

**COMMAND REPORT - Chosin Reservoir; 27 November 1950 - 12
December 1950**

Note: Original Classification Stamped SECRET. Tabbed by DLS (Donald Singer) on
5/13/03 and copied on 7/28/03 by Charles E. Shaw. MASTER No. 889 538.

**COMMAND REPORT - CHOSIN RESERVOIR
27 November 1950 - 12 December 1950**

-COVER PAGE-

**HEADQUARTERS
7TH INFANTRY DIVISION
APO 7, c/o Postmaster
San Francisco, California**

COMMAND REPORT

(CSNTS-5 (R1))

CHOSIN RESERVOIR

27 November 1950 - 12 December 1950

Approved by:

**C. B. FERENBAUGH
Maj Gen, USA
Commanding**

-PAGE 1-

COMMAND REPORT - CHOSIN RESERVOIR

period 27 November 1950 to 12 December 1950

During the early part of November 1950, the 7th Infantry Division was pressing a successful attack against a stubborn enemy and had gained its objective of HYASENJIN on the Manchurian border.

On 24 November 1950, a warning order was received from X Corps regarding assumption of the 1st Marine Division zone east of the CHOSIN Reservoir. This order also attached the 1st Bn 32d Inf to the 1st Marine Division for operational control. At the time of receipt of the order, the 1st Bn, 32d Infantry, was enroute to join the 32d Infantry Regiment in the vicinity of SAMSU DA 1872. The battalion was stopped in HAMHUNG and ordered north to the CHOSIN Reservoir.

The only route for the Division to move to the new zone to the west was the narrow HYESANJIN, KAPSAN, PUNGSAN, PUKCHONG, HAMHUNG road and the PUKCHONG - HAMHUNG railroad. (see road map.) The narrow road, with no alternate or parallel routes, forced all movements to be made in columns. Speed in columns averaged approximately ten miles per hour because of the narrow tortuous roads, snow and ice conditions, and lack of pull-off areas for passing.

Because of the time element involved in moving the division, security could best be maintained by having the northern units in contact with the enemy to continue the attack until time for the unit to move out. By moving southern most unit first, relief of northern most units by the 26th ROK Regiment would be accompanied before contact with the enemy was broken.

On 26 November 1950, the 31st RCT, commanded by Colonel Allan D. MacLean, was ordered to move from the vicinity of UNTAEK DV1258 to the east side of the CHOSIN Reservoir. The mission of the regiment was to relieve the Marine units in that vicinity and then advance north to the Manchurian Border. Initially, Col MacLean had at his disposal the 3d Bn, 31st RCT, commanded by Lt Col William Reilly, 1st Bn, 32d Infantry, commanded by Lt Col Don C. Faith, and the 57th Field Artillery Bn (- C Battery) commanded by Lt Col Ray C. Embree.

-PAGE 2-

The 1st Bn, 32d Infantry had preceded the balance of the 31st RCT and was assembled on the east bank of the reservoir approximately three miles north of HUDONG-NI. (See "K" Strip Map)

At 0800 on 27 November, Col MacLean and part of his staff arrived at the command post of the 1st Bn, 32d Infantry. He and Lt Col Faith immediately made a reconnaissance of the forward outposts vacated by the marines who were moving without an actual relief on the positions of the 1st Bn, 32d Infantry. No contact with the enemy had been reported in the area and all had been quiet on the east side of the reservoir.

Col MacLean directed the 1st Bn, 32d Infantry to go into the positions vacated by the Marines on the northeastern tip of the reservoir (See "A", strip map). The 3d Bn, 31st Infantry established positions about four miles south of the 1st Bn, 32d Infantry positions (See "B", strip map). The Forward Regimental Command post was established about halfway between the two battalions. (See "A", strip map)

By 1600 hours 27 November 1950, the 1st Bn, 31d Infantry, 3d Bn, 31st Infantry and 57th Field Artillery Bn had occupied their positions, perimeter was established, reconnaissance patrols sent out and outposts manned. The 2d Bn, 31st Infantry (-E Co) was enroute to the reservoir area and had arrived in HAMHUNG. the 31st Tank Company, also enroute had arrived at HAMHUNG, (See "E", strip map) and halted for the night at the Regimental Command Post (Rear) established there.

