Chapter 11
NORTH KOREA 1950

INTO THE MOUNTAINS

On November 1, the Chinese People’s Liberation Army attacked and nearly destroyed the ROK 15th Infantry and US 8th Cavalry Regiments near Unsan, in the foothills of North Korea’s Taebaek Mountains. For the next week, the Eighth Army was attacked repeatedly and began pulling its most advanced units back toward the Chongchon River to avoid another disaster but more were coming. Seeking to flank the Chinese, General MacArthur ordered X Corps to attack to the northwest and link up with the Eighth Army. Such a feat would severely stretch the corps’ three divisions. The 3rd Infantry Division, recently arrived at Wonsan, was moving up the coastal road and rail line to Hungnam. The 1st Marine Division had reached the Changjin (Chosin) Reservoir north of Hungnam and the 7th Infantry Division reached the Pujon (Fusen) Reservoir farther east, trying to keep contact with the ROK I Corps, which was racing northeastward along the North Korean panhandle toward Chongjin.

As the last elements of the 31st Infantry landed at Iwon on November 8, the regiment began moving north through rugged mountains east of the Pujon Reservoir. Its mission was to advance to the Yalu River, establishing contact with the 5th Marine Regiment on the left and the 17th Infantry Regiment on the right. The initial advance encountered only scattered resistance from enemy troops who fired from a safe distance and quickly melted away. The situation seemed so quiet that Major Clifton Z. Couch, the 3rd Battalion’s Executive Officer, and Captain Herbert L. Bryant, Commanding the 3rd Battalion’s Headquarters Company, went into the hills together to hunt Siberian tigers. On the morning of November 21, the 17th Infantry reached Hyesanjin on the Yalu River, bordering the Chinese province of Manchuria.
A reinforced platoon of the 32nd Infantry Regiment (Task Force Kingston) and an ROK regiment reached the river at points farther east.¹

On Thanksgiving Day (November 23), the 31st Infantry was scattered across northeastern Korea. Advancing along tracks that could scarcely be called roads, the Regimental Headquarters and 3rd Battalion were in the mountains near the northeast end of the Pujon (Fusen) Reservoir.² The 1st Battalion was near the reservoir’s southeast end near Pungsan and the 2nd Battalion was protecting the 7th Division’s Command Post near Pukchong. Units did their best to get a hot turkey meal with all the trimmings to the troops, but road conditions made that impossible for most. Whatever arrived was cold and got even colder when food was exposed to temperatures below zero.

Thanksgiving was not quiet for men in the rifle companies. Most were on patrol, looking for an elusive enemy. Wherever they went, local civilians reported hundreds of Chinese troops ahead of them. North of Pungsan, a pitiful column of refugees was spotted trudging south along a winding mountain road. Here and there, gunfire crackled across barren ridges as two patrols made contact with a larger Chinese force ambling slowly down a road just a few hundred yards behind the refugees. The outnumbered patrols inflicted some losses, but soon withdrew to Pungsan. The refugees struggled to safety among the retreating GIs and KATUSAs.

At Pungsan, a distraught old woman pleaded with the Americans through an ROK liaison officer to bomb her village. She cried repeatedly “kill everyone in it”. Confused, the officer asked why she was so eager to kill her own people. She said any who are left alive have no life worth living. Chinese troops came during the previous night, took over their homes, took all the young girls, and told the men to leave. When villagers refused, the Chinese took all the men and boys out and shot them. Everyone else fled. The Chinese apparently considered Mao’s “swim in the sea of the people” doctrine valid only in their own country.

¹ Task Force Kingston reached Singalpajin on the Yalu but was forced to withdraw almost immediately.
² Pujon and Changjin are the Korean names of reservoirs named on Japanese maps in use at the time as Fusen and Chosin, creating confusion when people today write about battles fought around the Chosin (Changjin) Reservoir.
On November 24, Colonel McLean received orders to take his regiment, less the 1st Battalion (most of which would remain at Pungsan), to relieve the 5th Marine Regiment east of the Changjin (Chosin) Reservoir. The 1st Battalion 32nd Infantry, led by Lieutenant Colonel Don Carlos Faith, was the nearest of the 7th Infantry Division’s battalions to the Marines. It was therefore attached to the 31st RCT in place of the 1-31st and began moving north on November 25 to relieve the Marines east of the reservoir. The 57th Field Artillery Battalion (less C Battery), D Battery 15th Antiaircraft Automatic Weapons Battalion, and C Company 13th Engineer Battalion were also attached to the 31st Infantry to form the 31st Regimental Combat Team (31st RCT).

To reach the Changjin Reservoir, the 31st had to backtrack to the coast, traveling 140 miles to go only 25 as the crow flies because a steep, mountain range without roads stood between the reservoirs. The regiment’s motor convoy departed Pungsan around daybreak on November 26. The 31st RCT’s 319 vehicles had almost no off-route capability in Korea’s steep, icy mountains. American units, reliant on trucks to move supplies, heavy weapons, and casualties, were tied to narrow, poorly maintained roads that wound tortuously through icy valleys. Most bridges on those roads were single-lane structures spanning deep ravines. If blown, there was usually no by-pass. The risk of being ambushed at a blown bridge or a narrow defile was a constant companion to the long, slow-moving convoys snaking their way through the mountains.

In contrast, Chinese units traveled with what their soldiers could carry, supplemented by horses and forced civilian labor, allowing them almost unrestricted freedom to maneuver between and behind the Americans. The opportunities were not lost on Chinese generals, accustomed to that way of fighting. But senior American commanders had a different frame of reference. Believing they would be able to detect Chinese logistical preparations for an attack across the Yalu, they saw nothing and therefore assumed there was no buildup underway. The Chinese too would learn lessons. They could not live off the land in sparsely-populated, frozen North Korea as they had in their own country.

Underestimating the enemy and the difficulty of the terrain was not limited to X Corps. The 2nd Infantry Division, operating west of the Taebaek Mountains near Kunu-ri, would suffer the highest losses of any division at any time in the war while trying to cover the Eighth Army’s retreat to Pyongyang. In war, mastery of the terrain is central to success and in this war, the Chinese used terrain like chess champions, isolating UN units wherever an opportunity appeared.

The 7th Marine Regiment had reached Yudam-ni, just west of the Changjin Reservoir, on November 23, while the 1st Marine Regiment established defensive positions at the critical road junction of Hagaru-ri, at the southern tip of the reservoir and at Koto-ri, on the main supply route to the coast. On the morning of November 25, the 5th Marine Regiment, which had been advancing up the reservoir’s east side, began pulling back around the reservoir’s southern end to join the 7th Marine Regiment at Yudam-ni. On November 27, the 7th Marine Regiment attempted an attack to the northwest but was stopped cold by Chinese troops controlling the surrounding hills.

Although unknown at the time, the 5th Marine Regiment’s westward shift would save the 1st Marine Division from destruction. If the 5th and 7th Marines had remained split with the reservoir between them, each would have borne the weight of two Chinese divisions. Concentrated instead near Yudam-ni and supported by 36 105mm howitzers, their five infantry battalions had sufficient strength to maintain a more coherent line and would retain sufficient strength to come out intact. Behind them, the 1st Marine Regiment, subsequently reinforced by the Army’s 2nd Battalion 31st Infantry and other smaller units, held the escape route open. On the reservoir’s east side where the 5th Marines had been, two Army infantry battalions and two field artillery batteries (totaling 8 105mm howitzers) of the 31st RCT
began arriving on the afternoon of November 27. They would be too thinly stretched to hold off the two Chinese divisions (80th and 81st) waiting to pounce.

As the last elements of the 5th Marines passed through Hagaru-ri on their way to Yudam-ni, the 31st RCT’s 3rd Battalion began moving north on a narrow, slippery dirt road paralleling the Changjin Reservoir’s east side. By then, the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry had already moved further north, relieving the 3rd Battalion 5th Marine Regiment on high ground overlooking the reservoir’s mid-point on November 26. The 31st Infantry Regiment’s Forward Command Post (CP) tucked itself in behind the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry atop a ridge. Its forward location offered a good vantage point for overseeing the attack Colonel MacLean planned to launch the next day. Faithful to the last orders he received, he intended to attack toward the northwest as soon as his 2nd Battalion reached the Reservoir. Just behind him was the Regimental Heavy Mortar Company (less one platoon), positioned to support the attack’s intended kick-off the next morning.

The area was quiet when the 3rd Battalion 31st Infantry and the two field artillery batteries reached the Pungnyu-ri inlet in late afternoon of November 27. Lieutenant Colonel Reilly ordered K Company to move along the ridge overlooking the inlet from the east, while L Company continued along the road adjacent to the Reservoir. I Company would follow K Company. But the infantrymen of the 3rd Battalion were in no condition to continue moving. They had walked for 2 days and a night and most were so exhausted they fell asleep next to the road while the company commanders met with Reilly. Seeing his men’s condition, Reilly cancelled his order a half hour later and directed his companies to stop for the night. They would take up positions enabling them to continue in the morning according to the plan Reilly had directed earlier.

About a mile to their south, the 57th Field Artillery Battalion’s CP and D Battery, 15th Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion stopped for the night. Because darkness and falling temperatures would make the roads harder to traverse, the task force stopped for the night. I and K Companies and most of M (Heavy Weapons) Company occupied a long ridge overlooking the inlet while L Company occupied positions on lower ground near a bridge leading north from the inlet. They had just completed a bone-chilling 140-mile journey through the mountains in open trucks. The last 11 miles from Hagaru-ri to the inlet were the

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3 Regimental Headquarters, Heavy Mortar Company, and 3d Battalion of the 31st Infantry, the 57th FA Battalion, and D Battery, 15th AAA Battalion.
worst. The temperature fell quickly as a brisk Siberian wind swept in from the reservoir. The rifle companies dismounted at the inlet, ambled around clumsily to regain their circulation, and then trudged wearily up the ridge to dig into rocky, frozen ground at dusk. Soon after arriving, L Company sent out a patrol of 18 men to the northeast. The patrol crested a hill overlooking the inlet and returned before nightfall, reporting “not a Chink in sight”. They could not have gone far in the short time they were out.

As the main body was settling in at the inlet, the 31st Infantry’s Tank Company, Headquarters Company, and Service Company were just reaching the ruins of the former village of Hudong-ni, about 3 miles south of the inlet. With night approaching, they stopped and formed a hasty perimeter. The 57th FA Battalion’s Service Battery stopped for the night a half mile further south at Sasu-ri. The last element on the road that day was the 31st Infantry’s Medical Company, which passed through Hudong-ni near midnight in a column of jeeps, ambulances, and trucks. At the time, the 2nd Battalion was still securing the 7th Division’s Rear CP at Pukchong, about two day’s motor march from the inlet. Inexplicably, its battalion commander was just receiving orders to join the RCT east of the Chosin Reservoir.

