 25 May 51; IX Corps Opn Plan 20, 24 May 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 26 May 51.

[39] IX Corps G2 Hist Rpt, May 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 26 May 51.

[40] Dept of the Army GO 77, 5 Sep 51; Interv, Appleman with Col Gines Perez, CO, 21st Inf. For their outstanding performance in this action, the Headquarters Company and Medical Company were awarded the Presidential Unit Citation.

toll to around two thousand. During a final sweep of the area by the 5th Infantry on 28 May, Chinese taken captive, many of whom surrendered in large groups, brought the total to near thirty-eight thousand.[41]

Action in the general corps advance was concentrated along Route 17 where Chinese fought hard to hold open the Hwach'on town–Hwach'on Reservoir escape route for the columns moving northwest out of the ground below the reservoir. Rain and heavy clouds that had kept aircraft on the ground finally lightened in the afternoon of the 27th, allowing air strikes along with artillery fire to take a heavy count of the Chinese scurrying to get above Hwach'on. The 17th Infantry meanwhile fought up Route 17 through stubborn resistance and entered Hwach'on at 1400, but a division of the *20th Army* blocked the regiment's attempts to advance north of town and east toward the reservoir. The ROK 6th Division moving up on the right out of the Ch'unch'on area met no opposition but advanced only a few miles through the rough ground below the western reaches of the reservoir. Much of the enemy's gateway to safety thus remained open.[42]

On 28 May air observers reported the ground below the reservoir all but empty of enemy forces, and the ROK 6th Division's move to the lake's western edge confirmed the Chinese escape. The division of the *20th Army* deployed north and east of Hwach'on town and another division encountered on the fronts of the 24th and ROK 2d Divisions to the west meanwhile showed well organized defenses and a determination to resist any further IX Corps advance toward the Iron Triangle.[43]

Although the IX Corps had gained its road center objective too late to trap the Chinese coming from the X Corps zone, the overall estimate of enemy casualties during the corps' counterattack, including the last three days of May, exceeded 62,000. Smaller losses during the Chinese offensive raised the corps estimate to more than 73,000, of which 44,705 were reported killed, 19,753 wounded, and 8,749 captured. During all of May, IX Corps units themselves suffered 341 killed, 2,011 wounded, and 195 missing.[44]

General Hoge's attempt on 24 May to quicken the IX Corps' advance with an armored attack into Ch'unch'on was matched early the same day by General Almond's order for an armored attack up Route 24 by the 2d Division to seize the Umyang-ni bridge site on the Soyang. More detailed in his order than Hoge had been, Almond directed General Ruffner to assemble a task force of two tank companies, an infantry battalion, and engineers at Han'gye and start up the road at noon. He instructed Ruffner to place the task force under the commander of the division's 72d Tank Battalion, Colonel Brubaker, then in the P'ungam-ni area where his headquarters and one company had been with Task Force Yoke and Task Force Able.[45]

[41] IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; IX Corps G2 Daily Activ Rpt, 27 and 28 May 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 27 and 28 May 51.

[42] IX Corps G2 Hist Rpt, May 51; Eighth Army G3 Jnl, Sum, 27 May 51.

[43] IX Corps G2 Daily Activ Rpt, 28 May 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; IX Corps G2 Hist Rpt, May 51.

[44] IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51.

[45] X Corps OI 184, 24 May 51; 2d Inf Div CofS Jnl, Entry 2, 24 May 51.

Ruffner was pressed for time to open the operation within the few hours Almond allowed. While having Colonel Brubaker flown to Han'gye, Ruffner assigned the mission to the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team, already operating along Route 24, and the two nearest tank companies; B of the 72d, already attached to the regiment, and B of the 64th, a 3d Division unit given to the 2d Division earlier in one of the many unit shifts made under corps orders. General Bowen selected his 2d Battalion for the operation and placed his executive officer, Col. William Gerhardt, in command of the task force.[46]

Despite all the haste, it was almost 1100 by the time Colonel Brubaker reached General Bowen's command post, half past noon before Colonel Gerhardt issued final instructions, and 1300 when Brubaker started the armored point of the task force up Route 24. The point commander, Maj. Charles A. Newman of Brubaker's staff, led his tank platoon, engineer platoon, and reconnaissance squad up the road slowly, as directed by Colonel Gerhardt, with engineers in the lead probing for mines—a prudent precaution given the recent experience of Brubaker's battalion in the Chaun-ni area. Around 1400 Major Newman halted his tanks about six miles above Han'gye while engineers checked the road ahead and while he took time to correct faulty radio communications with the reconnaissance squad. Arriving over the scene by helicopter, General Almond, already unhappy over the tardy start of the operation, landed to learn the reason for the halt. He ordered Newman to forget communications, to move his tanks at twenty miles an hour, and to "keep going until you hit a mine." [17]

As Newman took his tanks forward in fifth gear, Almond flew south to check on the main body of the task force, which he found still forming. Exploding with impatience, he ordered Colonel Gerhardt to get the tanks moving whether or not they had infantry support. When getting trucks out of the way and getting the last tanks out of the streambed onto the road took even more time, Almond relieved Brubaker of his battalion command. Despite pressure from the general, it was mid-afternoon before the tanks started forward with the rest of the task force following.[48]

During this stir to the south, Major Newman's point force drove rapidly through clumps of Chinese visibly rattled by the appearance of tanks and came up on the rear of some four thousand Chinese scrambling north under punishing air attacks about a mile below Umyang-ni. Finding room to deploy in a skirmish line, Newman's tank crews opened fire with all weapons as Chinese broke for the hills on both sides of the road or fled north across the Soyang, leaving behind a litter of dead, supplies, pack animals, and vehicles. By 1630 Newman's tankers entered Umyang-ni and took up positions to continue firing on enemy groups scurrying for safety both below and above the river. By the time the main body of Task Force Gerhardt arrived two hours later, Newman's point was in full possession of the bridge site.[49]

[46] 8th Hist Det, AAR, "Task Force Gerhardt," copy in CMH; 2d Inf Div CofS Jnl, Entries 3 and 4, 24 May 51.

[47] 8th Hist Det, AAR, "Task Force Gerhardt."

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

With the Gerhardt force occupying the lower bank of the Soyang, General Almond late on the 24th issued instructions for attacks to carry out General Van Fleet's earlier order for the two-pronged trap by the X Corps and ROK I Corps. Coming out of corps reserve, the 23d Infantry moving up Route 24 on the morning of the 25th was to pass through the Gerhardt force and establish a bridgehead over the Soyang, throwing a treadway over the river, then was to seize Inje to block large enemy groups that air observers on the 24th had sighted withdrawing up the P'ungam-ni–Hyon-ni–Inje road. Behind these groups, the 38th Infantry was to continue its pursuit. In getting within ten miles of Hyon-ni on the 24th, that regiment had had as much trouble with the roadbed giving way under its tanks and with the sharp pitch of the bordering ridges as with knots of North Korean delaying forces.[50]

After the 23d Infantry established the Soyang bridgehead, Task Force Gerhardt and the remainder of the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team were to assemble under corps control just south of Umyang-ni to form Task Force Baker for a rapid drive over Route 24, beginning on the morning of the 26th, to seize Kansong on the coast. The 2d Division, less the 9th Infantry, which General Almond ordered into corps reserve and replaced in the area between Route 24 and the P'ungam-ni–Hyon-ni–Inje road with the ROK 5th Division, was to continue clearing its zone. At the same time, the 23d Infantry, following Task Force Baker, was to give particular attention to preventing enemy forces from moving above the Inje-Kansong segment of Route 24. In a further remodeling, Almond dissolved Task Force Able, as previously planned, and reassigned its zone to the 3d Division, which, with the ROK 9th and 8th Divisions still attached, was to continue clearing its wide east flank zone. On the corps' opposite flank, the 1st Marine Division was to continue its drive along the west side of Route 24, a drive which again on the 24th had amounted to a plodding short advance, to capture the Yanggu area.[51]

As part of the operation to seize the Umyang-ni bridge site and subsequently the Yanggu-Inje area, General Almond had directed the 1st Marine Division to have a regiment follow Task Force Gerhardt up Route 24 as far as five miles below Umyang-ni where a lateral trail intersected from the east and continued northwest toward the Soyang. Veering off at the intersection, the Marine regiment was to occupy prominent high ground four miles west of Umyang-ni to strengthen the hold on the bridge site and to control the trail, which Almond believed enemy forces would attempt to use as a withdrawal route. General Thomas pulled the 7th Marines out of reserve for the mission, but because of a late start, a shortage of trucks, and enemy resistance to the leading battalion on a hill bordering the road northwest of Chaun-ni, the regiment by nightfall was still some seven miles short of its objective. Along the east side of the road, the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team, less its battalion with Task Force Gerhardt, also had made only short advances against scattered enemy

[50] X Corps OI 186, 24 May 51; 2d Inf Div OI 75, 25 May 51, and POR 619, 24 May 51; 38th Inf S2 Jnl, Sum, 24 May 51; 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51.