At 2250 hours, 27 November 1950, the enemy began persistent probing attacks against the 1st Bn, 32d Infantry perimeter. At 0030 hours 27 November 1950, the Chinese launched a coordinated attack. This attack initially penetrated the outpost positions of "B" Company. The positions were immediately restored by a counterattack launched by command post personnel. "A" Company on the left flank was overrun. A second counterattack drove the enemy back and the positions restored.

The attack continued against the left flank of "C" Company throughout the next morning. A counterattack by "C" Company, established by an air-strike forced.....

-PAGE 3-

.....the enemy to withdraw about 1600 hours. Friendly casualties were heavy, with about 100 passing through the aid station. Enemy casualties were estimated between 600-1,000, attesting to the size of the attacks.

Meanwhile, the 3rd Bn, 31st Infantry had also been subjected to coordinated attacks from all sides. (See "B", strip map) At 0130 hours 28 November 1950, a heavy attack was launched against the positions of "K" and "I" Company. The enemy broke through and overran Company "K". Close-in fighting resulted in "K" Company being caught between enemy and friendly forces and forcing it to withdraw to the positions of "A" Battery, 57th FA Bn. These positions were in turn abandoned, after the battery had run out of ammunition firing direct fire into the enemy. Both "K" Company and "A" Battery withdrew to "B" Battery positions and consolidated with "I" Company. In these positions the combined unit held the enemy off until he withdrew at daylight. All other companies around the perimeter had suffered heavily but had not been forced from their positions. After the enemy withdrew, a check revealed a heavy loss in men and officers. Lt Col Reilly, CO 3d Bn, 31st Infantry and Lt Col Embree, CO 57th FA Bn, were both casualties, though only wounded.

The 57th FA Bn hastily regrouped and moved into the perimeter of the 3rd Bn, 31st Infantry. "A" Battery had recaptured its abandoned guns through hard infantry tactics.

During the day of 28 November 1950, action was relatively quiet with all units tightening their perimeters and consolidating positions. It was discovered that the enemy had roadblocks between the 1st Bn, 32d Infantry and the 3d Bn, 31st Infantry; also that roadblocks had been established between the 3d Bn, 31st Infantry and the Regimental Command Post at HUDONG-NI, about six miles to the south.

Col MacLean had moved his staff and command post into the perimeter of the 1st Bn, 32d Infantry during the early morning hours. It was also learned that the 31st Medical Company moving north from HAGARU-RI, was attacked north of HUDONG-NI (See strip map). Some personnel fought on through and others returned to HAGARU-RI.

-PAGE 4-

Major General Almond, Commanding General, X Corps visited the 1st Bn 32d Infantry during the early morning hours of 28 November 1950 and awarded Lt Col Don C. Faith the Silver Star for gallantry in action.

At 1000 hours on 28 November, the 31st Tank Company with a composite infantry platoon from "C" Company, 13th Engineer Bn, 31 AT Platoon, and Headquarters personnel, attacked north from HUDONG-NI, with the mission of opening up a route to the 3d Bn, 31st Infantry. This Task Force accompanied by Gen Hodes, Assistant Division Commander, hit an estimated enemy battalion north of HUDONG-NI. (See "D", strip map) The infantry was not strong enough to hold the high ground to assist the advance of the tanks. The enemy using bazookas (3.5 rocket launchers) and AT guns forced the Task Force to withdraw with loss of four tanks and many casualties.

The 2d Bn, 31st Infantry, stopped at HAMHUNG, was ordered by X Corps to proceed to MAJON-DONG (see road map) on 29 November and to continue north to clear the MSR and to rejoin the 31st Infantry east of the CHOSIN Reservoir.