SAEA OF THE INTELLIGENCE AND RECONNAISSANCE PLATOON

Big battles unfold from small ones, the results of which shape the outcome in ways often overlooked in official histories. East of the Chosin Reservoir, the opening shots were fired around 6 PM on November 27, 1950 by a regiment of the Chinese 80th Division as it encountered a patrol from the 31st Infantry’s Intelligence and Reconnaissance (I&R) Platoon. The Chinese were trying to reach the reservoir but their encounter with the little I&R Platoon would cost their lead regiment time and perhaps a third of its strength. When it attacked reached the 3-31st Infantry’s main line early the next morning, it lacked the strength to sustain the attack all the way to the reservoir, sparing the 31st RCT and the 1st Marine Division a catastrophe. The 80th would never recover from this initial encounter and would bleed itself nearly dry in the four days and five nights that followed.

Earlier that afternoon, the I&R Platoon had been escorting the 31st RCT’s Headquarters when that segment of the motor column reached an abandoned schoolhouse at Hudong-ni. Brigadier General Henry I. Hodes, the 7th Infantry Division’s Assistant Commander, was there and expressed concern about the time it took to move from east of the Fusen Reservoir, where the rest of the 7th Infantry Division was, to the Chosin Reservoir where the 31st RCT was just arriving.4 Although the reservoirs were only about 25 air miles apart, there were no identifiable roads between them, causing the 31st RCT to travel 140 miles, much of it along icy single-lane roads through the mountains. Looking for a way to better connect the division’s elements, Hodes directed First Lieutenant Richard B. Coke, leader of the 31st Infantry’s Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon, to search for a route connecting the reservoirs. His order proved fateful for the platoon.

Although only recently reassigned from I Company, Lieutenant Coke (at left), a tall ex-paratrooper from Texas, led a seasoned and cohesive platoon whose four senior NCOs had all served in the platoon since before the 31st Infantry moved to Japan from Korea in 1948. They had patrolled the 38th parallel separating North and South Korea and on several occasions came under fire from Russian and North Korean troops on the other side. Platoon Sergeant Paul T. Embry was beloved and respected by his men, as were his three squad leaders, Sergeants First Class John Q. Adams (1st Squad), Richard G Cooper (2nd Squad), and Willis S. “Sam” Muncy (3rd Squad). The platoon numbered 43 men, including 17 Korean Augmentees to the US Army.

4 The two reservoirs (Fusen and Chosin) in northeastern Korea are called by their Japanese names as they appeared on US maps at the time. Their Korean names are Pujon and Changjin, respectively.
(KATUSA). They traveled in eleven vehicles and their main armament included six .50 caliber heavy machineguns, three .30 caliber light machineguns, and two 60mm light mortars.

With about three hours of daylight left, Lieutenant Coke took the platoon north through the 3rd Battalion’s positions, following a trail beside a narrow gauge rail line along the Pungyuri-gang, a tributary feeding the Changjin reservoir from the northeast. About two miles past the 31st Infantry’s combat outpost line, Coke dropped off Sergeant Muncy’s squad and continued moving northeast with the rest of the platoon. The lead element was to contact Muncy every 30 minutes by radio, providing a potential source of quick reinforcement and a radio relay to the nearby Heavy Mortar Company in an emergency. No calls ever came.

Around 4 PM, the platoon’s main body halted at a cluster of four or five Korean huts located on defensible ground above the main trail. Since darkness would come in less than an hour, Coke decided to halt and dig in for the night. Platoon Sergeant Embrey and the squad leaders sited positions about 50 yards apart overlooking a railroad cut to the north. Digging in was easier said than done since the ground was frozen and entrenching tools became brittle and broke in such extreme temperatures. Although men worked with picks and shovels from their vehicles’ pioneer equipment, they dared not break a sweat since there was no way to dry out and hypothermia would strike when cold combined with moisture.

Around 6 PM, a jeep from regimental headquarters pulled into the platoon’s perimeter to deliver mail. The platoon was not hard to find since there was only one road leading in its direction but why anyone should risk his neck to deliver mail so far from the RCT’s main body, particularly alone and in the dark, is a mystery. As the driver stepped from his vehicle, he was killed by a burst of fire from beyond the perimeter. Suddenly the night came alive with the sound of bugles, shouts, and beating on metal pans. Small arms fire laced the perimeter as enemy soldiers set off trip flares near the railroad cut. Chinese troops were running through the cut five abreast in a continuous column.

Sergeants Adams and Cooper directed their men to hold their fire until they could clearly see their targets. They did not have long to wait. As the platoon’s six heavy and light machineguns shattered to life almost in unison, Adams ran to the platoon’s command post (CP) but found neither Lieutenant Coke nor Master Sergeant Embry there. Emerging from the CP, Adams spotted them about 50 yards south of the perimeter, heading back toward the platoon. They had gone on a short reconnaissance by themselves and would soon be cut off. Master Sergeant Embry was killed before he could reach the perimeter and Lieutenant Coke was wounded and captured.

Although the platoon took a fearful toll, piling up several hundred Chinese in the railroad cut alone, they could not stop the swarm of enemy troops coming at them. One by one, positions fell silent as

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5 Picture of Lieutenant Coke is from The Chosin Few, Vol 6, No 4, Oct/Nov 2005.
Chinese troops fanned out to the flanks and moved in for the kill. Corporal Donald Trudeau, who had joined the platoon in Japan in 1949, was among its steadiest members, blazing away with his Browning Automatic Rifle until the barrel glowed red. Adams remembers Trudeau as “The finest BAR man I had ever seen. He knew his job and never shirked his duty, no matter how high the risk.” When Trudeau’s weapon fell silent, Adams headed back to the CP with his radio operator to call for help. Minutes later, the door was thrown open by someone shouting “GI, GI!” A grenade rolled in, followed by an explosion that slammed Adams into a corner and brought part of the roof and wall down on him. He lay stunned for several minutes, covered with debris and unable to hear. His radio operator lay dead nearby.

Outside, Sergeant Cooper saw Adams and his radio operator enter the CP and witnessed the explosion that followed. Presuming both were dead, he was stunned to see Adams emerge from the debris covered in dust with his flak jacket still smoking and a dazed look on his face. Survivors of positions that had fallen silent converged around the CP, putting up a fight resembling Custer’s last stand. Sergeant Cooper grabbed a 60mm mortar from a jeep and held it against the jeep’s wheel while Adams slammed several rounds down the tube in rapid succession. Fired at a near-direct angle, the first few rounds hadn’t even armed when they whistled through the enemy ranks, sowing confusion. Elevating the tube to near maximum angle, Cooper and Adams hoped to produce a protective barrier of fire around the dwindling number of survivors around them. Explosions followed in quick succession just 30 yards away, blowing dirt, fragmentation, blood, and bone back in their direction but nothing seemed to work. The Chinese just kept coming, no matter how many of them were killed or wounded. Some in the last wave had only grenades while others had no weapons at all. The latter picked up weapons and ammunition from dead comrades and continued the assault.

Groups of Chinese soon streamed through the CP area. Adams felt the blow of a rifle butt glancing off his forehead, cascading down to his nose to his jaw where it knocked out several teeth. With his adrenalin pumping, he somehow managed to kill the offender with a bayonet but it was now clear that the platoon was overrun. Taking advantage of the confusion, Adams ducked into the shadows and cautiously worked his way up the tallest hill in sight. Along the perimeter, he witnessed squads of Chinese rounding up surviving GIs and KATUSAs and shooting several who were unable to walk. He could see thousands of enemy troops being herded back into ranks beyond the platoon’s position and hurrying off to the southwest along the same route the platoon had followed from the reservoir. There was no way to warn Sam Muncy or the regiment.

Several miles further back, Sam Muncy’s 3rd Squad soon saw the Chinese coming their way. They reached Muncy’s position near midnight and attacked from the march. As before, they came on in a long column initially and began fanning out to the flanks when the 3rd Squad opened fire. Occupying a less defensible position with an exposed left flank, the 3rd Squad hastily mounted up, inflicting as much damage it could before retreating to the RCT’s perimeter. One squad with just three machineguns could not hope to stop a regiment.

When daylight came on November 28, Sergeant Adams could see his platoon’s former positions from his concealed perch amid scrub vegetation atop a nearby hill. Chinese troops were still combing the area for anything of value, military or otherwise. The area between the railroad cut and the platoon’s perimeter was littered with clumps of Chinese dead. At the cut, the dead looked to be four or five deep and five or more across for a distance of about 50 yards. Wherever there had been an automatic weapons position along the platoon’s perimeter, there were more stacks of enemy dead. Making his way around the back side of the hill, he saw six men huddled in a clearing. Moving closer for a better look, he recognized them as members of his platoon. They were Sergeant First Class Dick Cooper, Corporal Jim

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6 CPL Donald Trudeau was captured during the engagement and spent the next 33 months as a POW.
Arie, CPL Ananias Janvrin, PFC George Peachy, and two KATUSAs. Arie was the only one among them who was not wounded. Janvrin would soon die of his wounds. During his escape the night before, Cooper had come across Master Sergeant Embrey’s body, confirming that he died trying to return to the platoon.

For the next six days, the small band of survivors moved as stealthily as possible through areas controlled by the Chinese. They reached Marine lines at Hagaru-ri just in time for the withdrawal to Hungnam. Sam Muncy’s squad was fed into the line on November 28 to replace losses suffered by K Company earlier that morning when the same regiment that had overrun the I&R Platoon struck the 3rd Battalion’s perimeter. All of his Muncy’s men survived but several had close calls during the desperate withdrawal to Hagaru-ri. Corporal John Weinreich (3rd Squad) was captured during the withdrawal but escaped by hiding among the dead. He made his way alone to the Marine perimeter at Hagaru-ri.

Sergeants Cooper and Muncy were evacuated by air from Hagaru-ri and recovered from their wounds at a hospital in Japan. Both returned to the I&R Platoon after its reconstitution in South Korea and served until September 1951. Both eventually retired from the Army as senior NCOs and are still living as of this writing. John Quincy Adams also returned to the I&R Platoon after recovering from his wounds. He was promoted to Master Sergeant in 1951 and became the acting Platoon Leader. He became First Sergeant of Headquarters Company before being wounded a third time and was evacuated to Japan and then the US in 1952. He died in January 2005. Master Sergeant Paul T. Embrey’s body was never recovered and probably remains buried near where he died in North Korea. First Lieutenant Richard B. Coke Jr. died in captivity at POW Camp 1. His body was returned as part of Operation Glory in September 1954. He is buried at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio, Texas.

THE CHANGJIN (CHOSIN) RESERVOIR

George Rasula was a captain serving as Assistant S-3 of the 31st Infantry Regiment at Hudong-ni. His overview of the action summarizes the events to follow. During operations east of the Chosin reservoir, the main battle was fought by units in a perimeter located on the south side of an inlet formed by the Pungnyuri-gang, a river that flows into the reservoir from the northeast. On 27-28 November the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry had been located about four kilometers north of the inlet. It withdrew in the early morning hours of 29 November to join the 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry in the main perimeter. Here the battle continued into the morning of 1 December. The breakout began at noon and became a moving battle as the enemy followed the breakout column until it faced the main Chinese blocking position on Hill 1221. The column was eventually destroyed a few kilometers south of the hill. The 31st Regimental Combat Team, with only two infantry battalions and part of an artillery battalion, had faced the assaults of two CCF divisions backed up by one regiment of a third division, all part of the Chinese commander’s main effort to capture Hagaru-ri before the arrival of two Marine regiments withdrawing from Yudam-ni on the reservoir’s west side.

