

INDIVIDUAL PERSONAL STATEMENTS AT CHOSIN RESERVOIR

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Sgt. JAMES J. FREUND's STATEMENT ("A" Co. Mortar Squad 1/32)

Transcription of recorded statement by Sergeant James J. Freund, Co "A", Squad Leader, Mortar Squad, 32d Infantry Regiment made the day after the return of his unit from encirclement by Chinese Communist troops in the Chosin Reservoir area commencing 26 November 1950.

I am Sergeant Freund, Company "A", 32d Infantry. we moved up into position, I believe it was around noon time 27 Dec, and I was set up on CP for the mortars. We dug in and set up in position and waited for the Chinese to come. We were told that there were only three or four or five that came in every night, and most of them were hungry and wanted some clothing. A little after dark we saw a few started coming in and we started firing on them and we were immediately told not to fire on them because there wouldn't be too many coming in. About half an hour later they just kept coming and kept coming, so we just started firing. And we were right up on the crest of the hill where we could see everything and these Chinese just marched up in a column of twos right up the hill (CV5304). and we were firing at them as fast as we could. We couldn't knock them down. They just kept coming up.....well, there was about a 200 yard front right where I could see, and they just kept coming up there all night long. And we fired and fired until they overran our position. They knocked out the position on my left front. And they just came right up on and came right on through. And I didn't.....I couldn't see too much after that, they were firing everywhere.

We had six arranged targets. We were already zeroed in on this target where they were coming through. And when I went to give the firing order back to the mortars the communications were out. We had sound power phones. But I don't know what was wrong with them, they wouldn't work. Our 536s were froze up. They didn't work either. But I know my gunners.....I don't know how many rounds he fired, but he fired them in that draw and got some of the Gooks. He was later killed. That night (AM 28 Nov) the Chinese that came through our line killed one of my gunners. One of my other boys, he shot the man, the Chinese that got my gunner. Next day (28 Nov) we pushed them back

off the hill and we sat up in our positions again and we fired all the day eight rounds of mortar ammunition and chased them off to another hill. That night (28-29 Nov) they came at us again.

There is another thing I didn't bring up. It was after they started coming through on us they would start blowing these bugles and blowing whistles and everything else but that didn't bother the GIs. They would just fire all the more. During the first night we lost our sights, somehow they were busted. But the next day we fired better than 300 rounds. We didn't have anything.....aiming stakes or no sights; just by moving the mortars from left to right. and we used pass-back communications. Just yelled from one man to the other. We had about five men strung out and used that for communications. We fired up over 300 rounds on this one hill and chased them off there. The next morning we pulled out it was about 4 o'clock in the morning (29 Nov). We pulled out and worked our way back to the 57th Field Artillery where they were set up with the 3d Battalion, 31st, I believe. From there we waited and moved out to the rear.

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Capt. ROBERT E. DRAKE's STATEMENT (CO, Tank Co. 31st Regiment)

TANK COMPANY
31st INFANTRY REGIMENT
APO 7

12 December 1950

SUBJECT: Operations Summary, 25 November to 11 December 1950

TO: Commanding Officer
31st Infantry Regiment
APO 7

Tank Company of this regiment departed Sagu, Korea (CV2882) on 24 November, arrived Pukchong, Korea (DV4255) 25 November, and departed Pukchong 26 November by rail with destination Hamhung (70 miles). Company arrived Hamhung 26 November and departed Hamhung 27 November travelling 60 miles to Hudong-ni Korea (CV5376) on East side of Chosin Reservoir. On 28 November, Tank Company was given mission to attack North and open route to 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, and 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment. Attack commenced at 281000 November with provisional composite platoon of Headquarters Company attached. Attack progressed as far as vicinity of Medical Company ambush CV 5478 sufficient infantry was not available to hold this intermediate objective. Enemy force estimated as one battalion well dug in. Numerous infantry casualties and loss of four tanks (two hit by 3.5 rocket launchers, 1 rolled over steep incline, and one with thrown track on steep incline on objective area) led to decision to withdraw. Two officers and ten enlisted men of tank company were wounded in this action. Attack with the same mission was ordered the following day.

Attack jumped off 290800 with 2nd, 3rd, and 4th platoons of tank company, with one platoon of "C" Company, 13th Engr (C) Battalion, anti-tank mine platoon and composite platoon of Headquarters Company, 31st Infantry Regiment. Attack again reached intermediate objectives with each of two tank forces but over whelming enemy numbers caused high infantry casualties and positions on objective became untenable. Undersigned ordered withdrawl of attacking forces to Hudong-ni. Enemy forces estimated as two battalions well dug in. In the meantime, one platoon of tank company was ordered on patrol mission to east of Hudong-ni and then reconnaissance mission directy North of Hudong-ni to select route thru saddle in mountain area. Last operations resulted in loss of two tanks, death of one officer, and two enlisted men of tank company wounded. At 301600 November, withdrawl from Hudong-ni to Hagaruri CV 5272 was directed. This company performed rear guard action. Two disabled tanks were towed from Hudong-ni for approximately one mile until further towing was impossible because of sharp turns on the route. These two tanks were ordered to be abandoned by Lt Col Anderson (acting CO of 31st RCT) as they held up progress of the vehicle column then under heavy small arm fire. Company arrived at Hagaruri 301730, was attached to 1st Tank Battalion, 1st Marine Division and immediately placed in the perimeter defense of the Hagaru-ri area. Attack by Chinese forces that night was directed at this company's sector. Attack was repulsed with some one hundred counted enemy dead. Tank company sustained only one casualty. Attack.....