[51] X Corps OI 186, 24 May 51, and Opn O 23, 25 May 51.

groups during the day. Thus the lateral trail, now located about halfway between the front of the Marine and airborne troops and the Gerhardt force at Umyang-ni, remained open.[52]

Shortly before dark, air observers reported about two thousand enemy troops moving west on the trail onto Route 24 and beyond. They were from *12th Army* units, which continued to cross the road during the night, their movement not again picked up by observers until noon on the 25th as they entered the ground below the Hwach'on Reservoir in the IX Corps zone. To protect their passage across Route 24, the *106th Regiment* of the *34th Division* organized a deep position extending over two miles below the road's intersection with the trail to hold off attacks from the south. With no position established to the north, the intersection was open to seizure by Task Force Gerhardt. But Colonel Gerhardt sent no forces down the road, even after all but one of twenty trucks sent back for supplies were destroyed and all but two of the drivers were killed at the Chinese position.[53]

Alerted by the ambush of the truck convoy, General Ruffner ordered the 23d Infantry to move forward at daylight to clear the roadblock. At each position of the deep block, forces of the *106th Regiment* fought a dogged defense until virtually annihilated. Regimental tanks broke through on the road and reached Task Force Gerhardt in the afternoon, but darkness fell before the 23d Infantry eliminated the enemy regiment and reached the intersection to stop for the night. Attacking cross-country on the west flank of the 23d Infantry, the 7th Marines met little resistance but moved no farther than to come abreast. Behind the roadblock, *12th Army* forces meanwhile had continued to stream across Route 24 and up the trail to the northwest until the *106th Regiment* was all but wiped out. Then they avoided Task Force Gerhardt by veering northeast, forded the Soyang, and headed toward Yanggu.[54]

The 38th Infantry's pursuit of enemy groups escaping up the road through Hyon-ni to Inje on the 25th was halted by stubborn resistance from two North Korean battalions deployed at the junction with the road coming up from Habae-jae two miles below Sangam-ni. Supporting artillery battalions reached out for the enemy withdrawing behind the block, but many of the groups were already well up the road and out of range. To supply further evidence that the enemy withdrawal was outdistancing the pursuit, the 9th Infantry, moving through its central zone until relieved by the 35th Regiment of the ROK 5th Division, made almost no contact, and the reinforced 3d Division encountered only light, scattered resistance as the 7th Infantry came up to the division's road junction objectives east of Habae-jae and as attached South Korean forces on the extreme east flank moved into the ground above Route 20.[55]

[52] X Corps OI 184, 24 May 51; 1st Marine Div Hist Diary, May 51; X Corps POR 240, 24 May 51.

[53] 2d Inf Div CofS Jnl, Entries 21, 23, and 25, 24 May 51; X Corps G2 Section Rpt, "Battle of the Soyang River," 30 Jun 51; 2d Inf Div PIR 213, 25 May 51, and POR 620, 25 May 51; 2d Inf Div CofS Jnl, Entry 4, 25 May 51.

[54] 2d Inf Div POR 620, 25 May 51; 2d Inf Div Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; 23d Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; 2d Inf Div PIR 213, 25 May 51; 1st Marine Div Hist Diary, May 51.

[55] 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; 38th Inf S2 Jnl, Sum, 25 May 51; 2d Inf Div POR 620, 25 May 51; 9th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51.

Still hopeful of trapping and eliminating sizable enemy groups below Route 24, General Almond urged General Thomas to accelerate the 1st Marine Division's advance on Yanggu and pressed General Ruffner to bridge the Soyang and seize Inje so that Task Force Baker could form and open its drive on Kansong. Almond also added a shallower swing to his attempt to cut off enemy forces ahead of the ROK I Corps, ordering the 3d Division to organize a reinforced regimental combat team as Task Force Charlie and send it over the road leading northeastward from the Habae-jae area on the morning of 26 May to take Yangyang on the coast.[56]

There was still one opportunity to intercept a sizable enemy force. After the rain lightened enough to allow aircraft aloft in the afternoon of the 26th, observers scanned the corps zone. The Hyon-ni–Inje stretch of road and connecting roads running north and west beyond Inje remained aswarm with enemy troops and vehicles. Artillery supporting the 38th Infantry was far enough forward to fire on the road up to two miles beyond Hyon-ni, and during the remaining hours of daylight fighter-bombers attacked enemy groups in and around Inje while B–26s laced the forces between Inje and Hyon-ni with thirteen tons of bombs, all producing a high score of casualties. The pursuit of the 38th Infantry, however, came to an abrupt halt three miles short of Hyon-ni in the face of strong rearguard action by the *19th Regiment,* North Korean *13th Division.* Below the 38th, the 3d Division's Task Force Charlie built around the 7th Infantry moved only four miles toward Yangyang before minefields and a destroyed bridge blocked any further advance. To the north along Route 24, the attack of the 23d Infantry also was stopped short. Sweeping one enemy group off high ground bordering Route 24 below Umyang-ni, the regiment reached and crossed the Soyang before noon. Leaving a battalion to protect engineers while they bridged the river during the afternoon, Colonel Chiles sent the remainder of his regiment toward Inje. But the advance ended some five miles from the town when stubborn North Korean *12th Division* forces refused to give up blocking positions until well past dark.[57]

A swifter advance was clearly required if enemy passage through the Inje road center was to be blocked and any substantial part of the enemy throng on the Hyon-ni–Inje road rolled up from the south. The *27th Army* was already above Route 24 en route through the area above the Hwach'on Reservoir to take position behind the *20th Army* along Route 17, and the North Korean *V Corps* was beginning to organize defenses between the reservoir and the outskirts of Inje. The latter's *6th Division* entering the Yanggu area would oppose the 1st Marine Division, which on the 26th was still moving forces up to the Soyang for its attack on the town. As the 23d Infantry had discovered, the *12th Division* was coming in alongside the *6th* to defend the ground reaching east to Inje. Still on the road below Inje, the *32d Division* was to move into a corps reserve posi-

[56] X Corps OI 187, 25 May 51; 2d Inf Div CofS Jnl, Entries 22, 23, and 25, 25 May 51.

[57] X Corps POR 242, 26 May 51; 2d Inf Div POR 621, 26 May 51, and PIR 214, 26 May 51; 38th Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; 23d Inf Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51.

tion. Farthest south on the road, the North Korean *II Corps* planned to deploy the *27th Division* around Inje, the *2d Division* next to the east, and the *13th Division*, currently covering the corps' rear, on the east flank. Other than this jam of North Korean troops between Hyon-ni and Inje, the only enemy forces still below Route 24 were stragglers and isolated groups that had become separated from their units in the confusion of the withdrawal.[58]

Urging speedy attacks to bag the enemy forces remaining below Route 24, General Almond directed Task Force Baker to lead the attack on Inje on the 27th, leaving bypassed enemy troops to the left and right of the road to the following 23d Infantry, and to be prepared to proceed to Kansong in coordination with the advance of the ROK I Corps toward the same objective. Since General Paik's forces had entered Yangyang on the 26th, Almond meanwhile canceled the Task Force Charlie attack toward the town.[59]

Rain during the morning of the 27th and heavy low clouds throughout the day limited flights by air observers, but they were able to confirm a continuous enemy exodus to the north. They reported one group of some seven thousand moving along the Hyon-ni–Inje road ahead of the 38th Infantry. The regiment pursued with tanks on the road and an infantry battalion moving overland on each side. The remaining battalion was to move up after Hyon-ni was taken and, with the tanks, push on to Inje. But North Korean blocking positions and minefields covered by fire so slowed the advance that Hyon-ni was not occupied until dusk, and the drive on Inje was postponed.[60]

On Route 24, Task Force Baker fought through stubborn resistance and entered Inje at 1430, but it was evening before the task force and two battalions of the following 23d Infantry cleared the town. No time remained for the task force to drive on toward Kansong. To the west, the 7th Marines crossed the Soyang River to open the 1st Marine Division's northward attack to seize Yanggu, but though the regiment encountered only scattered enemy groups, it was still six miles from the town at nightfall.[61]

Since it was obvious by the 27th that the slowness of the Eighth Army in seizing its road center objectives had allowed most major Chinese units, mangled as they were, to escape entrapment, General Van Fleet laid out Operation PILEDRIVER to extend the reach of the counterattack.[62] In the west, the I Corps and IX Corps were to seize line Wyoming to cut enemy lines of communication at the base of the Iron Triangle and to block the main roads running southeast out of the triangle toward the Hwach'on Reservoir and Ch'unch'on. The weight of the western attack was to be in the zone of

[58] USAFFE Intel Dig, no. 99, 16–31 Jan 53; X Corps G2 Section Rpt, "Battle of the Soyang River," 30 Jun 51; Rad, X 19869, CG X Corps to CG Eighth Army, 26 May 51.

[59] X Corps OI 188, 27 May 51; Rad, X 19870, CG X Corps to CG 3d Div, 27 May 51.

[60] 2d Inf Div POR 622, 27 May 51; 38th Inf S2 Jnl, Sum, 27 May 51; 2d Inf Div Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51.

[61] X Corps POR 243, 27 May 51.

[62] The 25th Division, General Van Fleet judged, should have taken the I Corps' road center objective below Ch'orwon three days sooner that it did; the 7th Division should have occupied the Hwach'on area in the IX Corps zone a day earlier; and, while he commended General Almond's attempts to energize the advance of the X Corps, he believed the 1st Marine Division and the 2d Division could have made far faster moves toward Yanggu and Inje. See Interv, Appleman with Van Fleet, 15 Sep 51.