Chinese Marshall Peng Teh-huai’s plan was to first destroy the US 1st Marine Division in the Chosin Reservoir area. He would exploit the resulting gap by throwing up to four armies, totaling fifteen divisions, against the Hamhung-Hungnam area to cut off and destroy the US 7th Infantry Division and ROK I Corps in North Korea’s eastern panhandle. When the plan was being developed, the US 5th
Marine Regiment was still on the reservoir’s east side, the US 7th Marine Regiment was still moving toward Yudam-ni on the reservoir’s west side, and the US 1st Marine Regiment was establishing widely separated strong points along the main supply route between Hagaru-ri at the south end of the reservoir and Koto-ri, about 14 miles further south.

Peng’s plan was to commit his 20th Army (58th, 59th, 60th, and 89th Divisions) against the 7th Marines west of the reservoir and his 27th Army (79th, 80th, 81st, and 90th Divisions) against the 5th Marines east of the reservoir. The 42nd Army (124th, 125th, and 126th Divisions), would hit key points along the 1st Marine Division’s supply route between Hamhung, near the coast, and Hagaru-ri at the south end of the Chosin Reservoir. The latter would close the door to Marines trying to escape from both sides of the reservoir. The 26th Army (76th, 77th, 78th, and 88th Divisions) would remain in reserve to exploit the success of the others.7 Unknown to Peng at the time, the 5th Marines would shift to the west, reinforcing the 7th Marine Regiment at Yudam-ni the day his attack was to begin. The Marines would be replaced on the reservoir’s east side by the Army’s 31st RCT, but by nightfall on November 27 only two of the 31st RCT’s infantry battalions had arrived. Consequently, the critical area around Hill 1221 and approaches to it from the northeast were not occupied.

One regiment of the Chinese 80th Division struck the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry from the north. Another struck from the northeast, slicing through I and K Companies of the 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry to overrun the Battalion Command Post and A Battery, 57th Field Artillery. The third passed around Hill 1456, which overlooks the inlet’s east side, striking the 57th Field Artillery Battalion’s Command Post and D Battery, 15th Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion. A regiment of the 81st Division occupied Hill 1221, right where the 31st Infantry’s Medical Company had to negotiate a hairpin turn enroute to the inlet.

Just after midnight, the Medical Company’s convoy came under intense fire from Hill 1221 and was all but wiped out. Captain Harvey Galloway, the Regimental Surgeon was among the survivors to reach the inlet that night. He had a bullet in his brain but was still coherent, reporting he knew exactly where the bullet was lodged. Captain Hank Wamble, the Medical Company Executive Officer also reached the perimeter, but had been shot in the chest and was barely able to breathe. Sometime before daylight, SFC George Chastain, who had escaped in the opposite direction, stumbled into the Tank Company’s perimeter alone and dazed. After his driver was killed and his jeep was disabled in the ambush, he crawled all the way back to Hudong-ni in a ditch. The ambush meant Chinese troops had occupied terrain dominating the road between Hudong-ni and the inlet. The door was suddenly slammed shut behind the RCT’s main body and it would not reopen.

In the rifle companies arrayed north and east of the inlet, men arrived at their designated positions about an hour before dark and quickly became exhausted trying to dig foxholes in the frozen earth. Water turned to ice in their canteens, offering no relief when parched throats signaled the need to replace fluids lost to perspiration. Few expected the Chinese to attack under such conditions. At dusk, NCO’s barked, “half on watch”. The bitter cold, plummeting to -20˚F, numbed mind and body. Numerous sentries, seeking refuge from the biting Siberian wind, “stood” their watch in sleeping bags—a sure recipe for dozing off. With 50 feet or more between foxholes, there were easily exploited gaps all along the bald, uneven ridge. If even a single foxhole was overrun, it could open a gap large enough to run a company through. Because the ground was uneven, few men could support each other’s positions, particularly in the dark.

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7 Although Peng had 15 divisions, each totaling between 8,000 and 12,000 men, he could supply only half of them and he had no communications gear below division level, severely limiting his ability to exploit success.
Few officers or NCOs checked the line since the frozen snow was crunchy and the sound of a man thrashing and slipping around on it was a sure give-away on a night when only the wind’s eerie whistle and an occasional muffled cough broke the silence. On snow-covered ground revealing no clear demarcation line, there was also the risk of straying outside the perimeter in the dark and getting shot by one’s own sentries. Neither is an excuse for leaders not doing what they must, but it happened often in units operating under such conditions all over Korea, just as it had in Europe during World War II.

Attacks on the 31st RCT were like those that also hit the Marines at Yudam-ni that night. Small teams of Chinese scouts crawled stealthily across the frozen snow, trying to identify gaps they could exploit. Once they found them, they led assault formations forward to the nearest covered and concealed position to await the attack signal. Around 2:00 AM, the sounds of bugles and yak horns, followed by the crunching sound of thousands of feet running up snow-crusted ravines alerted men on the perimeter. To some who had been sleeping, reality did not set in until it was almost too late. The shooting had barely begun before the first wave of Chinese began setting off trip flares perhaps a hundred yards from the forward line. The Chinese chanted in grunting tones as they struggled uphill in ragged formations. Sergeant Bill G. Rowland of I Company described the attack. “They came in from our rear and from both sides. The third wave had machine guns to cover the assault troops of the first and second waves. When they came in it was hard to keep them out of our holes.” PFC Lewis Shannon of I Company’s 3d Platoon recalled, “They came running in mass, spread only a few yards apart, yelling and screaming, “GI surrender,” making noise with bugles and whistles, and running over their own dead and wounded until they were killed.

Muzzle flashes blinked in the darkness on both sides, slapping bullets into the frozen snow and bodies at random. Urgent cries for medics were lost among the deafening roar of an increasingly intense firefight. Gloved hands were obstacles when trying to replace the ammunition clip in an M-1 rifle. The clip, holding eight rounds of .30 caliber ammunition, is inserted into the top of the rifle’s chamber with a man’s thumb, hoping he can be quick enough to get it out of the way of the bolt slamming forward when the clip is seated, an awkward thing to do even in a warm place in broad daylight. Shaking from cold and fear in the dark, performing that act often cost men too much time when there was none to spare. Stomach-knotting panic sets in when an enemy soldier is about to shoot as you clumsily fumble with an empty weapon in a narrow two-man foxhole with a wounded or dead buddy slumped against you. That was the last thing some riflemen in I and K Companies would experience in their much too short lives.

Incrementally, the 31st RCT’s 57mm and 75mm recoilless rifles, 81mm and 107mm mortars, and 105mm howitzers added their weight to the rattle of rifle and automatic weapons fire from the line companies. The momentum of the Chinese assault quickly made any form of indirect fire impractical. Urged on by blaring bugles, shepherd’s horns, and whistles, Chinese troops surged through the forward companies in waves. Some exchanged fire at close range with GIs and KATUSAs or threw grenades into their foxholes, but most just streamed around them, headed for the reservoir without firing a shot or slowing down. About 20 yards behind the first wave came another and yet another behind that. Hundreds of Chinese went down, but the weight of their numbers, concentrated where they could minimize the distance they would have to travel over open ground to breach the thin American line, proved overwhelming.

Some Chinese units undoubtedly melted away under the intense fire, but so did parts of I and K Companies. One by one, foxholes fell silent. Their inhabitants were either dead, too badly wounded to continue fighting, or too alone and terrified to risk exposing themselves. M Company’s 75mm recoilless rifles and .50 caliber machineguns, attached to I and K Companies, suffered the same fate as the companies they supported and were temporarily lost during the long night. PFC Milton Margan’s
recollection typifies a situation unfolding all along the ridge. “Sergeant Tony Mandino was killed in a foxhole with me. PFC Gordon Lee, the mail clerk, and PFC Dominick Cataldo were in the same hole. Lee was wounded but somehow made it home, but I never saw Cataldo again.”

In places, survivors slipped out of their holes and ran down the back side of the ridge alongside the Chinese, hoping they would not be recognized by the enemy or shot down by their own troops as they approached American units nearer the inlet. Among them were PFC Ed Reeves and his KATUSA partner, Bak Ho Yah of K Company’s 3rd Platoon. Foxholes on both sides of them on higher ground were overrun by the enemy, leaving Reeves and Bak exposed on three sides. Recognizing the futility of staying in place, they rolled out of the back of their foxhole and ran toward the reservoir. Bursts of American automatic weapons fire laced the fields around them as they ran, forcing them to take cover several times, while trying to stay at least a few yards away from clusters of fast-moving Chinese. After what seemed an eternity of playing cat and mouse with the enemy and periodically taking cover from long sweeping arcs of American machinegun fire, they came close enough to one of the many “rings of fire” to recognize American voices over the din. Their shouts of “Glis comin’ in” were met by “hold your fire GIs are coming in”. They had reached Captain Earle H. Jordan Jr.’s M Company CP, but trouble was still all around them. Jordan’s men were locked in a struggle for survival as waves of Chinese charged down the slope to their front and both flanks. Many had already passed M Company and were attacking the artillery positions in the valley below.

When he learned his 3rd Platoon had been overrun, Captain Robert J. Kitz, K Company’s Commander, pulled his CP out of the attack’s path. He reached A Battery’s positions in the valley just ahead of the Chinese. Others in K Company who saw their CP leaving joined the retreat. Much of K Company’s line quickly unraveled, leaving I Company alone on the ridge. When Captain Harold L. Hodge, commanding A Battery, 57th FA, was informed that the infantry was pulling out in front of him, he ordered his howitzers leveled at the ridge to hit the Chinese with direct fire. Because artillery rounds were exploding among K and M Companies’ survivors, his fire had to be lifted and his cannoneers instantly became infantrymen. The left side of the 3rd Battalion’s line had collapsed. On the right, Captain Auburn “Pop” Marr’s I Company was also penetrated but most of his line held on all night. His company journal reported only two men killed that night, but there were substantial numbers of wounded.

M Company’s CP and the 81mm Mortar Platoon were arrayed around an adobe and thatch farm house situated in a shallow wash behind I Company. Although most men in that position were killed or wounded during the night, often in hand-to-hand combat, the position held. PFC Ed Reeves and KATUSA Bak Ho Yah, who joined the defenders after pulling out of K Company’s line, were posted along a fence when two large caliber shells slammed into it in quick succession, showering the defenders with splinters, shards of hot steel, and clods of flying dirt. They were probably 105mm shells fired by Captain Hodge’s A Battery 57th Artillery. Reeves and Bak saved their lives by running to where the first round hit. They dropped to the ground just in time to see a third round strike right where they had been lying. Men in the forward areas were in as much danger from the fire of American units situated nearer the reservoir as from the Chinese swarming around them. Reeves recalls Captain James W. Conner, the 3rd Battalion’s Chaplain, walking calmly through it all, talking to the position’s defenders and giving each man a swig of whiskey. Since all water was frozen, whiskey was the only liquid available.