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.....was made by estimated three companies of enemy. On 2 December conducted patrol to assist in evacuation of wounded survivors of 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry and 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry and recovered approximately 20 wounded. Patrol mission was hampered by heavy small arms fire and anti-tank gun fire. Company was attached to 5th Marine Regiment on 3 December 1950. Conducted patrol mission with Royal British Marine detachment North on West shore of Chosin Reservoir to link up with 7th and 5th Marine Regiments then withdrawing from Yudam-ni to Hagaru-ri. Patrol was ordered to return before mission was accomplished. Six casualties from extreme cold were evacuated during period 3-6 December 1950 during which period company supplemented perimeter defense of Hagaru-ri area. On 7 December 1st Marine Division commenced evacuating Hagaru-ri. This company was assigned mission of advance and rear guard of 5th Marine Regiment. Numerous engagements with enemy enroute to Koto-ri resulted in estimated 50 enemy dead - action resulted in three casualties to this company. During stop over at Koto-ri company was committed on perimeter defense. Departed Koto-ro 101100 December and arrived vicinity Hamhung Korea 112300 December without serious incident.

ROBERT E. DRAKE
Capt Armor
Commanding

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1Lt. CECIL G. SMITH's STATEMENT ("A" Co. 1/32)

Transcription of recorded statement by 1st Lieutenant Cecil G. Smith, Company "A", 32nd Infantry Regiment, made the day after the return of his unit from encirclement by Chinese Communist troops in the Chosin Reservoir commencing 26 November 1950.

At that time, November 27th, I was executive officer of Company "A", and we moved into position in coordinate block CV5284. At 10 o'clock at night (272200) Captain Scullion, company commander of "A" Company, returned to the 1st Battalion CP to receive an attack order for the following morning. Approximately at 1230 at night the three platoons, which were on the right flank of our company with the 1st and 2nd platoons forward on the ridge, started firing. I ran up and down the line shouting, "Don't fire," because I did not see anything out in front. I told the men to let them come on in so we could capture some prisoners. Approximately half an hour later Captain Scullion came back to the company CP. He also walked up and down the line and we quieted the ROKs down from firing. Finally after about 15 minutes we saw a patrol of 5 Chinese on the road. Captain Scullion gave the orders to fire upon the patrol. We fired upon the patrol and they withdrew.

Within a half hour (280115) we were hit by approximately a company of Chinese. They hit both flanks of the three platoons. They surrounded the CP and came on back into the 60mm mortar position. Captain Scullion went to the left flank of the 3rd Platoon and in this place he was killed. I immediately took command of "A" Company and we fought the Chinese: formed a perimeter around the CP and fought the Chinese until daylight. At daylight the lines were restored. The men started checking on the holes that had been evacuated and they found two Chinese in one of the holes in the mortar position. These two Chinese were shot immediately.

When Captain Scullion had returned to the CP the night before, he didn't have time to give me the orders as to what the battalion was going to do on the attack the following morning. Around 8 o'clock (280800) Major Jones came up to "A" Company and he told me that "A" and "C" had jumped off into the attack toward the west to seize the high ground. He told me that I would remain in position in my present location. During the night we had withdrawn the two platoons back to consolidate with the 1st Platoon. I helped the 1st Platoon. We had withdrawn the 2nd Platoon back to consolidate with the 3rd Platoon. I moved the 1st Platoon forward of the other two platoons to cover the ridge and approaches to our company. We remained in position all day and approximately at 4 o'clock (281600) we received orders to consolidate my position and tie in for the night.

I sacrificed the high ground to my front to get a closer perimeter, placing the 2nd Platoon on the left flank, the 3rd Platoon to the front and the 1st Platoon on the right flank. The Chinese attacked the same positions, hitting the 3rd Platoon for the second night, and we fought all that night. (28-29 Nov) And at 4:30 in the morning (290430) Major Miller, the executive officer, came up to "A" Company and said we had orders to withdraw, "A" Company being the rear guard.

I withdrew one squad that was left from the 2nd Platoon on the left and the 3rd Platoon, leaving the 1st Platoon on the right to cover the withdrawal of the rest of the company. We marched down through the draw and met the 3rd Platoon who had withdrawn across the hill. After we had marched about an hour and a half across the hills we had met the rest of the mortar column where we went into position again to cover "B" and "C" Companies advance across the lake, covering the rear of these two companies. As soon as part of "B" and "C" Company had crossed the lake the orders were given for the rest of the Battalion to start forward, marching down the road. We marched down the road while the planes strafed the hill to our right. Around noon time we joined the 3rd Battalion of the 31st Infantry and the 57th Field who were at coordinates CV5481 in the block of that coordinate.

Here we remained for the night of November 29, which was a quiet night. The night of November 30 the Chinese again hit the "A" Company position from the east. They hit the 1st Platoon along the railroad track and the road. We repelled the attack of the Chinese and later they hit to our rear, which was the 3rd Battalion of the 31st Infantry, and made a slight penetration. This was repulsed by the 57th Field. We fought all night November 30th. On December 1st, the morning of December 1st, we watched the Chinese down the road approximately 800 to 1000 yards picking up their wounded and dragging them back into the gully while the planes were making their air strikes.

At one o'clock (311300) Colonel Faith gave the order that we would attack to the east to join forces with the Marines at Hagaru-ri. Then "C" Company would move out as advance guard with "A" Company on the left flank and Headquarters, Heavy Mortar Company of the 32nd in the center, and the 31st Infantry as the rear guard. As "A" Company moved out of their holes they were immediately under fire. The men advanced approximately 20 yards forward with the air strikes and when air strikes came the plane dropped a napalm bomb hitting part of "A" Company and the Headquarters Company which had moved in on the left. At this time approximately five men were burned to death. "B" Company, coming into the rear of "A" Company after the napalm bomb had disorganized "A" Company, continued to push forward. After "B" Company came in up from our rear, "A" Company men joined in with "B" Company and we continued to advance on the left flank catching up with "C" Company which was advance guard.