THE PUNCHBOWL

the I Corps. Reinforced by the 3d Division and its attached ROK 9th Division, to be transferred from the X Corps, and backed up by the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team, also to be taken from the X Corps and placed in army reserve in Seoul, General Milburn was to seize the Ch'orwon-Kumhwa area. In a narrowed IX Corps zone, General Hoge's forces were to occupy commanding ground beyond Hwach'on town to block the roads reaching southeast out of Kumhwa.[63]

East of the reservoir, after completing operations to capture the Yanggu-Inje area and reach Kansong on the east coast, the X Corps and ROK I Corps were to seize and establish defensive positions along a newly drawn segment of line Kansas running northeast from the reservoir across the southern rim of a hollow circle of mountains aptly called the "Punchbowl" to the coastal town of Kojin-ni, five miles above Kansong. Following generally the same prominent ridge traced by earlier phase lines in the sector, the new Kan-

[63] LOI, CG Eighth Army to CGs I, IX, and X Corps, 187th Abn RCT, and 2d Inf Div, 27 May 51; Rads, GX–5–5055 KGOP and GX–5–5152 KGOP, CG Eighth Army to CGs I, IX, and X Corps and 187th Abn RCT, 27 and 28 May 51, respectively.

sas segment lay well above Route 24. Once on the adjusted line, both corps could use the road as their main supply route and, in addition, could receive supplies through the port at Kansong.[64]

Van Fleet had in mind another use for Kansong as part of an operation he planned to open on 6 June to isolate and destroy enemy forces who had succeeded in withdrawing above Route 24 into the area northeast of the Hwach'on Reservoir. Under X Corps control, part of the 1st Marine Division was to stage through Kansong for a quick shore-to-shore movement to establish a beachhead at the junction of Route 17 and the coastal road in the T'ongch'on area some twenty-eight miles on the north. The remainder of the division was to join the beachhead by moving up the coastal road. Once reassembled, the Marine division was to attack down Route 17 while the IX Corps drove up the same road out of the Kumhwa area to seal off the area to the southeast. Enemy forces caught in the trap were then to be systematically destroyed. Van Fleet needed General Ridgway's approval for an operation of these proportions beyond the Kansas and Wyoming lines, and on 28 May he made that request, urging in his message that the "potentiality of enemy defeat should over-ride any objections.[65]

Unconvinced that such was the case, Ridgway flew to Seoul late on the 28th. There he presented to Van Fleet all of the reasons why the T'ongch'on operation should not be undertaken. The sum of his reasons was that the possible benefits of the operation did not justify the risks entailed. The Eighth Army's mission, he reminded Van Fleet, was to exact maximum enemy losses at minimum cost while maintaining UNC forces intact, and this mission could best be carried out in a gradual advance to lines Kansas and Wyoming. In that connection, Ridgway did approve Van Fleet's adjustment of line Kansas east of the Hwach'on Reservoir. Looking ahead to the time when the Eighth Army reached lines Kansas and Wyoming, Ridgway before leaving Korea on 29 May instructed Van Fleet to prepare an estimate of the situation covering the next sixty days along with recommendations on operations. As he undertook this contingency planning, Van Fleet on 1 June directed his corps commanders to fortify lines Kansas and Wyoming upon reaching them and thereafter to conduct limited objective attacks, reconnaissance in force, and patrolling.[66] Under the circumstances, at least at the time, he had no alternative.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Rad, GX–5–5099 KGOP, CG Eighth Army to CINCFE, 28 May 51.

[66] Rad, CX 63580, CINCFE to CG Eighth Army Personal for Van Fleet, 28 May 51; MFR (memo for the record), 31 May 51, sub: Conference Between General Ridgway and General Van Fleet; LOIs (letters of instruction), CG Eighth Army to CGs I, IX, and X Corps, and to CG ROK I Corps, both 1 Jun 51.

CHAPTER XXVII

Substitute for Victory

Ridgway's Mission Redefined

General Ridgway, like his predecessor, considered the Joint Chiefs of Staff directives governing his duties as Commander in Chief, U.N. Command, and as Commander in Chief, Far East, to be deficient in important respects. Within a week of replacing General MacArthur, Ridgway had attempted to change one provision that he believed diminished his ability to carry out his overriding mission of defending Japan, specifically of defending the islands against an attack by the Soviet Union. Since intelligence estimates accorded the Soviets the capability of launching an attack with little or no warning, he asked the Joint Chiefs for independent authority to withdraw his forces from Korea to Japan should the Soviets attack. It was not that Ridgway expected an attack but that he considered it just as urgent to be prepared to deal with what the Soviets could do as with what they might do.[1]

An ongoing review of U.S. objectives and courses of action in Korea partially conditioned the Joint Chiefs' response to Ridgway's request. Although General MacArthur's pronouncement of late March had spoiled President Truman's initiative to open armistice negotiations, examination of the pros and cons of a cease-fire and of other steps that should be or might have to be taken to settle the Korean situation continued. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, in submitting recommendations to the National Security Council on 5 April, had for the first time declared that the war, let alone the whole of the Korean problem, could not be resolved satisfactorily by military action alone. In their estimation, the best course for the United Nations Command depended upon the future action of the Soviet Union. If the Soviets did not start a general war, the U.N. Command should remain in Korea and maintain pressure on enemy forces with a view to a satisfactory armistice; if the Soviets did open a general war or intervene in Korea, the U.N. Command should withdraw from the peninsula.

Because these recommendations were under review at the time of Ridgway's request, the Joint Chiefs preferred to retain control of any withdrawal from Korea. On 1 May they sent Ridgway new instructions governing combat operations in which they also restricted the depth of any Eighth Army general advance. Ridgway was to make no general move beyond the combined trace of lines Kansas and Wyo-

[1] For more detailed coverage of events described in this section, see Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, pp. 382–85, 390–93; Collins, *War in Peacetime*, pp. 298, 302–05; Ridgway, *The Korean War*, pp. 168–69; Rees, *Korea: The Limited War*, pp. 223–27, 264–83; Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope*, p. 456. Unless otherwise noted, this section is based on the above sources.

ming without prior approval. He could go farther north on his own, but only in limited operations designed to keep enemy forces off balance, to maintain contact, to insure the safety of his command. Ridgway himself had similarly restricted general advances in his initial instructions to General Van Fleet. But the Joint Chiefs preferred to assume control, in part because their recommendations were still under study and in part because they believed that potential armistice negotiations could develop more easily if the general Eighth Army drive into North Korea was kept so shallow that Chinese and North Korean authorities could see advantages in accepting a line of demarcation along the main line of contact.[2]

Ridgway complained to the Joint Chiefs that their instructions seriously abridged "the authority and freedom of action I believe you intend me to have in order to discharge assigned responsibilities." Since his military objective in Korea as stated in the 1 May directive was to destroy the Chinese and North Korean forces operating "within the geographic boundaries of Korea and waters adjacent thereto," he believed he should be the one who held authority over a general advance above the Kansas-Wyoming trace. And since his mission as Commander in Chief, Far East, of defending Japan had priority over his objective as Commander in Chief, U.N. Command, in Korea, he believed he should be the one who decided when his forces would withdraw from Korea to take up the defense of Japan. The Joint Chiefs replied that strategic considerations (without stating precisely what these considerations were) required that they themselves control any withdrawal from Korea, that Ridgway's instructions were in keeping with existing national objectives, and that, consequently, the instructions would not be altered. The Joint Chiefs did emphasize, though, that these objectives were currently under review and that Ridgway's mission would be made to accord with President Truman's action on forthcoming recommendations of the National Security Council.[3]

The security council first met to consider the Joint Chiefs' April recommendations on 2 May. On the following day the Senate Committees on Armed Services and on Foreign Relations convened jointly to inquire into the military situation in the Far East and the relief of General MacArthur. Invited earlier to speak to a joint session of the Congress, MacArthur had made an eloquent and dramatic statement of his convictions. He again had proposed the retaliatory measures—now softened somewhat—against China first recommended to the Joint Chiefs in December and again had insisted, as in his March letter to Congressman Martin, that there was "no substitute for victory." First to speak at the Senate hearings, he forcefully elaborated on the points he had made before the full Congress, and, in urging decisive steps to end the war, he explained that there was at the present "no policy—there is nothing, I tell you, no plan, or anything."[4]

Media reports of MacArthur's speech and testimony generated considerable

[2] Rads, JCS 88950 and JCS 90000, JCS to CINCFE, 19 Apr and 1 May 51, respectively.

[3] Rad, C 62088, CINCFE to DA for JCS, 9 May 51; Rad, JCS 90999, JCS to CINCFE, 12 May 51.

[4] *MacArthur Hearings*, p. 68.

public interest in the issues involved. That interest, in turn, spurred the National Security Council to develop a clear and practicable statement of military and political policy in Korea. Concluding its deliberations on 16 May, the security council produced a statement evolved from the recommendations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and other advisory bodies, including allies. On the following day President Truman approved the statement, which introduced no new concepts but did at last firmly and officially declare that the United States would seek to conclude the fighting in Korea under suitable armistice arrangements. General MacArthur's protests notwithstanding, there was to be at least an attempt to produce a substitute for victory.

General Ridgway meanwhile continued trying to clarify his directives, sending two members of his staff to Washington to present his views on what he considered to be points of ambiguity and conflict. Their consultations coincided with the establishment of the new policy. While the policy had little effect on revisions made to clarify Ridgway's responsibilities and authorities as Commander in Chief, Far East, it brought about a major redefinition of his mission as Commander in Chief, U.N. Command. In new instructions sent on 1 June, the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed Ridgway:

> you will, consistent with the security of your forces, inflict maximum personnel and materiel losses on the forces of North Korea and Communist China operating within the geographic boundaries of Korea and adjacent waters, in order to create conditions favorable to a settlement of the Korean conflict which would as a minimum:
>
> a. Terminate hostilities under appropriate armistice arrangements.
>
> b. Establish authority of the ROK over all Korea south of a northern boundary so located as to facilitate, to the maximum extent possible, both administration and military defense, and in no case south of the 38th Parallel.
>
> c. Provide for withdrawal by stages of non-Korean armed forces from Korea.
>
> d. Permit the building of sufficient ROK military power to deter or repel a renewed North Korean aggression.[5]

Retaining the authority they had assumed over general Eighth Army advances, the Joint Chiefs further instructed Ridgway:

> With regard to ground operations you will obtain approval of JCS prior to undertaking any general advance beyond some line passing through the Hwachon Reservoir area. You are, however, authorized to conduct such tactical operations as may be necessary or desirable to insure safety of your command, to maintain contact, and to continue to harass the enemy. This includes guerrilla operations and limited amphibious and airborne operations in enemy rear areas.[6]

Although the Joint Chiefs had previously issued similar instructions to govern the operations of the Eighth Army after it reached the Kansas and Wyoming lines, the latest directive at least gave the underlying objective of those operations more definite shape. Their future course, in the main, was to be designed to support a negotiated end to hositilities.