Farther back, clusters of Chinese picked their way across 500 yards of open ground to reach A Battery. Knowing they were among their enemy, the Chinese shot at or grenaded everything that moved, 8 Dominick Cataldo, Jr was wounded but made it to the regimental aid station. He died on 1 December when the convoy carrying the wounded was ambushed at Hill 1221 during the withdrawal.
and some that didn’t. Americans, on the other hand, could not as easily distinguish friend from foe among the shadowy figures running through their area. The problem was aggravated by the fact that most Americans could not distinguish between Chinese voices and those of their own KATUSAs. Ray Vallowe of the 57th Artillery recalls: “In South Korea we had been told about North Koreans infiltrating our lines wearing American uniforms obtained from captured or killed American soldiers. Just having KATUSA’s in our area wearing our uniforms made us jittery.” Several tents and vehicles were set ablaze in the intense exchange of fire, illuminating their immediate vicinity and the furtive movements of men from both sides struggling to avoid being shot. In a scene from hell, shadows shot at shadows.

Near the inlet bridge behind K Company’s former line, everyone in the 3rd Battalion’s CP was either killed or wounded, including Lieutenant Colonel William R. Reilly, the Battalion Commander. The CP was in a sturdy mud house, surrounded by a courtyard. Enemy troops arrived too quickly for the position to be evacuated, so the men inside were caught up in the fight. Wounded by a machinegun round that passed through his right leg and another that took off several toes, Colonel Reilly sat propped against an interior wall and fired his pistol at enemy soldiers trying to crawl through a window on the opposite side of the room. Captain Melville E. Adams, the S-4, and Major Clifton Z. Couch, the Battalion Executive Officer, were both shot in the chest defending the open doorway. Lieutenant Johnson, the Air Force Liaison Officer, was killed when a mortar round detonated on the roof above him. Lieutenant James A. Anderson, the Assistant Fire Support Coordinator, complained of having trouble getting his pistol out of his holster. When the flash of an explosion outside momentarily illuminated the darkened room, Reilly realized why. Anderson’s right arm had been blown off by the mortar round that killed Lieutenant Johnson. Anderson, probably in shock, did not seem to know his arm was missing. Reilly took Anderson’s pistol out of his holster and put it in his left hand, but to little purpose. The young officer quietly bled to death where he sat. Around 3:00 AM, a Chinese concussion grenade sailed through the window, wounding Reilly again and knocking him unconscious.

Outside the CP, tucked into shadowed corners of the surrounding courtyard, were members of the 3rd Battalion’s Headquarters Company, including the Company Headquarters and a squad from the Pioneer and Ammunition Platoon. Their original position, located in a mud hut nearer the bridge, was in danger of becoming isolated early in the battle, causing the group to retreat to the courtyard around the Battalion CP, which they thought had been abandoned. They fought from there most of the night, several times at close quarters when Chinese troops flooded into the courtyard. Neither they nor the men inside knew the other group of Americans was there.

Just 20 feet across the courtyard in a mud hut housing part of the 3rd Battalion’s Communications Platoon, a similar drama was unfolding. There, a bullet passed through the wall, hitting PFC John Hale in the back and perforating one of his lungs as he sat at the switchboard. The 3rd Battalion’s Communications Chief, Staff Sergeant Harry Cutting, took over the switchboard while PFC Don Mayville made Hale as comfortable as he could. Shortly afterward, two men brought in a badly wounded KATUSA, laying him on a pile of straw opposite the switchboard. He lay moaning “Etai, Etai”, Japanese for “it hurts” and died during the night. Staff Sergeant Max Maynard, the battalion’s Radio Section Chief, rushed into the hut asking for a rifle because his had been hit while exchanging fire with the Chinese outside. He took PFC Mayville’s carbine and went back outside to rejoin the fray. He was killed soon afterward. Near the outdoor latrine, PFC Joseph M. Harper was hit in the chest and lay unattended, laboring for air while the firefight raged all around him. When Don Mayville went there in the morning, he found Harper laying on his back with his eyes still open and a ghastly expression on his frozen face. Years later, Mayville would still shudder at the memory of his dead friend’s staring green eyes.

In A Battery’s area, several Chinese soldiers stopped to look for food and to warm themselves at a fire barrel. They became easy targets in the firelight and were quickly shot down by Captain Hodge and
several others. At the nearby 3rd Battalion Aid Station, a medic was killed while treating a critically wounded man in a blackout tent. When A Battery was overrun, survivors of K Company and A Battery made their way back to B Battery, which was positioned nearer the reservoir and oriented north to support the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry.

No one knew or cared which units they fought among. Most were only interested in finding shelter from the outbursts of fire lashing back and forth around the inlet. At daylight, many Chinese were still there, but it was obvious from their diminished fire that they were nearly out of ammunition. Knowing they could not retreat the way they had come without being gunned down, they stayed put and fought with whatever weapons and ammunition they could find. Lieutenant Hank Traywick, the 3rd Battalion Motor Officer, gathered any men he could to retake the Battalion CP. Captain Robert McClay, the 3rd Battalion Adjutant, gathered still more men to reach M Company’s battered CP. Others, led by Captain Kitz and Captain Hodge, retook A Battery’s positions. A cook who had hidden under a trailer throughout the night reported seeing the Chinese leading away an American and 12 Koreans just before dawn. About 30 Chinese were captured during the various counterattacks launched after daylight.

Half a mile farther south, another fight broke out near dawn at the 57th FA Battalion’s CP. There was no infantry at the site, but D Battery, 15th AAA, with its four twin 40mm “Dusters” and four quad .50 caliber machineguns, all mounted on half-tracks, offered ample protection. Lieutenant Colonel Ray O. Embree was awakened by the sound of mortar fire dropping around his CP. As he rushed to his radio to find out what was happening, a burst of automatic weapons fire hit him in both legs. With his bones broken, he dropped to his knees like a sack of flour. He was out of the fight before he could even enter it.

From the hill overlooking the site, another column of enemy soldiers was hurrying down to the valley to join the fight. The snowy hillside made running figures stand out as in daylight. Captain James R. McClymont, commanding D Battery, ordered his twin 40mm guns to engage the fast-moving column. The enemy unit practically evaporated in a long, crackling burst of explosions. Around the same time, enemy troops overran D Battery’s 1st Platoon. With a small group of antiaircraft and field artillery support personnel and fire support from his 2nd Platoon, Captain McClymont retook the position. Among the dead at the 1st Platoon’s overrun CP was Major Max Morris, the 57th FA Battalion’s Executive Officer.

The first night’s fighting had taken a severe toll on leaders. All four of the most senior officers in the two battalions at the inlet were dead or seriously wounded. The Artillery XO, Major Morris, was dead and the Infantry XO, Major Couch, would not regain consciousness. Command of neither battalion passed immediately to the surviving senior officers, Major Harvey H. Storms, the 3rd Battalion’s S-3, and Major Robert J. Tolly, the 57th FA’s S-3. Their battalion commanders were seriously wounded but were still giving orders from the aid station the next day. The 3rd Battalion Surgeon was dead and over a third of the regiment’s 170 medical personnel were killed or wounded when the Medical Company convoy was ambushed at Hill 1221. Radios critical to maintaining internal cohesion and coordinating external support had also been destroyed.

Because the 3rd Battalion switchboard had been damaged during the fighting, PFC Mayville went outside at daybreak to string wire to the CP across the courtyard. He was shocked to find so many bodies lying all around his hut. Among the perimeter’s still living defenders were PFCs Bernie Schwartz and Tommy Melbourne of the Pioneer and Ammunition Platoon, two of Mayville’s best friends from basic training. As Mayville looked up, he saw Colonel Riley sitting against the outside wall of the CP, silently
watching his every move. “He looked so helpless and that was upsetting to me because I wondered who was running the show.”

After daybreak, the 57th FA Battalion’s Command Post and D Battery 15th AAA moved hurriedly to the inlet to join the main body. They left their dead behind, along with a destroyed half-track. The artillery repositioned to avoid offering the same target as the night before, but the Chinese were watching from the hills, paying particular attention to the heavy weapons’ dispositions. By late afternoon, K Company regained its original positions atop the ridgeline, aided by air strikes and reinforcements from L Company. The wounded were collected at a makeshift aid station in one of the mess tents at the inlet.

That afternoon, Master Sergeant John Watlington, a recalled reservist from Tennessee who served as the 3rd Battalion’s Operations Sergeant, came into the communications shack to ask if there was a medic around. From a considerable distance away, a burst of automatic weapons fire stitched through the hut’s thin back wall, killing Watlington as he stood in the doorway. Daylight had not brought safety anywhere in the perimeter.

Farther north, another consolidation was taking place. Colonel MacLean’s forward CP, with about 60 vehicles, moved into the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry’s perimeter about 4 miles north of the inlet. McLean had no idea of how bad the situation was at the inlet, did not know where his 2nd Battalion or Tank Company was; did not know that his Medical Company had been ambushed, and did not know that his Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon had been sent by General Hodes on a scouting mission from which it would never return. That morning, Lieutenant Colonel Richard R. Reidy’s 2nd Battalion began moving by open rail car from Pukchong to Hamhung. The battalion’s trucks followed by road, reaching Hamhung late that night. They were still 72 miles from the RCT’s main perimeter at the Pungyuri inlet, a full day’s motor march on an icy, single track road along which ambush sites were being established by the Chinese 42nd Army. At Hamhung, Reidy was instructed by Colonel Frank Millburn, X Corps’ G-3, that he should move by road and rail to Majon-dong the next morning and that X Corps trucks would take his troops the rest of the way to the reservoir. Unaware of the delay, Colonel MacLean expected to hear that the 2nd Battalion had reached the inlet during the night. Operating in a communication void would prove fatal.

From Hudong-ni, the Tank Company, accompanied by General Hodes, attempted to break through to the inlet early on November 28. SFC George Chastain accompanied them to point out positions from which the Chinese had ambushed his company the night before. When they reached the hairpin curve, Chastain asked Captain Drake to stop his jeep. Standing beside the road with General Hodes and Captain Drake, he was pointing at a path up the side of Hill 1221 when a bullet drilled through his head, killing him instantly and spraying the officers with his blood. Hodes and Drake scurried back to safety behind their vehicles.