Because the (left) flank was on rather rough terrain and the men were getting shot, the men were inclined to move across the railroad track on to the road. All the officers and non-coms were continually pushing the men off to the left flank which was the ridge. The men did not care to get up on that part because there was quite a few Chinese. We continued on down the road until we hit the road block at coordinates 53.3 79.2, at which place the road was blown. All the trucks remained at this spot. The advance guard, which at this time was part of "C" Company, "A" Company, "B" Company, and part of the 31st Infantry rear guard which had moved up as a point, moved on out to seize the high ground at coordinates 54.3 78.8.

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This road block was covered at this point by the Chinese. There also was another road block covered by automatic weapons and the road block was sitting in a ravine with the automatic weapons sitting on both sides of the hill.

We tried to advance troops around the left flank of the road block and they were immediately driven back by the heavy fire. The men all started gathering up and they were getting hit very rapidly. So a few of the non-coms and officers decided that we would push them across the hill and overrun the Chinese positions on top of the hill. After we got on the hill we threw hand grenades at the machine gun position but we did not knock it out. The point of approximately 40 men flanked the machine gun position and kept moving on the road and later they got into the valley. There was approximately fifteen men left on the hill with Lt. Barnes and myself, who was an FO from the 48th Field. After we had seen that the point had advanced there was no chance to withdraw from this position. We decided that we would move forward and try to catch the point. We got on the road and marched forward for approximately one mile without getting a shot fired at us. Just prior to reaching the ice, approximately 25 Chinese came off the hill from our left and chased us on the ice. We could not return their fire because at that time we were out of ammunition. After we had reached 500 yards out on the ice there was one wounded man who had fallen back on the ice. One fanatic Chinese came out on the ice and bayoneted him.

On November 27 when we went into our first position "A" Company's strength was 152 enlisted men, 70 ROK's and 6 officers. When we joined the 31st Infantry and 57th Field, we had 3 officers, 130 enlisted men and 50 ROK's. On December 1 when we joined forces with the Marines at Hagaru-ri we had 1 officer, 12 enlisted men and 13 ROK's. In my experience with fighting with the ROKs, the ROKs are cowards. They do not fire aimed fire and all the GIs have to expose themselves to drive the ROKs forward at which time the ROKs will shoot into the air, try to make a lot of noise, in the Oriental custom. Through the fighting we had excellent air support. The planes made continual strikes on the hills where the Chinese were dug in. They used napalm, rockets and they would come in and strafe. In my opinion, without the Air Force's help, it would have been a very small number that would have gotten out.

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Captain ROBERT J. KITZ' STATEMENT ("K" Co. 3/31)

Transcription of recorded statement by Captain Robert J. Kitz, O-1287896, Company "K", 31st Infantry Regiment, made the day after the return of his unit from encirclement by Chinese Communist troops in the Chosin reservoir area commencing 26 November 1950.

My name is Robert J. Kitz, my rank is Captain in the Infantry, and my serial number is 1287896. I am the company commander of "K" Company, 31st Infantry.

I was present as company commander on the night of the 27th of November 1950. We arrived at the Chosin Reservoir at approximately 1600 hours on that date. When we arrived our areas were assigned to us by the Battalion Executive Officer, Major Couch, and my area was, as I recall it, a section of the perimeter defending from the east. It was a little valley that led into the Fusen Reservoir which was several miles east of our position. The disposition of my troops was as follows: About two miles up the trail to the east I had two squads of the 1st Platoon commanded by Lt. McFarland. On the ridge I had my 3rd Platoon and further down the ridge tied in with the 3rd Platoon was the 2nd Platoon. The 2nd Platoon tied in with "I" Company. My weapons squad was at the base of the ridge with one machine gun, and I had a section of machine guns from "M" Company in the draw covering the draw. This section of machine guns of "M" Company was commanded by Lt. Schmit. To the north of the machine guns "L" Company was tied in with my company occupying the ridge high ground. In order to better portray the disposition of the company I had better state where my 4th Platoon was and where my command post was. The 4th Platoon was in the draw with its mortars and 57s behind the machine gun section, approximately 200 yards. My command post was in a hole behind some houses further behind the 4th Platoon, approximately 50 to 75 yards, on a little higher ground than the 4th Platoon. My kitchen was set up on along side the command post and I had erected a pyramidal tent and had prepared to feed on early chow the next morning because we had been alerted to move out the following morning and attack to the north.

At approximately 1900 hours (271900) I went to the battalion CP which was located in some houses about 150 to 200 yards north of my command post on the low ground and received an order from Colonel Rieley. The order stated roughly that we would attack to the north the following morning and my company was to attack along the ridge line while "L" Company was to move to the north along the road with "I" Company as reserve company. "L" Company would be supported by my company's machine guns and 75s. When the order was given Colonel Rieley stated that it was his desire to move out the next morning early. However, he had not received a clearance from Colonel MacLean and we were not to move until he called us and told us that Colonel MacLean had approved of his desire to move.

About 1930 or 2000 Colonel MacLean came into the CP. He told Colonel Rieley that he could not move the next morning but should wait until the following morning, the day after tomorrow, before he jumped off his plans. (29 Nov) However, there was a report of 400 to 600 enemy located in a town about six or eight miles from where we were to the northeast and we were to send a.....