Not yet in possession of his new instructions but informed of their development and essential content by his staff officers in Washington, General Ridgway in assessing the results of recent operations for the Joint Chiefs on 30 May indicated that conditions in Ko-

[5] Rad, JCS 92831, JCS to CINCFE, 1 Jun 51.
[6] Ibid.

rea already were favorable, at least on a short term basis, for seeking to open armistice negotiations. Enemy forces, he reported, had suffered a defeat so costly that without reinforcement from China they would not again be capable of attacks as strong as those launched in April and May; even assuming—as some prisoner and agent reports indicated—that a new Chinese army group arrived in Korea, the Eighth Army within the next two months could face enemy forces no stronger than those it had already soundly defeated. Thus, for the next sixty days, he predicted, "the United States Government should be able to count with reasonable assurance upon a military situation in Korea offering optimum advantages in support of its diplomatic negotiations."[7] Predicting further that as an immediate course enemy forces would attempt to put up strong defenses below the Iron Triangle and in the ground flanking the triangle on the east and west, he outlined General Van Fleet's preparations to advance through these defenses toward line Wyoming and toward the altered segment of line Kansas east of the Hwach'on Reservoir. Barring the arrival and rapid deployment of sizable Chinese reinforcements, Ridgway expected the Eighth Army to reach these lines within two weeks. If the attack progressed as he expected, he told the Joint Chiefs, he would within a few days give his recommendations for operations to follow the Eighth Army's seizure of its Kansas-Wyoming objectives.[8]

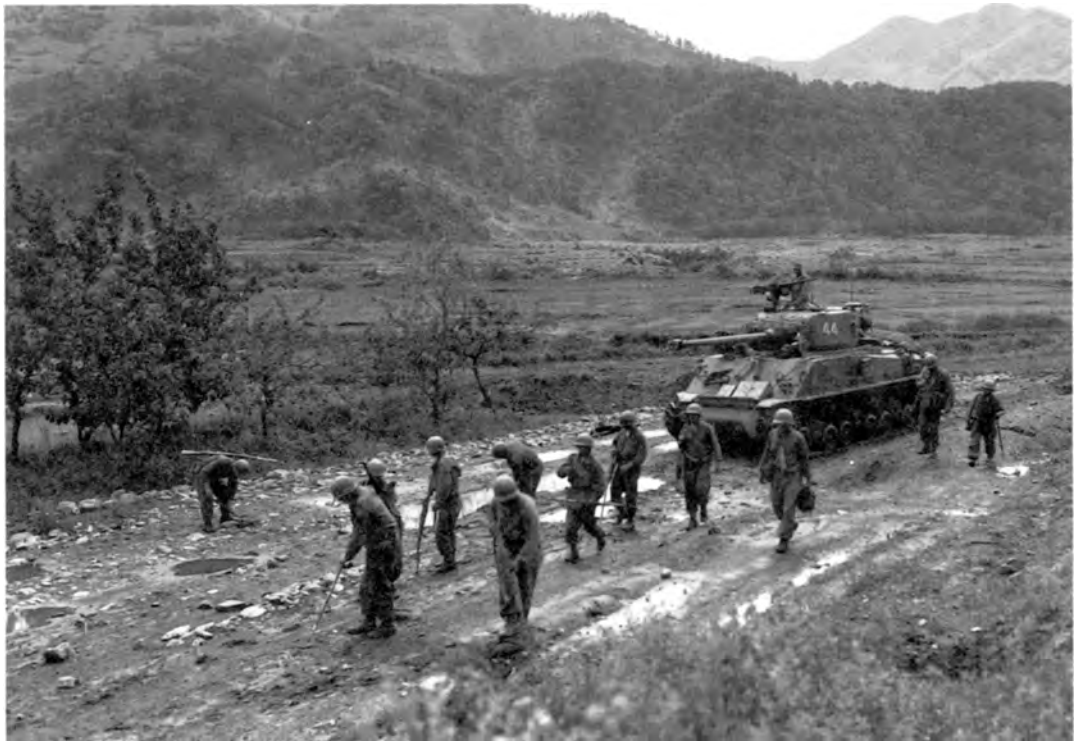
Operation Piledriver

For advancing the I Corps right to line Wyoming, General Milburn on 28 May laid out an attack by three divisions, the 1st Cavalry Division moving along the west side of Route 33 to occupy the segment of the line slanting southwest of Ch'orwon to the Imjin River, the 3d Division advancing on the Route 33 axis to take the Ch'orwon base of the Iron Triangle, and the 25th Division attacking astride Route 3 to seize the triangle's eastern base at Kumhwa. In the IX Corps zone, General Hoge also organized a three-division attack to occupy the Wyoming trace reaching southeastward from Kumhwa to the Hwach'on Reservoir. Nearest Kumhwa, the ROK 2d Division and the 7th Division were to seize Wyoming objectives along and above the stretch of Route 17 leading northwest into the Iron Triangle from Hwach'on town. On the right, the ROK 6th Division was to advance above the western half of the Hwach'on Reservoir between Route 17 and the Pukhan River.[9]

While Milburn and Hoge organized full-blown attacks to start on 3 June in the I Corps zone and 5 June in the IX Corps zone, forces edging above line Kansas in preliminary advances in both corps zones encountered stiff opposition. As General Ridgway had predicted, the Chinese were determined to hold the Iron Triangle and adjacent ground as long as possible. Then drenching rains during the last two days of May began to turn roads into boggy tracks and, along with low clouds and

[7] Rad, C 63744, CINCFE for JCS, 30 May 51.
[8] Ibid.

[9] I Corps Opn O 7, 28 May 51; IX Corps Opn O 22, 28 May 51.



ENGINEERS SEARCH FOR MINES *ahead of tank, Ch'orwon area, June 1951.*

fog, limited close air support and both air and ground observation. Two clear days followed, but as the full attacks got under way on 3 June rainstorms returned to hamper operations through the 5th.[10]

Aided by the bad weather, Chinese delaying forces fighting doggedly from dug-in regimental positions arranged in depth held the advance to a crawl through 8 June, then finally gave way under the pressure and began a phased withdrawal, moving north in what air observers estimated as battalion-size groups. Against declining resistance and in drier weather, the assault divisions occupied their line Wyoming objectives between 9 and 11 June. In the I Corps zone, General Milburn sent tank-infantry patrols up each side of the Iron Triangle on 13 June to investigate P'yonggang at its apex. The patrols met no resistance en route and found P'yonggang deserted. The Chinese defenders of the triangle had taken up positions in commanding ground northeast and northwest of the town. IX Corps forces reconnoitering northeast of Kumhwa located Chinese defenses below the town of Kumsong. Rimmed on the north by Chinese and on the south by the I and IX Corps, the

[10] I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, May 51; Tech Rpt, *Weather Effect on Army Operations: Weather in the Korean Conflict*, vol. II, ch. XIV, "Operation Piledriver."

coveted road complex in the Iron Triangle area now lay largely unusable in no-man's-land.[11]

East of the Hwach'on Reservoir, North Korean forces opposing the X Corps advance gage ground even more grudgingly than the Chinese in the Iron Triangle. It was the end of May before the 1st Marine Division captured Yanggu and longer before other corps forces completed mop-up operations in the ground east of Inje and Hyon-ni. Two regiments of marines moved north of Yanggu on 1 June, but only on the 4th could General Almond open a coordinated attack by the 1st Marine Division and ROK 5th Division toward line Kansas and the Punchbowl some six miles above the corps front. By that date the ROK I Corps, advancing three divisions abreast along the east coast, had driven through spotty resistance and occupied its line Kansas segment slanting across the first high ridge above Route 24. Having far outdistanced the X Corps, General Paik was obliged to refuse his inland flank in strength against the possibility of enemy attacks from the direction of the Punchbowl.[12]

The six-mile attack to the Punchbowl involved General Almond's forces in some of the most difficult conditions of combat. In some areas, sharply pitched axial ridges limited advances to extremely narrow fronts; in others, repetitions of steep transverse ridges forced assault troops to make arduous climbs and descents over and over again. The two main arterial roads, through the Sochon River valley in the west and the Soyang River valley in the east, were heavily mined. Other access roads—the few that existed—winding through the mountains were narrow and required substantial engineering work before supply trucks could use them. Spates of rain frequently caused landslides that blocked the roads or so slickened them that trucks skidded off at hairpin turns. From time to time the rain and fog limited air support and observation. Most difficult of all were the North Korean defenders. They were in well organized fortified positions on every ridge; they gave no ground voluntarily; and, after losing a position, they counterattacked quickly in an attempt to regain it.[13]

On 8 June General Almond widened his attack, inserting a regiment of the ROK 7th Division on the left to clear the ground above the eastern half of the Hwach'on Reservoir while the 1st Marine Division concentrated on taking the lower lip of the Punchbowl and the segment of line Kansas astride the Sochon River valley to the southwest. Accordingly, General Thomas, the Marine division commander, committed his reserves on the 9th so that he had four regiments in the attack. First to slug through the bitter North Korean resistance was the regiment of the ROK 7th Division, which reached line Kansas on 10 June. The marines and ROK 5th Division took a week longer to gain full possession of their objectives.[14]

[11] I Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jun 51; IX Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jun 51.

[12] X Corps Special Rpt, "Battle of the Soyang River"; Montross, Kuokka, and Hicks, *The East-Central Front*, pp. 133, 141; Rad, X 19979, CG X Corps to CG Eighth Army, 3 Jun 51; Rads F747 and F521, ROK I Corps to Eighth Army, 28 May and 4 Jun 51, respectively; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jun 51.

[13] See Montross, Kuokka, and Hicks, *The East-Central Front*, ch. VII, "Advance to the Punchbowl."

[14] Ibid.; X Corps Comd Rpt, Nar, Jun 51; Eighth Army Comd Rpt, Nar, Jun 51.



MARINES ADVANCING IN THE YANGGU AREA, JUNE 1951

With the seizure of line Wyoming and the adjusted segment of line Kansas in the east, the Eighth Army had reached its allowed limit of general advance in support of efforts to open cease-fire negotiations. As yet there had been no clear sign that Chinese and North Korean authorities favored that kind of resolution, but there had been a search for a way to open armistice talks, and with some result.