As the two lead tanks approached Medical Company vehicles blocking the road, a Chinese soldier armed with an American 3.5-inch rocket launcher hit the lead tank, knocking it out. The second tank was also hit and slide off the road when it tried to by-pass the knocked out lead tank. Both were abandoned by their crews who barely escaped with their lives as Chinese troops swarmed over the site. Two more tanks tried to negotiate the narrow, icy path up Hill 1221 but one slipped over a steep embankment and the other threw a track. Two more became stuck as they tried to parallel the road along a marshy stream. Chinese troops swarmed over them, trying to open their grill doors to throw hand grenades into their engine compartments. Tanks farther back dusted the Chinese off with machinegun fire. Both of the bogged tanks managed to extricate themselves and withdraw to Hudong-ni. After another unsuccessful try in the early afternoon, Captain Drake called off the attack and pulled what
remained of his company back to Hudong-ni. He would need infantry and air support to breach the enemy roadblock and he had neither.

Before nightfall on November 28, the Chinese resumed their attack, striking almost exactly where they had the night before. Again, the porous infantry line was penetrated, even though they had been reinforced by two rifle platoons and most heavy weapons of Captain William W. Etchemendy’s L Company. Chinese troops again got as far as the artillery positions. Unlike the night before, however, the rifle companies stood their ground, even when penetrated. For a time, a large group of Chinese halted at K Company’s overrun mess tent to enjoy what would be the last meal for most. They were caught in a devastating crossfire after regrouping near the bridge spanning the inlet. The 57th Field Artillery, reinforced by the 15th AAA’s twin 40mm Dusters and Quad .50s, took a horrendous toll on their tormentors.

There was an ominous new development in the fight. One body of enemy troops approached from the south near dawn, taking control of the road and rail line between the reservoir and the perimeter. They were probably from the same unit that ambushed the Medical Company the night before. Unlike the light brown quilted uniforms and white covers of the troops who attacked from the north and northeast, these troops wore a heavy brown-green uniform, were armed with large numbers of American .45 caliber Thompson submachineguns, and had plenty of ammunition. The attacks from the northeast were no less intense, but some enemy soldiers on that end of the line were seen armed with only hand grenades, indicating a probable shortage of ammunition. Strangely, the two attacks were uncoordinated since they neither started nor ended at the same time. There was ample evidence that the 31st RCT was being attacked by two Chinese divisions, but no one was putting the story together yet, leaving Colonel MacLean and his superiors with an incomplete picture of what the 31st RCT was up against.

Over forty years later, when China opened its Korean War archives to American scholars, it was revealed that all six regiments of the 80th and 81st Divisions, reinforced by a regiment of the 90th Division from farther east, attacked the 31st RCT over a four day period and that most of those regiments were destroyed in the process. It is a remarkable testament to the determination and courage of desperate men that two half-American, half-KATUSA infantry battalions, supported by only 8 howitzers and 8 antiaircraft weapons were able to hold off 21 Chinese infantry battalions for 4 days and 5 nights. After fighting at the Chosin Reservoir, neither the 80th nor 81st Divisions ever returned to combat. Because they had suffered so many casualties, including the majority of their officers, both were used to replace losses in other divisions.9

The 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry, still four miles north of the inlet, was having troubles of its own. Like the 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry at the inlet, its perimeter was hard pressed to hold against steady pressure from the Chinese. Complicating matters, the weather was getting worse. Snow began falling some time after midnight and visibility was gradually deteriorating. Men from the Regimental CP, including Sergeant Major John A. Lynch, Jr., filled empty foxholes among the depleted rifle squads. Lynch was a former machine gunner who had served with the regiment since its reactivation at Seoul in 1946.

Around 2:00 AM on November 29, Colonel MacLean directed Lieutenant Colonel Faith to pull his battalion back to the inlet before daybreak if possible. Faith set the departure time for 4:30 AM, but some men didn’t get the word until they heard vehicles starting and idling their engines in unison, a sure

9 In contrast, all companies of the 31st and 32nd Infantry Regiments were reconstituted soon after they left North Korea and remained in action throughout the war. Report of Captain Fields E Shelton, Regimental Historian, 31 December 1950.
sign the battalion was leaving. Sergeant Major Lynch sent PFC Laverne Tate, the S-1’s driver with whom he shared a foxhole, to see who was in the adjacent foxhole on the left while Lynch checked the one on the right. Both were empty and there was no one in the foxholes beyond those either. The company had departed without telling its fillers. Lynch and Tate scurried down the hill just in time to join the rear of the departing column.

When the warning order for the withdrawal was issued, Major Hugh W. Robbins, the Regimental Adjutant, gathered anyone he could find to help unload headquarters trucks to make room for the wounded. In the S-1 truck were the National and Regimental Colors, still on their disassembled staffs and packed in the wooden olive drab boxes in which they had traveled from Japan several months before. In the dark, soldiers unloading the trucks, mostly KATUSAs, had no opportunity to sort through what they were discarding. Their instructions were simply to empty the trucks to make room for the wounded and that is what they did. The boxed Colors likely went into a discard pile with field desks, typewriters, numerous boxes of records, and all the other trappings of a personnel and administration shop. Someone suggested burning the abandoned equipment, but that idea was squelched to avoid making the convoy an illuminated target. Moreover, Lieutenant Colonel Faith directed that any vehicles that could not be operated would be disabled, but not destroyed since it was the regiment’s intention to return to the area within 24 hours. It is now clear that Chinese troops found the regimental colors in their packing container and took them back to China with them because they are now displayed in the People’s Army Museum in Beijing.

Colonel MacLean seemingly still planned to attack northward as soon as the 2d Battalion arrived at the inlet. He probably assumed the battalion had already arrived, but he had no radio contact with either the 2nd or 3rd Battalions. At the time, the 2nd Battalion was loaded aboard trucks at Majong-dong, as ordered by X Corps G-3, but was ordered off the road to make way for a convoy laden with ammunition for the Marines at Koto-ri. Given the congestion on a single lane road, X Corps issued new orders. The battalion would proceed north the next morning, November 30. For the 31st RCT, it would be much too late. The battalion could have made a huge difference in helping the Tank Company break through the ambush site at Hill 1221 and it would have provided a denser line at the inlet, perhaps enabling the regiment to hold the Chinese at bay on November 27 and 28, but while X Corps fumbled its instructions, the RCT’s fate was being sealed.

Just north of the inlet, Colonel Faith’s convoy encountered a log roadblock, covered by enemy automatic weapons fire. While Faith and a group of men he collected from vehicles near the head of the column removed the obstacle, he ordered a dismounted platoon and a recoilless rifle section to outflank the enemy from higher ground. Perhaps seeing what was happening, the enemy fled across the frozen inlet toward what was presumed to be American lines. The roadblock was removed and the convoy’s lead element rolled into what had been the 3d Battalion’s perimeter at around 9:00 AM. At the time, the inlet’s defenders were still heavily engaged, trying to eject the Chinese from their midst. Men in Faith’s flanking rifle company who reached the crest of Hill 1324 overlooking the inlet had a panoramic view of what was taking place. In the valley, they could see two large columns of Chinese troops still advancing
on the inlet from the south and knots of enemy troops still fighting their way down from the eastern
ridges. It was obvious that the inlet had nearly been overrun during the night because numerous tents and
vehicles were either on fire or destroyed and hundreds of bodies from both sides littered the ground,
particularly around the 3d Battalion’s CP and A Battery’s positions.

One person who did not make it into the perimeter that day was Colonel Allan Duart MacLean,
the 31st Infantry Regiment’s Commander. He was 43 years old at the time, nine years older than the
regiment he commanded. When the vehicle column encountered the roadblock near the Pungnyu-ri
Bridge, the command group split into two parts. One went forward with Lieutenant Colonel Faith to clear
the roadblock and the other remained atop a slight rise with Colonel MacLean. Although there was some
incoming fire, most assumed it was probably spent rounds from fighting that was still raging in and
around the inlet. Captain Erwin B. Bigger, Commanding D Company, 32nd Infantry, was standing with
MacLean looking across the flat inlet. In the dim distance, they could see a long column of troops
approaching on foot from the south. There were flashes of firing from the head of the column and fire
from the inlet was obviously hitting the approaching troops. MacLean exclaimed, “Those are all my
boys, they’ll cut each other to pieces.” He no doubt assumed the on-coming column was the long-awaited
2nd Battalion running head-long into the 3rd Battalion. It was not, but it would have been hard to tell
across a mile of hazy battlefield. MacLean then gave Bigger a verbal order for Lieutenant Colonel Faith
that detailed where he wanted Faith’s battalion on the perimeter and where he was to meet MacLean.

Eager to take charge of the situation and stop what he assumed was a fratricidal engagement
between two of his battalions, MacLean ran across the frozen inlet alone, crossing a small, brush-covered
island before proceeding to the south bank. Bigger, Faith, and several others saw him fall several times as
he crossed the final stretch of ice. Bigger was too far away to help and looked on in horror to see Chinese
soldiers rising to shoot at MacLean from the south bank. The Colonel nevertheless rose each time he fell
and staggered on. Bigger saw Chinese soldiers come out onto the ice to grab MacLean and drag him to
the south bank where they quickly took him away. A search was mounted by Faith after his battalion
entered the perimeter but it was too late. The Chinese had departed and MacLean was being marched
away in a column of POWs. A soldier released from captivity at the war’s end reported what happened.
MacLean was still able to walk but grew steadily weaker each day of the trek and had to be helped by
other POWs. On the night of December 3, he died and was buried in a ditch beside the road. He was the
second commander of the 31st Infantry to die in captivity, following Jasper Brady’s death on a Japanese
hell ship by only six years.

When Major Hugh Robbins, the Regimental Adjutant, reached the inlet, he was shocked by the
number of casualties and the scale of destruction. At the 3d Battalion’s battered CP, he found Lieutenant
Colonel Reilly in good spirits, but physically incapacitated. Captain Melville Adams, the S-4 was dying
of his wounds. Lieutenant Paul Dill, M Company’s Executive Officer, was dying, and so was Captain
Hank Wamble, the Medical Company Commander. All around the CP were the bodies of dead GIs and
Chinese, all mixed together where they fell. After conferring briefly with Reilly and learning that he was
the senior surviving officer, Lieutenant Colonel Faith assumed command of the 31st RCT. He spent the
rest of the morning locating the remains of the 3rd Battalion and organizing a perimeter. The 3rd
Battalion, 31st Infantry under Major Harvey Storms remained on the east ridge. Faith’s own 1st Battalion
32nd Infantry under Major Crosby Miller, filled in around the 3rd Battalion’s flanks. The heavy mortars,
howitzers, and antiaircraft guns were arrayed in the center. Major Bob Tolly commanded the artillery,
but only four of his howitzers remained operable.

Major Hugh Robbins, acting as the Task Force S-4, supervised the redistribution of supplies to
units around the perimeter. Around 3:00 PM, an air drop by C-119s provided emergency supplies, but the
results were not satisfying. Some landed outside the perimeter and were lost to the Chinese. In one case,
a parachute failed to open, sending its cargo hurtling down like a meteor, killing a KATUSA. Missing was ammunition for the 40mm Dusters, a particularly effective weapon that was running perilously low. It landed instead at Hudong-ni where the tank company destroyed it because it had no 40mm weapons.