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.....strong patrol up there the following morning. I asked if Lt. McFarland and his two squads could take the patrol and Colonel Rieley approved of that and stated that a

platoon of tanks would come in the following morning and accompany Lt. McFarland. So, we had a patrol set up, called McFarland, zeroed him in. Captain O'Neil was to command the patrol, and then I returned to the CP and called the platoon leaders together and gave them the order and informed them that we would move out only if the order was to be put into execution the next day, otherwise, we would just hold off until the following day and in all probability we would spend at least one more day where we were.

The platoon leaders returned to their platoons and I prepared to hit the sack for the night. I got into my hole. The cooks were preparing chow for the following morning. At approximately 2200 I received a call from Battalion, a flash red alert. I contacted the platoons and informed them. I got Lt. McFarland his road block, which was about 2 or 2 1/2 miles out from our positions and told him, and told everybody to double their guards for the night, which was done. About one o'clock in the morning (280100) I heard some firing and I called Lt. McFarland and asked him if he knew who was firing. He informed me that it was some one behind his positions. Between 1:30 and 2 o'clock in the morning there was a considerable amount of firing just about where my machine gun section was set up. I didn't exactly know what was going on but I am sure there was a lot of shooting. Perhaps someone had gotten trigger happy. I got my shoes back on and got out to check and about that time I heard a lot of firing up close and it was coming in.

The cooks, of course, got up and ran out of the tents and quite a few of the ROKs working in the kitchen ran out and started to run. So I ran about 50 yards back and stopped them. About this time a lot of people came over the rise and there were a lot of ROKs and they were running also. I assumed they were ROKs from the 4th Platoon because they were the only ones that were around. I could recognize them as ROKs. I attempted to stop them and finally did stop them. I was about 100 yards from my hole at this time. I tried to get them to fire back, but by this time the issue had become so confused that I couldn't tell who were ROKs and who were Chinese. There was also a lot of firing and there were Chinese coming at us. So then the 4th Platoon pulled back to where I was. They asked me what I was going to do. So I told them there was only one thing left to do. We couldn't stay out in the open field in that beach near the lake. I said we would pull back to the lake where we could have a better position. In the meantime, "A" Battery of the 57th opened fire on us. So we were caught in crossfire. So I got my people back with the assistance of Lt. Sicafus of the Artillery and got them back and stopped "A" Battery from firing on us.

We got into "A" Battery's positions and shortly afterward the Gooks followed us in. There was quite a fire fight in there and I sent Sergeant Kaputo and Sergeant Payne, instructed them to put the 4th Platoon and what we had of the cooks on the high ground to the north so that we could better withstand any assault by the Gooks. And I found the 2nd Platoon of "I" Company's CP and got Lt. Beach alerted. And I told him what happened. After.....

.....finding where "I" Company's CP was, which was within "B" Battery of the 57th perimeter, I got in there and by the time that I found it the Gooks had overrun "A" Battery and "A" Battery came back into "B" Battery's positions and they brought my men with them. "B" Battery had a pretty fair defense perimeter and we just took our men and put them in the perimeter with "B" Battery and held out there.

While this was going on, of course time passed and we had about an hour to sweat before daylight. When daylight came the Gooks pushed back and except for an occasional sniper they had more or less withdrawn. Well, we didn't know what had happened to the rest of the outfit. We didn't know whether the CP had been overrun or whether they had all been killed in the CP there. Not knowing what else to do I assumed that since I was senior captain I took over. I sent two of the vehicles of the 15th AAA and a platoon from "I" Company and a patrol out toward the Battalion CP. We had two ammunition trucks back there and they salvaged what they could. I decided to establish a defense perimeter around "B" Battery. We got up there to the Battalion CP and found the battalion, and although there had been some fighting, they were still in operation. My platoon up on the hill and one of "I" Company's platoons up on the hill had been overrun. They had stayed up there. If the gooks hadn't overrun them they would have come back down to the Battalion CP across the high ground. So we saw Colonel Rieley who had been shot and quite a few people around there had been wounded, and our orders then were to tighten up our perimeter.

We couldn't occupy all the high ground because the distance involved. And our entire perimeter then was placed on the low ground of the valley. It was at this time that the rascals started throwing mortars at us. We dug in our positions, stayed there that night (28-29 Nov), and this second night (29-30 Nov) this thing started. It wasn't even dark yet. I didn't have time to dig my new hole when that started. When they came in they took a machine gun right on the perimeter so I didn't have any communications by that time. They knocked out my Commo and I only had 60 men left in the company. So I went back to "L" Company's CP which was about 30 yards behind mine and got a captain to get the 60s out on it. Then I went back about 20 yards to the 81mm Platoon and got the 81s to throw 81 in on the position. The 50 calibers had been in. Around about that time the 40mms had opened up on the house that had been near my CP and started a fire on it. They hit what white phosphorus bombs I had and started quite a conflagration. I was only about 50 yards from it at that time. The 40s did a hell of a fine job. I could see they killed quite a few Gooks around the house by the light of the fire. They hit us every place you could think of. It was here and there and all around the perimeter. And of course they threw in a lot of mortars and stuff in on us. They went on all night. They penetrated in some places, but all in all we held pretty good. The ones that got in we knocked off. They made an effort to knock out the Triple A vehicles. They weren't successful in that. They got up to the artillery pieces and the artillery men stood by their guns, killing some. They stacked up quite a few there. And a few did get in. They didn't do much damage. Our casualties weren't as heavy as the night before.