In the area of the 3d Bn, 31st Infantry the enemy renewed his attacks at approximately 1800 hours on 28 November. The attacks were directed at various spots around the perimeter and lasted all night. Several penetrations were made but successful counterattacks drove the enemy out. "K" and "I" Companies were combined due to losses incurred. By 0600 hours 29 November, the enemy had withdrawn and the positions were still in tact, however, ammunition and supplies were running dangerously low.

In the 1st Bn 32d Infantry area, just four miles north of the 3d Bn 31st Infantry, the usual probing attacks began shortly after midnight. About 0100 hours on 29 November, the enemy attacks had increased in tempo until the full force of their weight was being felt by the entire battalion. All companies were receiving savage attacks. The Chinese were attacking with rushes of men, heedless of the losses inflicted by our units. "B" Company positions were penetrated but a counterattack restored the lines.

-PAGE 5-

At 0300 hours, with ammunition beginning to run low, Col. MacLean ordered that battalion to prepare to attack south to join the 3d Bn 31st Infantry. The orders were to unload all trucks regardless of cargo and to load on the wounded. This preparation was done under complete blackout conditions and eliminated the possibility of destroying the equipment of being left behind. The preparations were completed and the column moved out at 0430 hours. Some vehicles were left behind, but none of the wounded were without transportation.

The column proceeded without incident until halted by a road block of logs at approximately the position of the old Forward Command Post (See "A", strip map). During the attack to reduce the road block, fire was received from the vicinity of the 3d Bn 31st Infantry position across the finger of the reservoir. Thinking it was fire from friendly troops and without communications, Col MacLean personally started across the ice to halt the fire. It was observed that he was hit several times in crossing but made it to the other shore and disappeared. Portions of "A" and "B" Companies attacked across the ice, driving out the Chinese forces dug-in there.

After the road block was reduced, the column proceeded into the perimeter of the 3d Bn 31st Infantry at 1230 hours, 29 November 1950. a search of the area revealed no trace of Col MacLean, and personnel within the friendly perimeter had not seen him.

During the rest of the day units were consolidated, commands constituted and a Task Force organized with Lt Col Faith Commanding. 1st Bn 32 Infantry, Major Miller Commanding; 3d Bn 31st Infantry Major Storms Commanding; 57 FA Bn (-), Lt Col Tolley Commanding.

At approximately 1530 hours, 29 November, two air drops were received. These drops were only partially recovered because portions were dropped into enemy held areas. Only 40 rounds of 105mm artillery ammo were received.

At approximately 1630, two helicopters landed within the perimeter and a few of the seriously more wounded were flown out to HAGARU-RI, but darkness prevented them from making but two trips out and back.

-PAGE 6-

Further to the south at HUDONG-NI (See "E", strip map) the Tank Co (-), supported by a composite rifle company, again attacked north at 0800 hours 29 November in an attempt to open the MSR to the beleaguered 3d Bn 31st Infantry and 1st Bn 32d Infantry, a scant eight miles to the north. This attack was again repulsed at the same point as the previous day after an intense fight with two enemy battalions. This force withdrew to HUDOMG-NI. At 0900 another tank force attempted a cross country reconnaissance of a route to the north. This attempt also met with failure as no feasible route was found, and the officer platoon leader was killed. An attack by the enemy resulted in the loss of two tanks.

The 2d Bn 31st Infantry enroute from HAMHUNG arrived in MAJON-DONG (see road map) at 1200 hours 29 November, and was ordered to wait there until X Corps gave permission to proceed.

"B" Company 31st Infantry had arrived at KOTO-RI (see road map) on 28 November and placed under the command of the 1st Marine Regiment. On 29 November, company "B" 31st Infantry was attached to a British Royal Marine Commando unit with the mission of clearing the MSR from KOTO-RI to HAGARU-RI. The MSR had been closed by several enemy roadblocks. At 1800 hours, Company "B" column was hit by the enemy, splitting the force into two groups. These groups formed two perimeters and repulsed several enemy attacks, including three "Banzai" charges during the night. By 0600 hours 29 November, Company "B" had regrouped and fought its way over the hills to KOTO-RI. Heavy losses were incurred in the fight to KOTO-RI.