That afternoon, Brigadier General Hodes came into the inlet perimeter by helicopter to see for himself what was happening. PFC Ed Reeves, who had found refuge at the Battalion CP the night his company was overrun, remembers hearing Lieutenant Colonel Reilly arguing with Hodes, who had just ordered him and Lieutenant Colonel Embree loaded aboard his helicopter for evacuation to Hagaru-ri. Reilly said he couldn’t abandon his men and claimed unrealistically that his wounds wouldn’t keep him from doing anything he needed to do. Hodes knew that neither battalion commander could function effectively since neither could even stand up, much less walk. He gave Reilly and Embree no choice, ordering some of the able-bodied men near the CP to put them on the helicopter without further delay.

Meanwhile, Captain Drake was trying again to fight his Tank Company past the hairpin turn at Hill 1221 to break through to the RCT’s main body at the inlet. He took 12 tanks, a mortar, and a scratch force of less than a company, assembled from Headquarters and Service Companies and a platoon from the 13th Engineer Battalion. Again, the tanks were unable to get traction on the slippery mountainside and the troops on foot came under such heavy fire that they could make no headway. About 20 were killed or wounded. A single Marine Corsair flew a strike mission in support of the assault, but because there was no direct communication between the pilot and the troops on the ground, he fired at Americans as much as Chinese. In frustration, Chaplain Martin C. Hoehn, accompanying the assault force, grabbed a Thompson sub-machinegun and fired magazine after magazine, each time asking God for forgiveness.

Because high mountains blocked line-of-sight radio transmissions, there was no communication between the RCT’s main body at the inlet and the elements at Hudong-ni, only four miles away. A coordinated assault by the tank-infantry force from Hudong-ni and the troops at the inlet might have stood a chance, but by itself the Hudong-ni force had too few infantrymen to overcome Chinese dominance on the hills above the hairpin.

Just before midnight on November 29, the Chinese renewed their attack on the inlet, striking the sector held by A and B Companies of the 32nd Infantry. The attack was repulsed with heavy losses after about an hour. The Chinese later made a second try, striking A Company 32nd Infantry where the road entered the perimeter from the south. Preceded by a mortar attack, the Chinese overran a platoon that included a heavy machinegun and a 75mm recoilless rifle. The latter was destroyed by mortar fire, killing its crew. After a sharp firefight, the Chinese overran the .50 caliber machinegun position, capturing its crew and several others before withdrawing. Throughout the night Chinese raiding parties penetrated gaps in the perimeter, intent on knocking out the 15th AAA’s quad .50 caliber and 40mm guns that had proven so devastating.

In the 3rd Battalion CP, PFC Don Mayville had been sitting for hours on a floor that had a fire under it while he operated an SCR 608 Radio. He could only communicate with the 57th Field Artillery Battalion. Weary from three nights with little sleep, he got permission from Lieutenant Jules “Rocky” Rybolt, the Battalion Communications Officer, to lay down on the lower floor in front of the fire to catch a few minutes rest. Just as Mayville laid down, a burst of fire passed through the CP’s outer wall, hitting in Rybolt the forehead. He called out to his friend, Lieutenant Bob Boyer, standing about 10 feet away on the other side of the room, “Bob, I’m hit” and slumped to the floor.

On November 30, several more airdrops delivered sorely needed ammunition and other supplies. Major General David G. Barr, Commanding General of the 7th Infantry Division, landed at the inlet by helicopter that morning. On meeting with Lieutenant Colonel Faith, Barr learned for the first time that
Colonel MacLean had been captured. What conversation passed between Faith and Barr is unknown. Barr was in no position to give Faith any orders, because X Corps had transferred operational control of all troops from Koto-ri north to Major General Oliver P. Smith, Commander of the 1st Marine Division. Lieutenant General Almond, the Corps Commander, had ordered Smith to assemble all units from both sides of the reservoir at Hagaru-ri and fight their way back to the Hungnam area where the entire corps would concentrate.

REINFORCEMENTS STOPPED

Fifteen miles to the south near Koto-ri, another drama was unfolding. Captain Charles Peckham’s B Company, which was to temporarily replace E Company in the 2nd Battalion, arrived ahead of the battalion and was attached to Task Force Drysdale, commanded by Lieutenant Douglas B. Drysdale of the British Royal Marines.10 The task force, numbering about 900 men and including a Marine Tank Company, was ordered to move 11 miles north to reinforce the 3rd Battalion 1st Marines at Hagaru-ri and clear Chinese roadblocks along the route. The temperature was minus 32°. About halfway to its destination, the task force was ambushed from hills flanking both sides of the road. B Company took the full force of the ambush and was chopped to pieces.

A Chinese .50 caliber machinegun, firing from a hillside around 1000 yards away pinned down B Company’s center platoon and was hitting some of the men on the ground who could find no protection. Ordered by Lieutenant Bill Meanor to knock out the gun with his 57mm recoilless rifle, Corporal James C. Vickers and his assistant gunner would have to expose themselves to intense enemy fire from commanding heights on both sides of the road. To reduce their risks, the team moved after each time they fired. After firing two rounds, Vickers’ assistant gunner was killed. Vickers had been wounded twice, once by shrapnel and another by a burst from a Chinese submachinegun. Down to his last round, a white phosphorous shell, Vickers rose, took careful aim despite the bullets spattering all around him, and fired again. This time he struck his target. Many men would live to see another sunrise due to his heroic determination.

Shortly after the ambush began, a mortar round detonated between Corporal Thomas Batts, his platoon leader and another of his comrades. Batts was knocked unconscious and the others were killed. When he awoke, he found his BAR laying across his lap. An intense battle was raging all around him and he quickly joined in. Someone handed him a grenade and as soon as he threw it, a Chinese soldier fired two rounds into his hand. Unable to use his BAR any longer, he gave it to a friend and told him to get out any way he could. The man was killed. Batts took a pistol and crawled into a mortar crater to protect himself. He was wounded four more times during the night, but killed 18 Chinese soldiers as they passed or approached his lonely position. When morning came, the Chinese demanded that the task force’s survivors surrender or be killed.

Lieutenant Alfred J. Anderson gathered as many survivors as he could and formed a perimeter along a river bank to fight off groups of Chinese closing in from all sides. The Chinese surged down the hillsides in waves and they died the same way. Lieutenant George Snippen later recalled that there were so many Chinese bodies in front of the perimeter, the ground was no longer visible. Twice the Chinese penetrated the perimeter, but their admission fee was death. Armed with only a .45 caliber pistol, Anderson several times deflected enemy weapons with one arm and shot their owners at point blank range. His example stirred his battered group to perform superhuman feats to avoid being overrun. At 6:00 the next morning, Anderson led his contingent, 19 of them seriously wounded, into the Marine perimeter at Koto-ri.

10 E Company was detached from the 2d Battalion to protect the Division Command Post at Pukchong.
65 of B Company’s men were taken prisoner by the Chinese during the night. Technical Sergeant Frank Kaiser, Corporal John McReady, and Private Elliot Sortillo were among those captured. Sortillo was only 16 at the time and would spend his 17th, 18th, and 19th birthdays as an involuntary guest of the Chinese. McReady escaped the next morning, but was soon recaptured and spent the next 33 months as a POW. “I watched most of those guys get captured but I couldn’t do anything to help them because I was out of ammo,” recalls Vickers. But Vickers had done all he could earlier. For their actions in the battle, Corporals Batts and Vickers were belatedly awarded the Silver Star in separate ceremonies 52 years later.

Unaware of what was happening farther north, the 2nd Battalion departed Majon-dong by truck convoy at 6:45 AM on November 30. About a mile into the narrow Funchilin Pass, they were struck by an ambush. Four vehicles were knocked out in the ensuing firefight, but infantrymen dismounted farther back and counterattacked to keep the Chinese away. It soon became apparent, however, that Chinese troops were streaming around their flanks, obliging the advance to stop. Recognizing that the Chinese controlled all the high ground around him, Lieutenant Colonel Reidy called for air strikes to pin the Chinese down long enough for his men to get a toe-hold on the high ground. One came in late afternoon, but did little good. The Chinese still held all the high cards. Frustrated and aware that it would be dark soon, Reidy ordered his men to dig in and establish an all-around defense. They were still three miles short of Koto-ri.

At 5:30 PM, an officer from the corps staff arrived with a message from Lieutenant General Almond. It ordered Reidy to advance at once to join the remainder of the RCT at the inlet. Dutifully, Reidy issued the movement order at 7:15, specifying 9:00 PM as departure time. By the time company commanders could assure that all of their men had been collected and vehicles that could not be restarted were pushed off the road and their cargo transferred, the movement began two and a half hours late. Confusion reigned in F Company when a booby trap blew up at a roadblock on a bridge, precipitating a near rout. Snow had begun falling and visibility was getting progressively worse. Around 1:30 AM on December 1, the Chinese struck again, splitting the column. Part of the battalion continued to Koto-ri that night, but more than half of the force stayed in place until morning, not wanting to risk another ambush in the dark. The 2d Battalion made it no further than Koto-ri, reinforcing the Marines and taking charge of soldiers from other Army units that could get no further north.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE INLET

While the 2d Battalion was stalled, things were growing steadily more desperate at the inlet. By then, there were over 600 wounded in the perimeter and practically no way to get them out except by truck past the gauntlet at Hill 1221 to Hudong-ni and on to Hagaru-ri. Unknown to Lieutenant Colonel Faith or anyone else at the inlet, there was no longer an American presence at Hudong-ni. The Tank Company, Headquarters Company, Service Company, and Service Battery 57th Field Artillery, totaling 345 men and 16 tanks, had been ordered by General Hodes to pull back to Marine lines at Hagaru-ri on the afternoon of November 30. Although Hodes was acting under orders from Major General Barr, Barr no longer had authority over the 31st RCT since all units north of Koto-ri, including Army units, had been placed under Marine command.

At around 8:00 on the night of November 30, the Chinese unleashed a 45-minute mortar barrage against the inlet while assault parties crawled close to the line. Attacks struck repeatedly all along the line, building to an intensity exceeding that of earlier nights, but they were not well coordinated, giving the heavy weapons in the perimeter’s center an opportunity to concentrate on one attack at a time. K and L Companies of the 31st absorbed the hardest blows and again lost heavily but they held on stubbornly most of the night. PFC Stanley E. Anderson of L Company distinguished himself by turning back one of
the attacks almost single-handedly with his 3.5 inch rocket launcher, firing it repeatedly at any cluster of Chinese he could see. Around 3:00 AM on December 1, the line was penetrated. Faith sent a platoon-size counterattack force to retake the knob dominating the northeast portion of the perimeter, but to no avail.

When daylight came, the Chinese held the position they had gained during the night. From the highest point on the ridge, they placed increasingly accurate mortar fire on heavy weapons in the inlet. After conferring with his subordinate commanders, Lieutenant Colonel Faith, ordered preparations for a breakout. No one had much faith in being able to hold the perimeter another night. The 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry would lead, followed by the 57th Field Artillery with the 15th AAA and the heavy mortars attached. All heavy weapons except the AAA were ordered to expend their remaining ammunition and then destroy their tubes and fight as infantry. The wounded would be loaded onto trucks in the center of the column. The 3d Battalion 31st Infantry would bring up the rear. Everything left behind was to be destroyed.