The following morning (30 Nov) we were told the 32nd was coming in. They were pulling back to our positions. We were told that the 32nd was going to come in and withdraw to our positions, which was all right with us because we felt that the more people we had the merrier it would be. It would give us two battalions with our two batteries of artillery. We were also told that the tanks were going to come up and give us some assistance which was what we were all looking forward to, feeling that any tanks we had could be used for a mobile reserve in the perimeter. At that time the Gooks hadn't shown anything that would even begin to hurt a tank. However, it was either the second or third morning; I think it was the third morning, the 32nd joined us and they came across the road. You couldn't use the bridge because the Gooks had it covered by fire. They came across the ice. I guess this was the day that Colonel MacLean got it. Anyhow, the 32nd came into our position and they took over a part of the perimeter. This was the third night I believe and things were fairly quiet the third night. (30Nov - 1Dec)

It seemed that the Gooks had decided to reorganize. The next day we got a little small arms fire from them and a few mortar rounds thrown in. But it was the next night (1-2 Dec) that all hell broke loose, the attack started. It began early in the evening and kept on going all night. There was plenty of mortars, 120s, big ones, small ones, middle ones and medium size ones. We even had some artillery on the thing. And our artillery was almost out of ammunition so it couldn't fire as much as we would have liked it to fire. And the 50s were short of ammunition and the 40s were short of ammunition. People who fired M-1s had to conserve ammunition at this time. We just didn't have what we needed. Hand grenades were short. We needed a lot of things and couldn't get them. The fourth night (1-2 Dec) the attack lasted all night. They threw a lot of mortars at us. It kept on going until the morning and this time instead of withdrawing in the morning as they had been doing they stayed right down there in the low ground with us, stayed right down there in the perimeter and we were getting a lot of grazing fire. Got a lot of people hit too at that time. Our aid station was in tough shape. We got a lot of wounded. I don't know how many, but a hell of a lot.

And about 11 o'clock (021100 Dec) I was told that we were going to withdraw after an air strike. So we prepared for the withdrawal. There wasn't a hell of a lot we could do to prepare for it. We took what equipment we had. What we couldn't carry we put in holes and started to burn it. Destroyed what weapons we couldn't take with us. The vehicles were stripped and broken down and the planes finally got overhead and we started to withdraw. They were right down about 50 to 75 yards from the perimeter shooting into us, when we were pulling out. As a result the withdrawal was a little bit disorganized, as it was awfully hard to form units as such under that fire. As soon as we got out of our positions they (CCF) just started moving right in. And the people who were fighting the delaying action were driven right out of their positions. So the 32nd, which was to lead out, got out on the road and they weren't out 50 to 75 yards when they got hit. They put up a fire fight. The Air Force was supporting them. And I know the Air Force dropped one napalm bomb on them and the Gooks, they were so close together.

Anyhow, we got going (021300 Dec). Got the column moving and from then on it was a matter of moving and every time you hit a nose the Gooks were there shooting at you. So we used the ice to move out on. The ice broke in a couple of places. People fell in the water. Some got in and some didn't. I got in the water and was lucky to get out. The vehicles moving along the road were being shot at. After we got to the place where the big road block was, I am not sure how far it was, but it was about three miles from our positions (CV544787). The terrain was ideal for a road block. There was a hairpin curve, a big nose, and a long ridge we had to go around. I was under the impression that our friendly forces were right on the other side of that ridge. Most everybody else was, I think, but we didn't realize that we had to go all the way back to Hagaru-ri to see friendly forces. So the vehicles got caught on the road on the side of this hill. We couldn't move because of the road block. The Gooks were on top shooting down and the Gooks were on the bottom shooting up. And we were caught in the middle. The vehicles were caught. The wounded were in the vehicles and a lot of lead was flying.

The men were damn hard to handle. You couldn't get them to move. Maybe it was the four days they had been caught under fire that caused it, but you couldn't control them. You couldn't organize them because of the difficulty of moving across the open areas where the Gooks were laying down their fire. The men just wouldn't function as soldiers should. They didn't go up to the high ground. They were tired and wanted to huddle together and thought there was more protection in numbers and very few of them would listen to reason. They just looked at you when you tried to get them to move. They thought that standing by the trucks was the only way of getting away from the fire, when actually it was the one place where most of the fire was being directed. Anyhow, myself, Lt. Bore, Lt. Bernard and a couple or three other officers from the Artillery all grabbed small groups of men that were available and pushed them up this hill. There was quite a few Gooks up the hill. We banzaied the hill, the ridge and took it, knocked out the road blocks along the way. I think there were three of them.

We crossed the ridge and sent somebody back to haul the rest of them up and get the vehicles moving. But this time it was almost dark (021800 Dec). There must of been a hell of a lot of men (CCF) at the bottom of the hill, so the only thing left to do was take off across country, which we did. I noticed that some of the wounded got out and they were coming along with us. We couldn't carry the others because the Gooks were right under our tails. The trucks couldn't move. I sent two men back to tell the trucks to come around that bend and follow us through. They never did come and so we struck out across the lake. I had almost 210 men with me. Got into the Marine area around midnight (022400 Dec) and spent a couple of days there.

And then I made the run from Hagaru-ri to Koto-ri with them. In fact, it was a regimental combat team with two battalions which I think was effective up to a certain point. We didn't have any automatic weapons or communications or anything. We had plenty of ROKs who were completely worthless. You couldn't get them to shoot. The only time you could find the bastards was when there was something to eat around. They'd run the first time a shot was fired. They'd fall asleep in their holes while the Chinese were about 50 yards from the perimeter. They slept right in the holes; they weren't worth a damn to

us. And a lot of our men got killed because of the ROKs, trying to push the ROKs. In my opinion, many of our casualties were caused by the failure of the ROKs to function as we expected them to.

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Our communications within the battalion weren't too much of a problem because we were so close together. We had wire layed in, but most of our communications were taken care of by a runner. It was just a short distance. We didn't have much of a problem on communications there.