Armistice Negotiations
The Search for a Beginning

When, in mid-May, President Truman formalized the policy of ending hostilities under appropriate cease-fire arrangements, he and his advisers eschewed any attempt to open negotiations through a direct appeal to Chinese and North Korean authorities lest they interpret the initiative as indicating weakness and refuse to talk. Enemy forces, after all, were then on the offensive and beginning to make inroads through Eighth Army lines in the east central sector. The chosen approach was to try to draw an offer to negotiate from the other side by keeping sufficient pressure on enemy forces to convince their leaders that they could not win and by indicating U.S. and U.N. willingness to end hostilities near the prewar border between North and South Korea. Secretary of Defense

Marshall, testifying on 8 and 9 May during the MacArthur hearings, had been asked how he visualized the war would be ended. "If it goes on in the manner that it has for the last 2 months, and particularly in the last two weeks," he replied, with reference to losses suffered by enemy forces during April offensive, "it would appear that the trained fabric of the Chinese Communist forces will be pretty well torn to pieces . . . if we destroy their best-trained armies as we have been in the process of doing, then, it seems to me, you develop the best probability of reaching a satisfactory negotiatory basis with those Chinese Communist forces." [15] While not specifically designed for the purpose, the Eighth Army's stand against the enemy's May offensive and its subsequent counteroffensive had suited the approach adopted to get armistice negotiations under way.

By both coincidence and design, indications of U.S. and U.N. willingness to negotiate came from officials in several forums. On the day President Truman approved the new policy, Senator Edwin C. Johnson, Democrat of Colorado, proposed to the Senate that it ask the United Nations to call on all belligerent nations to declare a cease-fire at 0400 on 25 June, the exact hour and date of the war's anniversary. He also proposed that U.N. forces withdraw south of the 38th parallel beforehand. The Senate took no action, but the Indian delegate to the United Nations, Sir Bengal N. Rau, spoke to the General Assembly the following day in response to Senator Johnson's proposal. He urged his colleagues to consider General Ridgway's 12 March statement that it would be a victory for the United Nations if the war ended with U.N. forces in control of all territory in Korea up to the 38th parallel. In Moscow, *Pravda* on 20 May played up Senator Johnson's recommendations as a sign that the United States was growing tired of the war.[16]

Lester B. Pearson, Canada's secretary of state for external affairs, defined the U.N. objective in Korea in a speech broadcast on 26 May during the U.N. radio program, "The Price of Peace." The objective, Pearson emphasized, was not the complete capitulation of the enemy but solely the defeat of aggression against South Korea. U.N. Secretary General Trygve Lie reinforced Pearson's point while speaking to the U.N. Association of Canada in Ottawa on 1 June. "If a cease-fire could be arranged approximately along the 38th parallel," Lie asserted, "then the main purpose of the security council resolutions of June 25th and 27th and July 7th will be fulfilled, provided that a cease-fire is followed by the restoration of peace and security in the area." On the same day and the one following, Secretary of State Dean Acheson authoritatively stated the U.S. position in testimony at the MacArthur hearings. A cease-fire at or near the 38th parallel, provided its arrangements supplied reliable assurances that hostilities would not be resumed, he said, would "accomplish the military purposes in Korea." [17]

Seeking a response to the indications being given, State Department officials

[15] *MacArthur Hearings*, pp. 365, 430.

[16] New York *Times* Index, 1951, p. 565; *Facts on File*, 1951, p. 162.

[17] Rees, *Korea: The Limited War*, pp. 261–62; *United Nations Bulletin*, vol. 10 (15 June 1951), p. 559; *MacArthur Hearings*, p. 1782.

meanwhile "cast about like a pack of hounds searching for a scent."[18]

Contacts with Soviet figures at the United Nations and in Paris proved fruitless. Another official made himself available for contacts in Hong Kong, but with no success. Sweden's delegate to the United Nations announced on 23 May that a Soviet source two weeks earlier had indicated the war might be ended if the prewar border between North and South Korea was reestablished; but Jacob Malik, the Soviet delegate to the United Nations, declared that the report was completely groundless.[19]

Still, it was Malik who provided the first positive response. At Secretary Acheson's request and with President Truman's approval, George F. Kennan, a State Department official with a profound background in U.S.-Soviet relations, although at the time on leave of absence from the department, succeeded in arranging a private meeting with Malik at the latter's summer home on Long Island. Kennan's purposes were to make sure that the U.S. desire for a cease-fire as soon as possible was absolutely clear to the Soviets and to obtain Moscow's views and suggestions. As Kennan prepared to meet with Malik on 31 May, Secretary Acheson sent word of the coming event through the Joint Chiefs of Staff to General Ridgway so that he could prepare to advise on relevant military matters and to take any required action in Korea. In response to both Acheson's message and the 1 June directive from the Joint Chiefs, Ridgway asked General Van Fleet to recommend the best location for the Eighth Army during a cease-fire, based not on political implications but on purely military considerations.[20]

When Kennan raised the cease-fire subject at the 31 May meeting, Malik predictably avoided answering but agreed to meet again after he had considered the matter; that is, after he had checked with Moscow. The two met again on 5 June. The Soviet government, Malik said, wanted a peaceful solution in Korea as soon as possible but could not appropriately take part in cease-fire negotiations. His personal advice to Kennan was that American authorities should approach their Chinese and North Korean counterparts.[21]

On the day of the second Kennan-Malik meeting, representatives of all U.N. countries with forces in Korea met in Washington to consider the U.S. position. Giving some thought to offering another cease-fire proposal to enemy authorities, they elected instead to make the American position known to Premier Mao Tse-tung and Foreign Minister Chou En-lai through neutral diplomats in Peking. This the diplomats did in mid-June, but there was no direct response. Reaching London from Peking were reports that Chinese publications were reviving Mao's 1937 statement that "a true revolutionary leader must be adept at making himself and his followers advance and change their views according to changing circumstances." Some Britons interpreted this revival as evidence of Chinese preparations for a truce in Korea, but no other Chinese behavior supported such an interpretation. For example, when the

[18] Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p. 532.
[19] Ibid.; *Facts on File*, 1951, pp. 162, 169.
[20] Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, pp. 532–33; Ltr, Gen Van Fleet to CINCUNC, 9 Jun 51, sub: Location of EUSAK During a CEASE-FIRE (Military viewpoint).
[21] Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p. 533.

departing Swedish ambassador to Peking made a farewell call on Chou En-lai and asked if there was anything he could report to his government or the United Nations about Korea, the Chinese foreign minister "replied with an irrelevancy about the weather." [22]

Thus, by mid-June, the only positive development in the search for a beginning was Malik's answer to Kennan. U. S. officials had no doubt that Malik's statement was authentic, but, in the words of Secretary Acheson, it had "a sibylline quality which left us wondering what portended and what we should do next." [23]

The Question of Future Operations

In a different, yet related, context, what to do next had also become a large question for General Van Fleet as the Eighth Army moved to its limit of advance along lines Kansas and Wyoming. Although he said nothing publicly until much later, he was particularly displeased by General Ridgway's disapproval of the T'ongch'on operation. Before the Senate Committee on Armed Services after his return to the United States for retirement in early 1953, he testified that enemy forces in June 1951 were badly hurt, out of supplies, and in a panic and that he believed he could have won a decisive, if not complete, victory had he been permitted to continue his offensive.[24]

But within the limits that had been imposed on him by General Ridgway, Van Fleet saw distinct advantages in conducting future operations along and from the Kansas and Wyoming lines. In a 9 June reply to Ridgway's earlier request for an estimate of the situation and recommendations for operations over the next sixty days, he stated his belief that, despite the severe punishment enemy forces had absorbed during April and May, they would recover sufficiently during the next two months to launch at least one major offensive. This probability made a strong defense mandatory, and the best place to develop it, in Van Fleet's judgment, was along the Kansas-Wyoming trace. To begin with, even if he was authorized to occupy a more northern line, the next terrain permitting a strong line of resistance across the entire peninsula and allowing the Eighth Army to man it in sufficient strength lay as much as seventy-five miles above the 38th parallel. Advancing that far could cost the Eighth Army considerable casualties. Using a more northern line also would shorten enemy lines of communication, robbing U.N. air forces of time and opportunity to attack enemy supply movements from distant depots. Further, Van Fleet's engineers would face monumental reconstruction work since U.N. air and naval forces had destroyed or damaged important bridges, rail lines, roads, and communications centers throughout North Korea. In any case, the ground along lines Kansas and Wyoming was well suited for defense and was backed up by a road net that would allow adequate logistical support.[25]

[22] Leckie, *Conflict: The History of the Korean War, 1950–1953*, p. 293; Poats, *Decision in Korea*, pp. 200–201; *Facts on File*, 1951, pp. 185, 193–94.

[23] Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p. 533.

[24] U. S. Congress, Senate, *Hearings Before the Committee on Armed Services: Ammunition Supplies in the Far East*, 83d Cong., 1st sess., 5 March 1953, pp. 31–32 (hereafter cited as *Van Fleet Hearings*).

[25] Ltr, Gen Van Fleet to CINCFE, 9 Jun 51, sub: EUSAK Operations During Period 10 June–10 August 1951; Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, Jun 51.