By 11AM on December 1, the convoy was loaded and ready to move, but it would have to await air cover to make the move. Chinese troops had been watching and began moving down from the hills to take up positions along the only available withdrawal route. Others lobbed mortar shells into the perimeter, killing and wounding more men. Major Hugh Robbins was among them, hit in the arm and legs by fragmentation and knocked from his feet by the blast. Sergeant Major Lynch dragged him to a slit trench, bandaged his wounds, and loaded him onto a truck. The RCT’s senior leadership was eroding more by the hour. Just before 1 PM, Marine F4U Corsairs arrived overhead from the USS Leyte. Captain Stamford, the Marine Air Liaison Officer, directed them to make a dummy run to identify American marker panels at the head of the column. That accomplished, the Corsairs came around to engage. At the head of the column, Chinese troops attacked, closing to within 50 yards of the convoy’s lead element. As the lead Corsair approached over the convoy, it prematurely released its napalm tank, hitting Americans and Chinese alike. Peering out between slats in a truck carrying the wounded, Hugh Robbins watched in horror as he saw Master Sergeant David B. Smith, the Regiment’s Assistant Sergeant Major, enveloped in flames. Witnesses recall that five GIs and a KATUSA were killed outright and another eight or nine GIs were badly burned and loaded onto trucks. Still others continued walking and fighting despite severe burns. For the rest of the day, Corsairs returned in flights of four to six aircraft, strafing and bombing enemy positions all along the escape route.

When the column started moving again, infantrymen from the 3d Battalion streamed past the trucks to help push the Chinese out of the way, but in so doing, they were abandoning the rear of the column. The few officers who remained unwounded had no radios to control subordinate units and therefore controlled only those men within the sound of their voices. Amid the constant banging and chattering of weapons, punctuated by exploding grenades and volleys of mortar fire, no one’s voice carried very far. Unit integrity evaporated as men took any cover they could find, returned fire, and followed whoever seemed to be leading. Corporal Milton Margan recalls that he, Captain Auburn “Pop” Marr, and PFC Thomas J. Morris were at the tail of the column coming out of the inlet. Morris was firing a .30 caliber machinegun from the hip as they withdrew. He was captured when the Chinese pinned down and surrounded the trio. Captain Marr was killed by the Chinese as he attempted to surrender. Master Sergeant Ivan H. Long of the 3d Battalion’s S-2 Section was captured along with two other men as they attempted in vain to fight off a Chinese company attacking the rear of the truck column. The rear guard had evaporated.

After departing the inlet, what remained of the RCT focused on protecting the long column of trucks laden with wounded to Hagaru-ri, just a few more miles down the road. As trucks became disabled, the wounded were unloaded onto the road under fire and helped or dragged into ditches or
behind whatever cover could be found. The most seriously wounded were loaded onto other trucks, swelling the number of men on each truck to the point that some died from the additional trauma. Disabled trucks were pushed off to the side to allow others to pass. Somehow the convoy struggled on, but its pace was dreadfully slow, causing ever more casualties.

As the head of the column reached a blown bridge just short of Hill 1221, the trucks had to negotiate a swampy by-pass. Major Hugh Robbins recalls: “...we came to a bridge which had been destroyed and our motor column turned off the road and into a wide riverbed to by-pass the obstacle. Great mounds of frozen earth covered with tough grass carpeted the riverbed over which we now bounced. For about 100 yards we bounced and crashed up and down over those hummocks with the wounded screaming in anguish as they were jostled and slammed into one another on the truck bed. I luckily still had an steel helmet and thus was able to protect my head from banging against the front and sides of the truck bed which might have knocked me out otherwise. At that, I had a bruised head for days afterwards.” Eventually, a half-track pulled Robbins’ truck back onto the roadway and it continued south, but more trouble lay ahead. At the hairpin turn where the Medical Company had been ambushed four days earlier, the Chinese occupied positions that had been dug by the 5th Marines when they occupied the area until November 27. From there, they controlled the pass.

As trucks slowed, Chinese troops on the hills concentrated on killing drivers. Bullets whacked, slapped, and pinged from all directions as the trucks were hit repeatedly, killing some of the wounded inside and wounding others again and again. Some of the less seriously wounded or men who had taken refuge in nearby ditches risked all to take the wheel of trucks whose drivers were killed or too badly wounded to continue driving. On both flanks of the convoy, counterattacks were mounted under the most adverse conditions, but several succeeded in clearing segments of the roadway. Near the first saddle in the road, Major Harvey Storms, acting as the 3d Battalion’s commander, was severely wounded and loaded onto a truck with the other wounded. He perished on the truck. At nearly the same time, Major Crosby Miller, acting commander of the 1st Battalion 32d Infantry, was also wounded near the head of the column. By that time, the senior man still walking in each of the infantry battalions was probably a captain who did not know everyone above him had been killed or too badly wounded to command. With nearly all radios knocked out of action, some officers and NCOS led by example to try to overcome impossible odds while others assumed someone more senior would come along and tell them what to do. The latter would wait in vain because the chain of command was steadily being eroded by bullets. Lieutenant Colonel Faith was the only field grade officer still unwounded, but not for long.

With the convoy stalled, Lieutenant Colonel Faith tried desperately to organize a counterattack to clear the steep slopes dominating the road. Here and there, attacks of platoon and company strength got off to weak starts and most of the early efforts resulted in all or most of the participants being killed or wounded. Major Robbins, recognizing that the convoy might be stuck for good, decided that he would rather die fighting than wait for the Chinese to come down the hill and finish him off. He struggled out of the mass of other wounded men around him in the truck, slid painfully to the ground, and began collecting able-bodied soldiers, many of them walking wounded like himself, to attack Chinese positions overlooking the road. After fighting through a line of Chinese-held foxholes, most made it to the crest of Hill 1221, firing wildly and throwing all the hand grenades they had left as they struggled up the steep slope. Others were doing the same thing. Captain Robert Kitz, commanding K Company, gathered around 210 men who had taken cover along the road. At first, he had trouble getting men to move out of sheltered locations near the trucks, but with the help of other officers and NCOS from a variety of units, he managed to get people off their feet and moving uphill. Most were low on ammunition and many were wounded men who had struggled out of the trucks under intense fire, but they picked up weapons and ammunition from the dead and went up the hill anyway. Darkness was approaching when the group fought its way through the line of Chinese foxholes and bunkers dominating the road. Rather than
fanning out to the right to overrun the remaining Chinese from the flank or rear, the men continued to
struggle up the steep hill, responsive only to the instinct to survive. Once the exhausted climbers reached
the top and saw the hopelessness of the convoy’s situation below, they kept going, headed south toward
safety. Past the crest of Hill 1221, they struggled down to the rail line, following it south until they
encountered more opposition, and then crossed a frozen section of the reservoir, with the Chinese close
behind. They reached Marine lines at Hagaru-ri around midnight.

Although Kitz’s attack had punched a hole in the Chinese gauntlet, the hole was only a sliver in a
much wider line. All around the slope, Chinese troops continued to pour rifle and automatic weapons fire
onto the stalled convoy, killing or again wounding many of the previously wounded men in the trucks.
Men too weak to move moaned or screamed for help, but help was in short supply. The able bodied men
who had been escorting the convoy were falling victim to the same fire, adding hundreds more to the
number of dead and wounded. Recognizing the situation’s urgency, Captain Earle H. Jordan, Jr.,
commanding M Company, formed another ad hoc group to attack up the fire swept slope. Jordan, already
wounded during the first night’s action at the inlet, had kept what remained of his company in its position
through four days and nights of hell until the breakout. With Lieutenants John E. Gray, his 81mm Mortar
Platoon Leader, and Robert G. Schmitt, his Heavy Machinegun Platoon Leader, he assembled a group of
about 30 men to form up for the attack. They had only rifles, carbines, and hand grenades left, but they
would try. Schmitt’s arm was in a sling from an earlier shoulder wound and Gray, like Jordan, had also
been wounded during earlier fighting. The group attacked the north slope of Hill 1221, not far from
where Kitz’s group had attacked, and fought its way through the Chinese. Lieutenant Schmitt and
perhaps 20 others were killed or lay too badly wounded to continue. Lieutenant Gray was wounded a
second time, but remained in action, despite injuries to one hand and both legs. About 10 men, including
Jordan and Gray, made it to the top, exhausted and with no ammunition left. Unwilling to abandon the
wounded, Jordan led the men down the reverse slope of the hill toward a log roadblock near the head of
the vehicle column. Shouting like banshees, they ran, limped, and stumbled back through the Chinese
line from behind, taking some small arms fire, but suffering no more casualties. Back on the road, they
gathered others to help them move the log roadblock aside. Captain Jordan and Lieutenant Gray would
later receive the Distinguished Service Cross for their actions.

At dusk, most of Hill 1221 had been cleared by the various counterattacks and Navy/Marine air
strikes launched late that afternoon. There still remained one stubborn strongpoint. The Chinese
remained dug in near the nose of the hairpin turn where the 31st Infantry’s Medical Company had been
ambushed on the night of November 27 and where the Regimental Tank Company had tried
unsuccessfully to break through to the inlet on November 28 and 29. With the help of several other
officers from his battalion, Colonel Faith gathered a group of about 300 men and managed to get a final
counterattack moving, attempting to get around the position to take it from behind. Corporal George
Pryor of the 3d Battalion’s Communications Platoon kicked, screamed, and cajoled men to join him in
attacking the roadblock. He succeeded, leading a bulldog-like assault that quickly lost sight of Faith’s
attack struggling up adjacent furrows. Pryor was shot in the leg but struggled on. Shortly after the assault
began, Don Carlos Faith was knocked off his feet by a hand grenade. He did not get back up, prompting
some to presume him dead. A grenade fragment had entered his chest above the heart, but he was still
breathing. Lieutenant Fields E. Shelton of the 31st Infantry’s Heavy Mortar Company was with Faith
when he was hit and was wounded by the same grenade blast. He tried to get Faith back down to the
road, but was too weak to carry him. He wrapped him up as well as possible and went back down to the
road for help. Several soldiers carried him back to the road and laid him across the hood of his jeep.
Because the jeep could not get around larger vehicles blocking the road, he was transferred into the cab of
a truck at the head of the column.
Once Captain Jordan and his men removed the log roadblock and Faith’s counterattack cleared the adjacent high ground, the convoy resumed moving. Here and there, groups of able-bodied men and walking wounded helped the more seriously wounded along the road or the railroad running parallel to the reservoir’s eastern shore. Many got no further because there were still numerous pockets of Chinese troops all over the area. Descending from the saddle on Hill 1221 near dark, the convoy snaked its way slowly down icy roads. By this time, none of the quad.50 caliber machine guns or 40mm “Dusters” remained in action. Any fire support would have to come from the dwindling number of infantrymen moving along the sides of the road in front of the trucks. Exhausted and nearly out of ammunition, they would be of little help. Just after passing the abandoned village of Twiggae, the convoy encountered a blown bridge which slowed everything to a crawl as the trucks negotiated a difficult detour. Again the Chinese peppered the trucks with small arms fire, adding to the misery the wounded were already enduring. Every time the column stopped, several trucks stalled out and could not be restarted. The wounded from those trucks had to be loaded onto other vehicles, adding to the pain and suffering of all. Disabled vehicles were pushed off the road with great difficulty by men whose wounds reopened under the strain. The number of wounded men aboard each vehicle nearly doubled to 40 or 50 by the time the convoy passed Twiggae. Colonel Faith and the lead truck’s other occupants were killed in a final ambush that stopped the convoy’s remnant just short of Hudong-ri. Faith was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his aggressive leadership in attempting the breakout. Of the task force’s original complement of nearly 3300 men, only 385 of those who reached Marine lines at Hagaru-ri from the inlet were unwounded. Not one vehicle or piece of heavy equipment made it through.