Back to the north in the perimeter formed by the 1st Bn 32d Infantry and 3d Bn 31st Infantry, the night of 29 November was fairly quiet after one frenzied attack by the Chinese against the strengthened perimeter.

On the morning of 30 November 1950, the surrounded unit received another air drop of much needed supplies, but were still short of ammunition. Major General Barr, CG 7th Division visited the beleaguered group.

As of 0800 30 November 1950, all 7th Division units in the CHOSIN Reservoir area were attached to the 1st Marine Division.

-PAGE 7-

To the south at HUDONG-NI the enemy buildup continued around the Rear Command post and probing attacks were initiated by the enemy. At 1100 hours 30 November, this group was ordered to move to HAGARU-RI. The 31st Tank Company was the point and rear guard of this group. The column arrived at HAGARU-RI at 1730 hours 30 November after having fought a heavy rear guard action. The units were immediately assigned sectors and participated in the defense of HAGARU-RI.

At approximately 2000 hours 30 November, the Chinese renewed their attacks supported by 120mm mortars and light artillery. All night long the enemy flung waves of troops at the perimeter but were held off. The machine guns were taking a terrific toll of the enemy and the artillery, having lowered its guns to fire point blank, ripped huge holes in their ranks. Only a few Chinese penetrated the perimeter and were immediately killed. At daylight, although the Chinese withdrew from the edge of the perimeter they still kept up a harassing fire into the area and casualties among the friendly troops continued as this fire took its toll.

At MAJON-DONG the 2d Bn 31st Infantry was released by order of X Corps to continue north to join the 31st RCT on 30 November. The battalion moved out of MAJON-DONG at 2300 hours. At 0100 hours 1 December the battalion received a heavy attack two miles

south of KOTO-RI. "K", "G", part of "H" Company and the Battalion Command Group fought forward to KOTO-RI at 0245 hours. The balance of the battalion fought through at 0900 hours. The 2d Bn 31st Infantry was immediately attached to the 1st Marine Regiment. The battalion also assumed control of all Army units within the KOTO-RI area including "B" Company 31st Infantry, secured the high in its assigned area, and set up defenses against continuing enemy attacks.

At 1100 hours on 1 December, the surrounded Task Force, commanded by Lt Col Don C. Faith, was ordered by the CG 1st Marine Division to fight south to effect a junction with the 1st Marine Division forces at HAGARU-RI at the south end of the CHOSIN Reservoir. The shortage of ammunition, food, and increasing casualties made the possibility of holding the perimeter tenuous.

Plans were made and the attack south was to start at 1300 hours. Gasoline was drained from all immobilized vehicles and the vehicles destroyed. All wounded.....

-PAGE 8-

.....were loaded on serviceable vehicles. Equipment that could not be carried was burned or destroyed.

At 1300 hours, 1 December 1950, the Task Force attacked south under the command of Lt Col Don C. Faith. Order of march; 1st Bn 32d Infantry, Major Miller, Commanding; 57th field Artillery Bn, Lt Col Tolley, Commanding; Heavy Mortar Co, 31st Infantry, 3d Bn 31st Infantry, Major Storms, Commanding; D Battery 15th AAA (AW) Bn was interspersed throughout the column. All wounded in vehicles, all others marching.

As the Task force moved out it was immediately hit by heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire. Lead elements dispersed and overran the enemy in their fox-holes. The column proceeded under constant enemy fire. Some vehicles were knocked out. The wounded were immediately transferred to other vehicles and the knocked out vehicles cleared from the road and destroyed.

Approaching a destroyed bridge (see "Z", strip map) the column was halted by an enemy force covering the bridge. The infantry had to force the enemy beyond small arms range before the column could proceed, as all M-16s and M-19's were out of ammunition.

At 1730 hours, the column was stopped by a roadblock of two machine guns and supporting troops at CV547787. (See "D" strip map) The column was also receiving heavy small arms fire from both flanks. Lt Col Faith and other officers led groups of men to the high ground (See "C", strip map) to destroy the enemy strong points covering the roadblock and the road leading up to it. Col Faith was severely wounded by a hand grenade in the attack on the road block.