Van Fleet offered General Ridgway several plans for limited offensive action to keep enemy forces off balance, three of which he proposed to execute immediately after the Eighth Army reached the Kansas and Wyoming lines. Each of the three called for a raid on enemy troops and supplies within a specific area. In the west, a division was to hit Kaesong, the ancient capital of Korea on Route 1 some ten miles above the Imjin. In the central region, an armored task force was to attack P'yonggang at the apex of the Iron Triangle. In a more ambitious move, the 1st Marine Division was to make an amphibious landing at T'ongch'on and attack southwest over Route 17 to regain Eighth Army lines at Kumhwa. Ridgway agreed with Van Fleet's concept of holding the Eighth Army along the Kansas-Wyoming front and punishing enemy forces with limited attacks but turned down the 1st Marine Division operation, presumably for the same reasons he had refused Van Fleet's earlier T'ongch'on landing proposal. He approved the other attack plans, but they were to be executed only if intelligence confirmed that remunerative targets existed in the Kaesong and P'yonggang areas.[26]

In responding on the same day to Ridgway's subsequent request for recommendations on the best location for the Eighth Army during a cease-fire, Van Fleet assumed that enemy forces would violate the terms of an armistice by improving their offensive capability and renewing operations without warning. On the basis of this assumption, he recommended line Kansas because of its suitability for a strong defense. Besides the other disadvantages he foresaw in establishing a defense line farther north, he anticipated that during a cease-fire the Eighth Army would inherit immense problems of civil relief and military government in areas the enemy had denuded of food and young manpower. In recommending line Kansas to Ridgway, however, he pointed out that since a cease-fire agreement might require opposing forces to withdraw several miles from the line of contact to create a buffer zone, the Eighth Army must be well forward of Kansas at the time an agreement was reached.[27]

Ridgway agreed that line Kansas would be the best location for the Eighth Army if armistice negotiations started soon and assured Van Fleet that if possible he would advise him of forthcoming negotiations in time to allow him to move at least part of his forces to a line of contact twenty miles above Kansas. At the same time, since remaining behind a self-imposed line could prove exceedingly costly if enemy authorities refused to negotiate or if they protracted negotiations while they prepared a major offensive, Ridgway directed his own planning staff to explore, as a long range matter, the feasibility and possible profits of penetrating more deeply into North Korea. The staff considered various schemes of maneuver, selecting objective lines on the basis of whether they could be held as cease-fire lines and weighing in particular the logistical problems that would attend advancing to them. Of several concepts developed, Ridgway

[26] Ltr, Gen Van Fleet to CINCFE, 9 Jun 51, sub: EUSAK Operations During Period 10 Jun–10 Aug 51; Rad, CX 64976, CINCFE to DA for JCS, 14 Jun 51.

[27] Ltr, Gen Van Fleet to CINCUNC, 9 Jun 51, sub: Location of EUSAK During a CEASE-FIRE (Military viewpoint); Eighth Army G3 SS Rpt, Jun 51.

favored one posing a three-phase offensive to occupy the P'yongyang-Wonsan line. The first phase called for an advance on Wonsan in two columns, one moving up the east coast road, the other over the Seoul-Wonsan axis. In the second step, an amphibious force was to land at Wonsan to assist the overland advance. In the finale, Eighth Army forces were to drive northwestward and seize P'yongyang. Ridgway passed the outline to Van Fleet and instructed him to submit detailed plans for the operation by 10 July.[28]

The Joint Chiefs of Staff meanwhile had taken Ridgway's recent evaluations of enemy forces as reason to consider revising their 1 June directive. Two weeks after telling them that the Chinese and North Koreans over the next two months could assemble no force greater than that which the Eighth Army already had defeated twice, Ridgway on 14 June reported that "enemy lines of communications are overextended [and] his supply situation is aggravated by heavy rainfall and air interdiction." These and other encouraging reports convinced the Joint Chiefs that it might be wise to remove all restrictions on Ridgway's freedom to exploit these conditions.[29]

Wanting further justification before taking this step, the Joint Chiefs on 20 June asked Ridgway to inform them how an advance into North Korea would affect U.N. Command air operations, whether such an advance would increase the effectiveness of enemy air operations, and how logistics would be affected if his lines of communication were lengthened. Ridgway agreed immediately to the proposed removal of restrictions but deferred commenting on the effects of a general offensive until General Van Fleet had completed plans for advancing to the P'yongyang-Wonsan line.[30]

Negotiations Begin

On 22 June the U.S. State Department's Voice of America urged Jacob Malik to heed Trygvy Lie's appeal made in Ottawa at the beginning of the month and "say the one word the whole world is waiting for." The next day Malik said the word during a fifteen-minute recorded speech broadcast on the U.N. "Price of Peace" program. After spending most of his time blaming the United States for the war, Malik closed with the announcement that the Soviets believed the conflict could be settled and that, as a first step, the belligerents should start discussions to arrange a cease-fire and an armistice that provided for the mutual withdrawal of forces from the 38th parallel. He refused to elaborate on his speech thereafter, even claiming illness on 25 June when Nasrollah Entezam, the Iranian president of the U.N. General Assembly, attempted to see him to get more details. On 4 July Malik sailed from New York for home.[31]

The immediate American reaction to Malik's statement was largely skeptical. State Department officials advised Gen-

[28] GHQ, FEC, JCPOG Staff Study, 9 Jun 51; GHQ FEC, Memo, SGS for CofS, 13 Jun 51; Ltr, CINCFE to CG Eighth Army, 19 Jun 51, sub: Planning Directive; Ltr, Gen Ridgway to Gen Van Fleet, 22 Jun 51, sub: Location of EUSAK During a Cease-Fire.

[29] Rads, C 63744 and CX 64976, CINCFE to DA for JCS, 30 May and 14 Jun 51, respectively; Rad, JCS 94501, JCS to CINCFE, 20 Jun 51.

[30] Rad, JCS 94501, JCS to CINCFE, 20 Jun 51; Rad, C 65529, CINCFE to JCS, 22 Jun 51.

[31] Poats, *Decision in Korea*, p. 201; *Facts on File*, 1951, pp. 201–02, 218.

eral Ridgway that the proposal might be only an attempt to get UNC troops away from the 38th parallel and, further, that intelligence reports in Washington gave no indication of Chinese and North Korean readiness to stop fighting, but quite the contrary. Ridgway himself reminded his principal subordinates of "the well-earned reputation for duplicity and dishonesty possessed by the USSR" and of "the slowness with which deliberative bodies such as the security council produce positive action" and insisted that they ward off any relaxation by their commands.[32]

Following the joint decision of Generals Ridgway and Van Fleet that line Kansas would be the best location for the Eighth Army during a cease-fire, Ridgway had had his planning staff plot an outpost line ten miles above Kansas and a "cease-fire" line another ten miles forward. By occupying the deeper line the Eighth Army would be able to make a ten-mile withdrawal from the line of contact—a withdrawal that an armistice agreement might require—and still retain its Kansas positions and a suitable outpost line of resistance. Although somewhat skeptical of the Malik proposal, Ridgway on 25 June sent a staff officer to Korea to get Van Fleet's views on seizing the proposed cease-fire line. Van Fleet some two weeks earlier had considered such an Eighth Army advance essential, but now, in view of the recent hard fighting to reach the Iron Triangle and the Punchbowl, he voted against the deeper move as potentially too costly. On the following day Ridgway went to Korea, where after further discussing the matter with Van Fleet he agreed that while a deep advance was tactically and logistically feasible, the price would not be worth the results.[33]

In Moscow, *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, the party and government newspapers, respectively, put an official stamp on Malik's statement by publishing its full text on 24 June. In China, the authoritative Peking paper *Jen Min Jih Pao (People's Daily)* endorsed the proposal on the 25th, and Peking radio followed suit the next day, but with conditions. Although "the Chinese people fully endorse" the Malik statement, Peking radio announced, the United States had to accept the peace proposals "repeatedly" made by China and the Soviet Union, proposals which included the withdrawal of all UNC troops from Korea, the return of Formosa to Red China, and the seating of Red China in the United Nations.[34]

Malik had included no such demands in his proposal, but the question arose whether the Soviet position was indeed the same as that reported by Peking radio. On 27 June, Alan G. Kirk, U.S. ambassador to Moscow, sought out Duputy Foreign Minister Andrei A. Gromyko for an answer. Gromyko asserted that the Soviet government had no knowledge of Peking's view of the Malik proposal but advised that the armistice envisaged by the Soviets would include a cease-fire and would be lim-

[32] Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p. 533; *Facts on File*, 1951, p. 202; Rad, CX 65667, CINCFE to CG Eighth Army, 24 Jun 51.

[33] Ltr, Gen Ridgway to Gen Van Fleet, 22 Jun 51, sub: Location of EUSAK During a Cease-Fire; Ridgway, *The Korean War*, pp. 181–82; Collins, *War in Peacetime*, p. 309; Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, p. 403; *Van Fleet Hearings*, p. 651.

[34] *Facts on File*, 1951, pp. 201–02; Leckie, *Conflict: The History of the Korean War, 1950–53*, p. 294.

ited to strictly military questions and not deal with political or territoral matters. Further, military representatives of the United Nations and South Korean commands on the one hand and of the North Korean command and "Chinese volunteer units" on the other should negotiate the armistice. Subsequent special arrangements, Gromyko added, should be made for a political and territorial settlement.[35]

By 30 June there had been no further comment from the Chinese, and the only North Korean "response" had been a 27 June P'yongyang radio change of propaganda slogan from "drive the enemy into the sea" to "drive the enemy to the 38th parallel." But after Gromyko's confirmation and explanation of the Malik proposal, the U.N. legal counsel quickly ruled that the United States could conclude an armistice without further authorization or instructions from the U.N. Security Council or General Assembly. With the ambassadors of all U.N. nations with forces in Korea giving him their approval to proceed, President Truman authorized General Ridgway to tender a direct offer to negotiations. U.S. military authorities were not enthusiastic about being given responsibility for conducting armistice discussions, but there were strong reasons for doing so: (1) the United States did not officially recognize Chinese or North Korean authorities, (2) the talks were to shun political matters, (3) the prospect of negotiations was directly related to conditions on the battlefield, and (4) China accepted no responsibility for the Chinese "volunteer" forces in Korea, but their commander could speak for them.[36]

As instructed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Ridgway broadcast the offer from Tokyo at 0800 on 30 June, addressing it to the "Commander in Chief, Communist Forces in Korea" and using a prescribed text:

> As Commander in Chief of the United Nations Command I have been instructed to communicate to you the following:
>
> I am informed that you may wish a meeting to discuss an armistice providing for the cessation of hostilities and all acts of armed force in Korea, with adequate guarantees for the maintenance of such armistice.
>
> Upon the receipt of word from you that such a meeting is desired I shall be prepared to name my representative. I would also at that time suggest a date at which he could meet with your representative. I propose that such a meeting could take place aboard a Danish hospital ship in Wonsan Harbor.
>
> (Signed) M B Ridgway, General, U.S. Army
> Commander in Chief
> United Nations Command

Both Peking radio and P'yongyang radio broke into regular broadcasts late on the following day with a joint reply from Premier Kim Il Sung as supreme commander of the *North Korean People's Army* and Peng Teh-huai as commander of the Chinese volunteer forces. They agreed to a meeting of representatives for "talks concerning cessation of military action and establishment of peace" but preferred to meet at Kaesong and

[35] Poats, *Decision in Korea*, p. 202; Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p. 533; *Facts on File*, 1951, p. 202; Dept of State *Bulletin*, 9 July 1951, p. 45.