Our BARs are not worth a damn. Out of 9 BARs in the company I didn't have one that would fire automatically. The machine guns were all right. One of the answers of the machine gun is to fire it periodically in that cold weather and keep them loosened up. But the BARs didn't fire except a single shot. The most serious shortage, of course, was the shortage of grenades. The Gooks had plenty of them. The tactics that they used, they would crawl up at night and lay there for almost two damn hours waiting until they made a charge. And when they made the charge they were too damn close to us, you couldn't do anything about it. They were right up on you before you knew it. They were pretty good night fighters. They were able to get so close by just the excellent manner in which they moved. Of course, they had plenty of cover and when they got up close what they would do, about 150 of them would hit the spot, probably hit four or five men. The four or five men just couldn't stop them. I had one sergeant, I recall, who stacked up 20 around his hole with an M-1, but they finally got him.

It was awfully hard to determine about their leadership. It must have been good because they were able to function effectively. However, you couldn't distinguish their leaders from the others because you very seldom saw them. You didn't see them until they were dead. We killed a lot of them. In this one draw we must have had 300 of them stacked up. We had our 57s zeroed in. Our 57s had high-explosive anti-tank ammunition which is not desirable in a case like that. What we had to do was shoot it against the ground so it would detonate. Our high-explosives we never got. We had about 20 rounds of that and the rest was all AT.

Well, our winter clothing must have been all right. You didn't freeze to death. It was damn cold, I'll tell you, damn cold.

It's awfully hard to say how the freezing of feet occurred. Everyone's feet froze to a certain extent, but we couldn't change our socks as regularly as we should. And even if you did, you couldn't light fires to warm up. It was just impossible to have fires. They just drew mortar fire. So you changed socks one day and the next day maybe those socks dried out and maybe they didn't. We had plenty of socks but no way to dry them out. We didn't have any fires.

Well, it was pretty hard for them (CCF) to miss with their mortar fire, but I don't think they inflicted too many casualties. I think that their small arms fire also was very

inaccurate. They just threw so damn much of it that they just couldn't help but hit somebody. What surprised me in the inaccuracy of it was when we crossed these open spaces, they were covered by fire. I lay out in that lake for four minutes and they were shooting in at me all that time and they hit me once in the arm, just nicked me. But it amazed me that they didn't hit me fatally as I was sitting in the water.....of course, it was just a lucky break. A lot of people didn't get out of it.

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In some cases our NCO leadership was excellent. In other cases it wasn't too good. I had some fine NCOs. And they did well. But the NCOs we had also had to prod the ROKs along, and as I say, many of our casualties were because of the ROKs failings. A man had to expose himself to get the ROKs to move. In fact, I had to shoot at them, behind them, to keep them going. But what I tried to do, in a column, we tried to take the high ground that wasn't occupied by the Gooks, but you couldn't get the bastards to go up the high ground. They were tired. They just looked at you. They all had some excuse. They all had sore feet or their weapon was broken and they didn't have any ammunition. We used the ROKs as soldiers. That's the only way we could use them. We were planning on using them as soldiers, so we did. But we spent all our time trying to control them and trying to get them to function as soldiers.

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1st Sgt. RICHARD S. LUNA's STATEMENT ("B" Co. 1/32)

Transcription of recorded statement by First Sergeant Richard S. Luna, Company "B", 32nd Infantry Regiment made the day after the return of his unit from encirclement by Chinese Communist troops in the Chosin Reservoir area commencing 26 November 1950.

The 27th of November we moved into position as battalion reserve (CV 5314). One platoon sent forward. I don't recall exactly where they went, but I believe they went up to the area of "C" Company. Anyway, we dug in for the night, the two platoons that were in reserve. We all dug up a perimeter to the rear. We had a 4.2 group to our right on the right side of the road leading up to Battalion. Everything went pretty quiet all night. We managed to sleep a little bit. But all through the night we received quite a bit of fire up forward. I don't know what was going on at all.

And early morning at about 4:00 (28 Nov) I got the word from Captain Turner to arouse all the company, including headquarters, everybody was moving forward. I was all prepared to leave when Captain Turner instructed me to get just a hand full of cooks and a hand full of CP personnel to remain behind. They all moved forward and we remained and waited and waited and waited. And all hell seemed to be breaking loose forward. Got word later on to gather whatever equipment I could and put it in one centralized pile. We began to get word back about the casualties.

So we were sitting tight until about noon I decided to go up forward to Battalion CP, and I saw all the casualties that had come down. There were a lot of dead. I saw them being drug in, frozen stiff already, and a lot of casualties also that had already been loaded on the trucks that had been pushed forward. Some had frostbite, frozen hands, frozen feet. I returned back to our CP and waited for more word. Finally I was instructed by Lt. Moore to gather all CP personnel and load them onto trucks. We were all going to go into the Battalion perimeter with just a handful of men, and with what equipment we had.....and we were told to move on up to Battalion CP. We all formed a Battalion perimeter there, and I saw more casualties being drug in dead and wounded too.

Anyway, that night (28-29 Nov), all cooks, supply and all other Headquarters personnel, we dug at the base of this hill. We just had to stand by. I was instructed as to that by Captain Turner. Anyway, at a quarter to three I was aroused by warrant officer Cleasik and Captain Turner also that we were to move up and occupy a gap. That was all Headquarters personnel, cooks, etc. We were to fill in a gap because a platoon had been pushed out. We moved up, contacted Captain Bower.....I believe that was who it was.....it was some captain. We filled in that gap and about a half hour later word came up to stand by to move out about 4:30 (29 Nov). So it was approximately 5 o'clock when the word came that we were to leave everything behind.....everything. So we left kitchen equipment, supplies, bedding.....oh everything, and we moved out entirely.