Another group fought over the hill mass to the south and knocked out additional roadblock positions along the road to the south. (see "D", strip map). After this was

accomplished, word was sent back for the trucks to continue. Without waiting for the trucks the group continued across country to the south. Heavy enemy fire forced them to the reservoir and then out on the ice. Most of this group made their way over the ice to HAGARU-RI.

-PAGE 9-

At the truck column, word was passed that the roadblock could not be passed; for groups to fight their way south to HAGARU-RI. A few groups worked south on the road to CV538782. (See "D", strip map). At this point the road was effectively blocked by burned out tanks. a small foot column of approximately 100 continued on the road to CV 537764, (see "B", strip map) then crossed to the railroad tracks and continued along these to POKK-CHI CV 529743. (See "F", strip map).

At approximately 2400 hours, the column was broken when attacked by an undetermined number of enemy employing automatic weapons. Small groups made their way overland and over the ice of the reservoir to HAGARU-RI.

At 1800 hours on 1 December, the first groups started arriving at HAGARU-RI and continued to arrive through 2 December 1950.

On 2 December, all army units in the reservoir area were reorganized as a provisional regiment under the reorganized 31st Infantry Regiment Headquarters and assigned a portion of the defense perimeter of HAGARU-RI.

During the period 3 December through 6 December the 31st Regimental Combat Team (provisional) continued the defense of its assigned sector against constant enemy attacks and prepared to attack south. The attack south was scheduled to jump-off 24 hours after all Marine units had closed in HAGARU-RI from the west side of the Chosin Reservoir.

On 7 December the 7th Division 31st Regimental Combat Team (provisional), was constituted as a provisional battalion and attached to the 7th Marine Regiment. The 31st Tank Company was attached to the 5th Marine Regiment.

The attack south from HAGARU-RI to HAMHUNG jumped-off with the PROVISIONAL BATTALION, 7th Infantry Division, assigned to the left flank of the leading element (7th Marine Regiment). Two companies of this battalion were committed to screen and secure the high ground at least 1,000 yards east of the road.

Immediately after launching the attack, heavy resistance was encountered. A strong roadblock with the enemy firmly entrenched in dug-in positions was overrun by the 1st Bn, 32d Infantry (provisional).

-PAGE 10-

At 0630 hours on 8 December the head of the column reached KOTO-RI.

The 2d Bn 31st Infantry advancing to the north, to assist the 31st units trapped east of the CHOSIN Reservoir, had arrived at KOTO-RI at 0900 hours on 1 December, attached to the 1st Marine Regiment and assigned a defense sector to the SE, S, and SW of KOTO-RI.

At 0830 hours on 8 December, the 31st Provisional Bn was ordered to attack two hills northwest of KOTO-RI to hold the MSR open against an enemy attack. The objectives were secured against light opposition and held until all rear elements of the column from HAGARU-RI had closed in KOTO-RI.

At 0700 on 9 December the column attacked south of KOTO-RI toward HAMHUNG, with the provisional battalion 31st on the right, and a Marine unit on the left, leading the attack.

The first two objectives were secured against light opposition during an intense snow storm.

At 1600 hours the enemy attacked the column, but were driven off by the Provisional Battalion 31st Infantry and the Marine unit on the left. All units were in a perimeter defense during the night.

The attack south continued on the morning of 10 December and linked up with Task Force DOG (Brig Gen Meade, Commanding) attacking north from HAMHUNG.

The men were immediately loaded on trucks and continued to HAMHUNG where they were directed to their own units who received and cared for them.

On 11 December 1950, the 2d Bn, 31st Infantry Regiment left KOTO-RI, fighting as rear guard for the balance of the column advancing south.

On 12 December 1950, the 2d Bn, 31st Infantry Regiment arrived in HAMHUNG after fighting a determined rear guard action to the base of the pass south of KOTO-RI. The Bn was immediately utilized in the defense perimeter of HAMHUNG.

END