[36] *Facts on File*, 1951, p. 202; Goodrich, *Korea: A Study of U. S. Policy in the United Nations*, pp. 183–84; Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, pp. 533–34.

proposed that the talks begin between 10 and 15 July. Ridgway accepted Kaesong as the meeting site but urged an earlier start so as not to "prolong the fighting and increase the losses" and offered to send a three-man liaison team to Kaesong on 5 July or soon thereafter to arrange for the actual negotiations. He agreed to a return proposal for an 8 July preliminary meeting. Conducting themselves with strict formality when they met on the 8th, the two liaison teams had no serious difficulty in reaching agreement to open negotiations on 10 July.[37]

The New Dimensions of Battle

As armistice negotiations opened on the 10th, the opposing ground forces were almost even in numbers, the Eighth Army totaling about 554,500, the *Chinese People's Volunteers* and *North Korean People's Army* some 569,200. New units had recently joined each side. Now a part of the Eighth Army was an infantry battalion from Colombia which had arrived in Korea on 15 June and was training at the U.N. Reception Center. Colombia would be the last U.N. member nation to contribute ground combat forces to the U.N. Command.[38] With the addition of the Colombian unit, the Eighth Army consisted of four corps, seventeen divisions, four brigades, one separate regiment, and nine separate battalions. Among enemy formations, periodic inactivations of units to obtain replacements for others had reduced the North Korean Army to seven corps, twenty-three divisions, and two brigades, while reinforcements had raised Chinese forces to five army groups, seventeen armies, and fifty-one divisions. As Eighth Army intelligence suspected but had not yet confirmed, the Chinese *XX Army Group* with two armies, the *67th* and *68th*, had entered Korea in May and June and assembled for further training at Yangdok, the centrally located town on the lateral P'yongyang-Wonsan road. In addition, the *50th Army*, which had returned to Manchuria for reorganization in March, reentered Korea during the first week of July. That army, too, remained deep in North Korea.[39]

Chinese and North Korean casualties by 10 July had reached an enormous figure. Estimates of the total varied, but all were close to 1 million. Of these, Eighth Army prisoner of war compounds held about 163,000, more than 85 percent of whom were North Koreans. The remaining casualties were almost evenly divided between Chinese and North Koreans. U.N. Command losses after a year of fighting stood near 294,000. South Korean casualties had mounted to 212,500, American losses to around 77,000, and losses among other U.N. units to about 4,500. Army forces had suffered by far most of the American casualties: 11,327 killed out-

[37] *Facts on File*, 1951, pp. 209–10; Goodrich, *Korea: A Study of U. S. Policy in the United Nations*, p. 184; Schnabel, *Policy and Direction*, pp. 403–04; Hermes, *Truce Tent and Fighting Front*, pp. 15–21.

[38] Also arriving in June from the United Kingdom were the headquarters and service units of what would be the 1st Commonwealth Division. When eventually formed in late July 1951, the division would include the Canadian 25th, British Commonwealth 28th, and British 29th Brigades.

[39] Summary, ROK and U.N. Ground Forces Strength in Korea, 31 Jul 50–31 Jul 53; Eighth Army G2 Estimate of Enemy Strength and Locations, 1 Jul 51; Fox, "Inter-Allied Co-operation During Combat Operations"; Hq, USAFFE, Intel Dig, no. 96, 16–28 Feb 53, and no. 115, 1–15 Feb 53.



TROOPS OF THE 7TH INFANTRY, 3D INFANTRY DIVISION, ADVANCING *through the Sobang hills in the Iron Triangle, 3 July 1951.*

right; 42,925 wounded or injured in action, of whom 1,075 later died; 6,088 captured, of whom 2,583 eventually died in captivity; and 3,979 recorded as missing in action, of whom 3,323 later were declared dead either on direct evidence or under the provisions of the Missing Persons Act of 1942. Thus, out of a total of 64,319 Army casualties chargeable to the first year of the war, deaths numbered 18,308.[40]

As the first armistice conference convened, combat operations continued as the diminished pace that had set in after the Eighth Army ended its general advance at lines Kansas and Wyoming. Since that time, Eighth Army forces had conducted only extensive patrolling and a few limited attacks, the two largest an unsuccessful attempt in the X Corps sector to establish an outpost on the western rim of the Punchbowl and a successful attempt in the I Corps sector to clear the Iron Triangle of Chinese who after mid-June had crept back into the Sobang Hills, an island of mountains within the triangle. Otherwise, Eighth Army was preoccupied with developing defenses along the Kansas and Wyoming lines. *(See Map 37.)* As directed by General Van Fleet

[40] *Facts on File*, 1951, pp. 193, 202–03, 218, 234; Mono, Hq, USARPAC, Military History Office, "The Handling of Prisoners of War," Jun 60; Battle Casualties of the Army, Office, Asst Chief of Staff, G1, DA, 31 Mar 54.

on 1 June, line Kansas was being organized as the main line of resistance with defensive positions arranged in depth and elaborately fortified. Forces deployed on the looping Wyoming line were developing hasty field fortifications from which to delay and blunt the force of enemy attacks before withdrawing to assigned main line positions. To deepen the defense further, patrol bases were being established ahead of the Kansas-Wyoming front on terrain features dominating logical enemy approach routes. To prevent enemy agents reconnoitering Eighth Army defenses from mingling with local farm folk, the battle area was being cleared of Korean civilians from five miles behind line Kansas northward to the line of patrol bases.[41]

Lending haste to the preparation of defenses was an expectation that the Chinese and North Koreans would use the respite from Eighth Army pressure to rehabilitate their units and reconstitute an attack force quickly. Familiar signs of enemy attack preparations had appeared: main forces were off the line for refitting; screening forces on the periphery of the Kansas-Wyoming trace vigorously opposed the Eighth Army's ground reconnaissance; supplies were moved into forward dumps; and some captives mentioned a forthcoming "Sixth Phase Offensive." By early July the Eighth Army intelligence officer was predicting an enemy offensive anytime after midmonth. He revised his estimate after armistice negotiations started, predicting then that there would be no enemy attack unless the negotiations failed, but he expected a continuation of enemy offensive preparations.[42]

The Eighth Army estimate overrated the ability of enemy forces to recover from their recent defeat. As armistice negotiations began, both the Chinese and North Koreans—especially the Chinese—remained occupied with restoring units shattered over the past three months, most of which had moved far to the north to reorganize, and reequip. The immensity of the problem of refitting them was indicated in estimates placing enemy casualties suffered in April, May, and June above two hundred thousand and in visible battlefield evidence of tremendous losses in weapons and equipment. The size of the problem was also implicit in the 1 July response of Kim Il Sung and Peng Teh-huai to General Ridgway's offer to negotiate: "We agree to suspend military activities [during the course of negotiations]." Indeed, the Chinese and North Koreans needed only to consider the failures and heavy costs of their April and May attacks to realize that they could no longer conduct offensive operations successfully against the Eighth Army. This realization became evident when they agreed to enter into armistice negotiations without mentioning the conditions that Chinese authorities earlier had insisted upon.[43]

From a purely tactical standpoint, the cease-fire during negotiations proposed

[41] LOI, Gen Van Fleet to CGs I, IX, and X Corps and to CG ROK I Corps, both 1 Jun 51; Eighth Army Comd Rpts, Nar, Jun and Jul 51.

[42] Rad, CX 65365, CINCUNC to DEPTAR, 4 Jul 51; Eighth Army G2 SS Rpt, Jul 51.

[43] Hq, USAFFE, Intel Dig, no. 1, 1–31 Dec 52, no. 96, 16–28 Feb 53, no. 99, 16–31 Jan 53, and no. 115, 1–15 Feb 53; Hq, FEC, History of the North Korean Army, 31 Jul 52; Rees, *Korea: The Limited War*, p. 258; Rad, CX 66183, CINCFE to DA for JCS, 1 Jul 51.



THE KAESONG ARMISTICE CONFERENCE SITE, *a former teahouse.*

by Kim Il Sung and Peng Teh-huai was unacceptable to General Ridgway because he would not be able to employ air and ground reconnaissance to check on enemy activity, in particular on any preparation for major offensive operations. Beyond that, Ridgway had his 1 June instructions from the Joint Chiefs, confirmed on 10 July, to conduct operations primarily designed to create conditions favorable to concluding an armistice. As Army Chief of Staff Collins wrote later, the main purpose of U.N. Command operations was "to keep pressure on the enemy . . . in order to force an agreement that would end the fighting." [44] Admiral C. Turner Joy, commander of Naval Forces, Far East, whom Ridgway appointed as chief of the U.N. Command armistice delegation, set the matter straight at the first conference when he announced that hostilities would continue until an armistice agreement was reached. Given the prospect of a unilateral cease-fire, the enemy delegation had no choice but to agree.[45]

In applying pressure, U.N. naval surface forces would continue to blockade both North Korean coasts and keep enemy shore installations under bombardment. U.N. air forces already were

[44] Collins, *War in Peacetime*, p. 306.