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It was about 5 o'clock when we started moving out. Our group did not move out until about 5:00. We gathered them out, moved out through the snow and darkness, and we all finally managed to get down the road about two miles under the command of Lt. Heaton. We moved forward and we contacted the rest of the battalion. The word came up that we were to go through the left flank if, through the hills or mountain, I should say. "A" Company would be to our right. They would be skirting the road. So we started up. it was quite a rough climb for everybody, of course. We were all burdened down with what equipment we could carry on our person. We climbed and climbed and climbed until we came into sight of the 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry. So we took a, more or less, shortcut. We slid half the way down. It was over a 45 degree angle drop. So, a lot of the fellows got bruised or hurt sliding down. I bruised my knee myself. But anyway, we landed on the road. And it was a very, very slow procedure getting down because due to the steep sides.....it was just bare rock where we had to slide down. A lot of the equipment was lost, weapons were broken, ammunition and everything.

I got down on the road to Lt. Houton, (Houton...Heaton???) and Lt. Houton had gone on forward, and we were under command of WO Cleasik. I moved on forward with one group and I could see the other side of the lake. It was, more or less, a U cove in there and we were in along the road, walking along the road just breezing along and we saw Lt. Houton and a party of three cross the lake very easily. And presently we got word from behind not to cross the ice. It was a more or less 25 to 30 foot drop down to the ice lake. We got word from behind not to cross the lake and that was from Colonel Faith. He came

up and said we could go forward and take these logs off the bridge that was holding the convoy up. (CV549823)

So, we got about 6 men, including our supply sergeant, and we went forward and we were breezing along when all of a sudden machine gun opened up on us from ahead. Colonel Faith and the supply sergeant jumped over to our right down into the ice and we just hugged the cliff there.....I should sat the bank, and that machine gun just followed us right back for about 25 or 30 feet, and we got into a little corner there on the side and still it was only about inches from our bodies. So, we layed there and presently Colonel Faith came on back.....don't know where he came from, but he just seemed to come back there. He sai, "We'll have to cross the lake." So, we all got up and all got through O.K. That machine gun seemed to follow us all across the frozen lake but everybody got across.

Meanwhile the artillery, 57th Field, was covering us from ahead and they were doing a damn good job of it. It wasn't long before the whole battalion came through across the lake. But, meanwhile the road had been cleared and vehicles had started coming through, trucks and everything with the wounded. They say we had left behind quite a few wounded (Not verified). So, it was a matter of about an hour and a half or two that the whole battalion was across there, all the vehicles and so forth. And we remained there for approximately two nights. We were under constant fire from the enemy all along. We didn't know how close they were, but they were right in there.

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On the morning of the first at 5 o'clock (010500 Dec) I was altered to go down with my CP personnel and also clerks and everything down on the railroad and fill in some positions there. So, we did go down there and it was just at daybreak when we began to see figures coming over the hillsides to our front. They were approximately 300 yards to our front. We couldn't make out if they were GIs or not because of the snow. There were slight snow flurries coming down every so often. So, we started passing the word back, "Don't fire, they're GIs." So then it would stop and start snowing again and we didn't realize that it was actually the enemy coming right into our own perimeter. Finally at about 11 o'clock we got word. Captain Turner called a meeting of everybody and said that we were moving out, that we had to make a break out. We had to take a chance, and he gave us the order of march, etc. I didn't realize at the time just how close the enemy was.

So, we did make the break. Baker Company was to skirt the hill on our left flank. When we started out we had air support and they dropped napalm bombs on everything. We started out and I could see when the first napalm bomb was dropped they got some of our own men. You could see them running all around just ripping their clothes off, just keeping on running. I mean both the ROKs and the GIs. And it was only within a matter of 200 or 300 yards, just outside of our perimeter. And it was a matter of another 200 or 300 yards that the enemy was.....I had to step right over the enemy, over the enemy dead. We had to take the enemy dead off the roads so the trucks could get through. We made a

break forward and there was just a mass of wounded being put on the trucks, one on top of the other. The trucks still kept on moving forward. We got what wounded we could out. I mean just kept loading them on and on to the trucks. It was impossible to get all of them on. I do not recall right now just how many were left behind. You couldn't possibly back up and take them with you...they just kept moving forward. It was a matter of just having to keep moving forward at all times.

The ROKs presented one difficulty because they persistently stuck to the road and they did not want to go up the high points where they were suppose to be. So they had to be driven. Colonel Faith was along the road yelling and so was I and we were all trying to get them up on the high points because there was a huge mass of ROKs and personnel that always kept coming down on to the road. They had to be driven up to the high ground.

When we first started on the 27th I had approximately 133 men in the company and 8 officers and 49 ROKs. But the time after we got into that road block (CV543787) we had to leave all the wounded behind and when we got through to the Marines at HAGARU-RI I had from "B" Company approximately 15 men and 10 ROKs left. That was including myself. I was quite surprised, but of course some of the other men had to be evacuated, etc. I did not know as to those how many had gotten through or not until I got to HAGARU-RI. I was in a dazed condition for a couple of days, just wandering around. I finally got together with the rest of the Battalion and that is what I had left.

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Lt. Col. REIDY's STATEMENT (CO 2/31)

2nd Battalion, 31st Infantry at KOTO-RI.

Statement by Lt Col Reidy, Commanding Officer, 2d Bn, 31st Inf regarding action of the battalion from 27 November 1950 at HAMHUNG to KOTO-RI and return to HAMHUNG 12 December 1950.