[45] Rad, CX 66188, CINCFE to DA for JCS, 2 Jul 51; Rad, JCS 92831, JCS to CINCUNC, 1 Jun 51; Rad, JCS 95977, JCS to CINCFE, 10 Jul 51; Hermes, *Truce Tent and Fighting Front*, p. 23.

engaged in Operation STRANGLE, a campaign of concentrated interdictory attacks on major roads in a one-degree latitudinal belt across the peninsula just above the battle line, and on 13 July General Ridgway directed General Otto P. Weyland, the new Far East Air Forces commander, to exploit the full capacity of his command to punish the enemy.[46] General Weyland ordered the Fifth Air Force to increase fighter and light bomber attacks on enemy troops, vehicles, supplies, and installations. Within a week Weyland's staff developed plans for a massive air attack on P'yongyang to destroy troops and supply stocks concentrated in the North Korean capital city area and to impress upon the North Korean government the prudence of concluding an armistice quickly.[47]

As of 10 July General Ridgway was free to continue ground operations as he saw fit: on that date the Joint Chiefs of Staff lifted both the limit of general advance previously placed on the Eighth Army and the requirement that major offensive action have their prior approval. Ridgway had in hand at the time the plan he had asked General Van Fleet to prepare for an advance to the P'yongyang-Wonsan line. In Plan OVERWHELMING, Van Fleet tentatively set 1 September as the date for opening the operation. But in forwarding the plan to Ridgway he repeated his earlier conclusion that he could best accomplish his mission of inflicting losses on enemy forces from his Kansas-Wyoming positions and recommended that the Eighth Army not carry out the plan unless by 1 September there had been a major deterioration of enemy forces, a change in mission requiring the seizure of territorial objectives, or an allocation of additional forces to the Eighth Army sufficient to ensure the success of the offensive.[48]

Ridgway shelved the plan, not because of Van Fleet's recommendations but out of the possibility that the two armistice delegations would reach agreement in the near future. He and "ground commanders of all ranks," he wrote later, "hesitated to fight for ground that an early armistice might require them to relinquish" in order to conform to an agreed-upon line of demarcation. But more than that, he said, "it seemed to me, with a cease-fire faintly visible on the horizon, that I should do all I could to keep our losses at a justifiable minimum." He consequently elected to conduct no major offensive but to "retain the initiative through the use of strong patrols and local attacks." [49]

Thus, there was to be no great ground pressure to help persuade enemy authorities to conclude an early armistice. And without that pressure, neither would there be an early armistice.[50] Ridgway's decision, in any case, set the tempo of future U.N. Command ground operations. Indeed, the ebb and flow of battle had already subsided, and the fighting would not again take on the scale and momentum of the war's first year.

[46] General Weyland replaced General Stratemeyer in June after the latter suffered a heart attack and, following hospitalization, returned to the United States.

[47] Field, *History of United States Naval Operations, Korea,* pp. 356–58; Cagle and Manson, *The Sea War in Korea,* p. 241; Futrell, *United States Air Force in Korea,* pp. 400, 403.

[48] Rad, JCS 59577, JCS to CINCUNC, 10 Jul 51; Ltr, Gen Van Fleet to CINCFE, 5 Jul 51, sub: Advance Beyond KANSAS-WYOMING Line.

[49] Ridgway, *The Korean War,* pp. 182–93, 187.

[50] For an analysis dealing in part with this possibility, see MS, Edwin Augustus Deagle, Jr., The Agony of Restraint: Korea, 1951–1953, copy in CMH.

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As is evident in the footnote citations, this volume is based in far the largest part on records, reports, and documents generated in the course of military operations by Army commands and units directly involved in the Korean War. Foremost among these sources are war diaries and command reports. Through November 1950, Army regulations required that involved organizations issue monthly war diaries, these fashioned after the excellent diaries prepared by German Army units during World War II. Thereafter, new Army regulations required the preparation of monthly command reports by United Nations Command–Far East Command headquarters and at each lower command level down to separate battalions. Each war diary lists important developments in a date and time sequence, summarizes the developments, and includes documents that support the diary entries. Command reports are the main sources for this volume; each consists of a detailed narrative, supporting documents, and, in many instances, maps, overlays, and photographs. All war diaries and command reports are now in the custody of the National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. Classified secret when prepared, virtually all of them have since been declassified.

During the war, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Department of the Army communicated with the U.N. and Far East Commands mainly by radio. The National Archives and Records Administration keeps a complete file of the messages exchanged; some can be found in the supporting documents of the monthly UNC–FEC command reports. Messages the U.N. and Far East Commands exchanged with their subordinates in the field are in the Far East Command adjutant general's files, these also in the custody of the National Archives and Records Administration. Many of these messages can be found in the supporting documents of the UNC–FEC and Eighth Army command reports.

Of considerable usefulness were Eighth Army operational planning files. Most of them classified top secret at their origin, their contents did not become part of Eighth Army command reports, which by regulation could contain information classified no higher than secret. Now declassified, the planning files currently are kept by the National Archives and Records Administration.

As prescribed by Army regulations existing in 1950, small (three-man, later two-man) historical detachments were to be activated in times of war and deployed to combat theaters to help produce a record of military operations. Eight historical detachments served in Korea. For most of the war they were assigned to Eighth Army special troops and operated under the control of the

Eighth Army historian. During the last months of the war they were consolidated as the 8086th Army Unit, a provisional organization of Army Forces, Far East, headquartered in Japan, and operated under the control of the historian of that command. Detachment reports, based mainly on interviews with participants, centered on small unit combat actions, combat support operations, and service support activities. The detachments also produced monographs on diverse subjects—personnel problems, logistical problems, enemy tactics, among others—all of which, as indicated in footnotes, support numerous sections of this book. Originals of the detachment products are held by the National Archives and Records Administration. Microfilm copies are located in the Army Center of Military History.

Interviews and correspondence with key commanders and staff officers and personal accounts written by some of them provided important information available nowhere else. These transcripts, letters, and accounts are stored in the Army Center of Military History.

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List of Abbreviations

AAA	Antiaircraft artillery
AFA	Armored field artillery
ASCOM	Army Service Command
AW	Automatic weapons
BCT	Battalion Combat Team
BomCom	Bomber Command
CCF	Chinese Communist Forces
CINCFE	Commander in Chief, Far East
CINCUNC	Commander in Chief, United Nations Command
ComCarCom	Combat Cargo Command
CPV	Chinese People's Volunteers
CTC	Civil Transport Corps
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea)
EUSAK	Eighth U.S. Army in Korea
FA	Field artillery
FAF	Fifth Air Force
FEAF	Far East Air Forces
FEAM Com	Far East Materiel Command
FEC	Far East Command
H&W	Health and welfare
I&R	Intelligence and reconnaissance
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JLC	Japan Logistical Command
KATUSA	Korean Augmentation to the U.S. Army
KMAG	U.S. Military Advisory Group to the Republic of Korea
KMC	Korean Marine Corps
KOSB	King's Own Scottish Borderers
KSLI	King's Shropshire Light Infantry
LCM	Landing craft, mechanized
LST	Landing ship, tank

LVT	Landing vehicle, tracked
MASH	Mobile Army surgical hospital
MAW	Marine air wing
NavFE	Naval Forces, Far East
NKPA	North Korean People's Army
PLA	People's Liberation Army (Chinese)
POL	Petroleum, oil, lubricants
PPCLI	Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry
RCT	Regimental combat team
ROK	Republic of Korea (South Korea)
ROKA	Republic of Korea Army
RUR	Royal Ulster Rifles
SAG	Special activities group
SCAJAP	Shipping Control Administration, Japan
TOT	Time on target
UNC	United Nations Command
UNCACK	United Nations Civil Assistance Command, Korea
UNCURK	United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea
UNRC	United Nations Reception Center
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Basic Military Map Symbols

Symbols within a rectangle indicate a military unit, within a triangle an observation post, and within a circle a supply point.

Military Units—Identification

Antiaircraft Artillery ..... 

Armored Command ..... 

Army Air Forces ..... 

Artillery, except Antiaircraft and Coast Artillery ..... 

Cavalry, Horse ..... 

Cavalry, Mechanized ..... 

Chemical Warfare Service ..... 

Coast Artillery ..... 

Engineers ..... 

Infantry ..... 

Medical Corps ..... 

Ordnance Department ..... 

Quartermaster Corps ..... 

Signal Corps ..... 

Tank Destroyer ..... 

Transportation Corps ..... 

Veterinary Corps ..... 

Airborne units are designated by combining a gull wing symbol with the arm or service symbol:

Airborne Artillery ..... 

Airborne Infantry ..... 

Size Symbols

The following symbols placed either in boundary lines or above the rectangle, triangle, or circle inclosing the identifying arm or service symbol indicate the size of military organization:

Squad	•
Section	••
Platoon	•••
Company, troop, battery, Air Force flight	I
Battalion, cavalry squadron, or Air Force squadron	II
Regiment or group; combat team (with abbreviation CT following identifying numeral)	III
Brigade, Combat Command of Armored Division, or Air Force Wing	X
Division or Command of an Air Force	XX
Corps or Air Force	XXX
Army	XXXX
Group of Armies	XXXXX

EXAMPLES

The letter or number to the left of the symbol indicates the unit designation; that to the right, the designation of the parent unit to which it belongs. Letters or numbers above or below boundary lines designate the units separated by the lines:

Company A, 137th Infantry	A 137
8th Field Artillery Battalion	8
Combat Command A, 1st Armored Division	A I
Observation Post, 23d Infantry	23
Command Post, 5th Infantry Division	5
Boundary between 137th and 138th Infantry	137 / III / 138

Weapons

Machine gun	
Gun	
Gun battery	
Howitzer or Mortar	
Tank	
Self-propelled gun	

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