The 2d Bn, 31st RCT left PUKCHONG on the morning of 27 November 1950 and arrived HAMHUNG that night. The troops travelled by train and the vehicles by road. "E" Company was left at PUKCHONG in division reserve and did not rejoin the battalion until after its return from KOTO-RI.

Upon arrival in HAMHUNG, Lt Col Reidy reported to X Corps headquarters and was ordered to hold the battalion in HAMHUNG until further orders were received. On 280800 "B" Company 31st Infantry, was sent north toward KOTO-RI by X Corps order on 14 X Corps trucks. At this time X Corps controlled the movement of convoys on the MSR north to the CHOSIN Reservoir.

On 281700 Nov 50, the battalion received orders from G-3 X Corps to proceed by rail, (vehicles to follow by road,) to MAJON-DONG and there to set up a blocking position

against enemy from the east. Trains were scheduled to depart at 0500 and 0600 on 29 Nov.

Later on the night of 28 Nov Col Millbrun, G-3 section X Corps, delivered a change in orders; the 2d Bn 31st Inf to proceed to MAJON-DONG by rail on the morning of 29 Nov; there to mount trucks provided by X Corps and continue forward (north) to clear the MSR and rejoin the 31st Infantry regiment. X Corps trucks were due at MAJON-DONG at 1100.

The battalion left HAMHUNG on 29 Nov by train at 0530 and 0630. The batalion headquarters proceeded by road in the command vehicles and the organic transportation followed. The command group arrived at 0900 and the troops in two increments at 0930 and 1015. When the organic transportation arrived, it was ordered off the road until ordered forward by X Corps.

No trucks had arrived for the battalion. Capt Mitchell, Bn S3, called Col Forney, X Corps, to report on the immobilization of the battalion. He stated that he was familiar with the situation and Corps was working on it. Lt Col Faircheld, X Corps, arrived 291230 to see why trucks were not available. He went north to check and returned about 1700. He said a group of trucks that had gone on north loaded with ammuniton should have reported to the battalion, off loaded the ammuniton and transported the battalion.

A perimeter defense was set up at MAJON-DONG where the battalion spent the night of 29-30 Nov. An officer courier was sent to X Corps to acquaint them of the situation. He returned about 2400 with word that trucks would be in so that the battalion could continue north at 300630. The mission remained unchanged; clear the MSR and rejoin the 31st Infantry.

On 300645 Nov the column pulled out from MAJON-DONG. It continued north until about a mile north of the penstock area, CV546566, when the enemy attacked from the northeast at 1000. The column closed in and leading troops deployed and drove the enemy from the high ground to the east. Additional enemy were seen working toward the high ground to the east. In order to secure the MSR, the battalion seized the.....

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.....high ground, "G" Company successfully seizing hill 1457 (CV563558) which dominated all the terrain in the area, and prepared for an all around defense.

At 1300 Lt Beyers was sent to X Corps again with overlays to explain to them the situation which was considered "threatening". At 301830 an order was received from Maj Gurfun, G-3 section of X Corps to continue the movement to the north. The order to proceed was issued to the Company Cpmmanders at 1930 and the Battalion pulled out of their positions and began the forward movement at 302300. About dark a heavy snowstorm started which lasted all night and the next day.

The bridge at CV546572 was out and the column was hit by a light attack as it slowly continued on the bypass. At 010100 the column received a heavy attack at CV547572, about two miles south of KOTO-RI. The order of march of the column was, F, G, H, Hq 2d Bn and Regtl Hq det. F Company was ordered to fire and attack to the front; G Company to either flank as ordered and H Company to support as needed. F, G and part of H Company were able to fight forward quickly and arrived at KOTO-RI at 010245 Dec. Heavy machine gun fire from the east had cut the column at H Company. The rear of the column closed up and set up a perimeter defense. At 020700 the rear of the column was able to move forward and arrived KOTO-RI at 0900. Three tanks had been sent out by the Marines at KOTO-RI to assist the stalled column, but they met the column just south of KOTO-RI.

Upon arrival at KOTO-RI, Col Reidy reported to 1st Mar Div Hq and was told the 2d Bn 31st Inf was attached to the 1st Mar Div and assigned defensive sectors to the SE, S, and SW (see overlay). The battalion attacked the hills dominating the south, driving out the Chinese forces and secured the area until the units at KOTO-RI withdrew on 11 December. Many small attacks were repulsed during this period. The battalion also assumed control of all Army personnel in the area.

The mission of protecting the withdrawal of all forces from and through KOTO-RI was assigned to the 2d Bn 31st Inf by Operation Order #16-50, Hq 1st Marine Division, 1900 7 Dec 50:

"1b 2 - 1st Marine Division continues advance to south on CHINHUNG-NI - MAJON-DONG - HAMHUNG."

"3e. 2d Battalion, 31st Infantry (Reinforced) from present positions protect advance forces KOTO-RI. Furnish protection of Engineer forces destroying equipment in KOTO-RI. On order, begin advance south to hill 1457 and relieve 2/1. Protect advance to south and pass through 1/1 to CHINHUNG-NI."

On the withdrawal, Companies G and H occupied the hills previously held by G and F until 111715 December and all other elements had cleared KOTO-RI. As the battalion withdrew, four Marine tanks accompanied the battalion as far as objectives A and B (see overlay) where they reverted to Marine control and went ahead. Objectives A and B had already been vacated and the battalion finally passed through Marine units at the bridge at C. The 1st Marine Regiment (-2d Bn) then brought up the rear.

After travelling all night and receiving only sporadic enemy fire, the battalion arrived at the regimental area 121600 December.

Above narrative received from interviews with Lt Col Reidy, Bn CO, Capt Mitchell, Bn S-3, and Capt Kyle on 14 and 28 Dec 50 by Maj Jacobsen.

END