After dark, PFC Lewis D. Shannon of K Company helped an officer (probably Captain Swenty of the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry) round up as many able-bodied men as possible, including about 40 walking wounded, to make a break for safety. Many were too badly wounded to operate a weapon. The captain, a KATUSA, PFC Shannon, and an unknown American GI walked point, driving off any Chinese who came too close. Encountering a strongpoint that was too large to overcome, the group left the road under fire and continued moving south along the railroad tracks. The brightness of a full moon reflecting off the snow stands out in the memories of those trying desperately to get away. Corporal William J. Smith of I Company recalls “The moon was so bright you could only move when the moon went behind the clouds, or else the Chinese would fire at you. You had to be perfectly still. If you moved, chances are you got hit or killed.” By the time Shannon’s group reached Hagaru-ri, their number had swollen to roughly 100 men, more than double the number they started with. The actions of the group’s small point element saved many men who otherwise would have perished along the road.

For the men left on the vehicles at the final ambush site, the ordeal was far from over. Some crawled off of the trucks and dropped to the roadway. A few of those were able to make it onto the ice and crawl or stumble to safety at Hagaru-ri, about two miles away. Others, too weak to go any further lay on the road bed or in nearby ditches and were shot by the Chinese the next morning. Still others, too weak to get off of the trucks met a worse fate. When the Chinese arrived, an officer who spoke excellent English ordered all the trucks evacuated. Because most of the men remaining on the trucks were too badly wounded to move, few could comply with his instructions. PFC Ed Reeves of K Company was among the men left on the trucks. For two days, Chinese came and went through the convoy, first removing all stretchers and dumping the wounded in heaps on the cold metal floor of the trucks. On the ridge, more Chinese appeared, ready to ambush whoever came to rescue the wounded. They were bait. When it became obvious no help was coming, the Chinese decided to end the game.

On December 3, a flurry of shots rang out from the head of the column and smoke began to rise above the convoy. The Chinese were shooting everyone on the road and under the trucks. Those too badly injured to move were left aboard the trucks and set afire with whatever gasoline the Chinese could drain from the vehicles’ gas tanks. On trucks with empty gas tanks, an executioner came aboard with a
rifle and shot every man between the eyes. Men resigned to their fate waited quietly for the death shot to end their misery. Reeves recalls being hit, but the shot only grazed his scalp, leaving him a bloody mess, but still alive. The next morning, Chinese troops began pulling dead GIs and KATUSAs into piles on the road. They unzipped sleeping bags in which the wounded had traveled, searched the bodies, and unceremoniously flung lifeless corpses onto piles. When they searched him, they found him alive and beat him senseless with rifle butts before throwing him onto the pile of corpses. When they left, he began a daylong ordeal, crawling all the way to Hagaru-ri across the ice. His story, Beautiful Feet and Real Peace, is an epic of human endurance and determination to survive. Sergeant First Class Sam Muncy, shot in the ankle, was also aboard one of the trucks. Before the Chinese arrived, Muncy climbed out and lay in a ditch. He still agonizingly recalls the screams of comrades who perished in the inferno as the trucks were set on fire. Feigning death until dark, he managed to crawl out across the frozen reservoir where he was helped to Marine lines.  

On December 2, 1950 elements of the 31st Infantry Regiment were scattered across five locations, the extremes separated by 140 miles.

- The 3rd Battalion, Heavy Mortar Company (less 1st Platoon), Tank Company, part of Headquarters Company, and part of Medical Company, were east of the Chosen Reservoir under 1st Marine Division control.
- The 2d Battalion (less F Company), part of Headquarters Company, part of Medical Company, Service Company, Heavy Mortar Company’s 1st Platoon, and B Company reinforced by elements of D Company were at Koto-ri attached to the 1st Marine Division.
- The 1st Battalion (less B Company) was under 7th Infantry Division control at Untack.
- E Company was providing security for the 7th Infantry Division Command Post at Pungsan.
- Elements of the Regimental Staff and Service Company’s Headquarters were at Hungnam-up to coordinate command, supply and administration. Lieutenant Colonel Deshon, the Regimental Executive Officer, assumed command of the elements under 7th Infantry Division control.

Stragglers arrived at Hagaru-ri from the reservoir’s east side in clusters of varying number over the next several days. Most suffered from exposure and only 385 were neither wounded nor badly frost bitten. They joined several hundred others who had withdrawn from Hudong-ni on November 30. Anyone able to fight was sent directly into the perimeter to join one of the composite Army battalions being formed to thicken the Marine perimeter. They formed six ad hoc rifle companies of about 90 men each, including KATUSAs. They had no crew-served weapons. Troops were armed with pistols, M-1 Rifles, Carbines, and a few BARs. The Regimental Tank Company was attached to the 1st Marine Tank Battalion. This ad hoc organization, totaling around 600 men, defended its assigned sector at Hagaru-ri against constant attacks for the next five days. Its orders from the 1st Marine Division were to be prepared to attack south to Koto-ri 24 hours after Marine Units from Yudam-ni reached Hagaru-ri.

Attempting to maintain unit integrity, commanders re-formed the 1st Battalion 32d Infantry and 3d Battalion 31st Infantry, but exceptions had to be made to keep the companies reasonably balanced. The reconstituted RCT’s rough composition was:

1st Battalion, commanded by Major Jones (S-3 1st Bn 32d Inf), with:

11 Photo from David Douglas Duncan, This Is War!, Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1951.
• A Company, commanded by 1st Lieutenant Smith (XO, A Co 32d Inf) and composed of men from Headquarters and A Companies of the 1st Battalion 32nd Infantry and Headquarters Battery of the 57th Field Artillery Battalion.
• B Company, commanded by Captain Thacker (S-1, 57th FA Bn) and composed of men from B Company 32d Infantry, the 31st Infantry’s Antitank/Mine Platoon, and C Company 13th Engr Battalion.
• C Company, commanded by Captain Dowell (1st Bn 32d Inf) and composed of men from C Company 32d Infantry and Heavy Mortar Company 31st Infantry.

3d Battalion, commanded by Major Carl Witte (S-2, 31st Inf), with:

• I Company, commanded by Captain George Rasula (Asst S-3, 31st Inf) and composed of men from I Company 31st Infantry and Service Battery 57th Field Artillery Battalion.
• K Company, commanded by Captain Robert Kitz (CO, K Company 31st Inf) and composed of men from K, M, and Headquarters Companies 31st Infantry.
• L Company, commanded by 1st Lieutenant Robert Boyer and composed of men from L Company 31st Infantry and a platoon from the 7th Signal Company. Lieutenant Boyer was killed on December 5 during an attack on the Hagaru-ri perimeter.

C-47 transport planes were taking the most seriously wounded out of Hagaru-ri’s air strip as quickly as possible. Units could not keep track of who was being evacuated because they remained under constant attack on the perimeter and because the wounded entered the Marine perimeter at various places for the next five days and did not go through own units. Tanks were sent to try and reach stalled vehicles but could not make it. They did bring back a few more groups of wounded stragglers.

When news of the scope of the disaster at Chosin reached X Corps Headquarters at Hungnam, new orders were soon to follow. On December 3, Operations Order Number 28, Headquarters 7th Infantry Division, directed the 31st Regimental Combat Team to assemble in the Hamhung Area. Operations Order Number 29, Headquarters 7th Infantry Division, issued the following day, directed the 31st Infantry to reorganize and form the division reserve in the vicinity of Hamhung. In response, the 1st Battalion was ordered to move via truck to vicinity of Pukchong. Headquarters and Service elements moved by motor and rail from Hungnam-up to Hamhung. The 1st Battalion departed Untaek at 4:20 PM on December 4 and reached Puchong at 11:45 the next morning. There, they were ordered to proceed immediately to Hamhung. At the time, the 2nd Battalion was still bottled up at Koto-ri and the 3rd Battalion’s survivors were under constant attack holding a section of the Marine perimeter at Hagaru-ri. It would be another week before all surviving elements of 31st Infantry could be reunited at Hamhung.

On December 7, All Army troops at Hagaru-ri, except those in the 31st Infantry’s Tank Company, were reorganized to form a single provisional battalion of four companies. The Tank Company was attached to the 5th Marine Regiment, while the Provisional Battalion was attached to the 7th Marine Regiment. It was assigned responsibility for protecting the regiment’s left flank in its attack to Koto-ri. After breaking through Chinese lines around Hagaru-ri, two companies composed mostly of men from the 31st Infantry were sent out to screen farther east, securing high ground out to 1000 yards from the road. That afternoon, a strong enemy roadblock was encountered about 4 miles south of Hagaru-ri. Two composite companies, composed mostly of men from the 32nd Infantry and 57th Field Artillery, overran the enemy positions. That night, the security screen was pulled back to within
100 yards of the road to avoid becoming cut off from the main body of the 7th Marine Regiment advancing along the road. The Chinese attacked the column twice during the night of December 7-8, destroying the trucks carrying the Provisional Battalion’s CP. Both attacks were repulsed, but with substantial losses to the Provisional Battalion. All members of the CP had been killed or wounded.

The Provisional Battalion reached the Marine perimeter at Koto-ri at 6:30 AM on December 8. Over half of their number had fought for 4 days and 5 nights at the Chosin perimeter, escaped across the ice to Hagaru-ri under harrowing conditions, helped the Marines withstand another 5 days and nights of attacks at Hagaru-ri, and then fought their way out to Koto-ri. There they were welcomed by the 2nd Battalion 31st Infantry, which had warming tents set up inside the perimeter. Bone weary, men of the Provisional Battalion found the warmest spots available and were soon asleep. Their slumber was not to last very long, however. At 1530, they were ordered to attack two hills northwest of Koto-ri and to hold the road open against enemy attacks. Considerable reorganization was required because of the number of casualties sustained between Hagaru-ri and Koto-ri. Only two companies could be assembled from the survivors. Both objectives were secured against light opposition. The Provisional Battalion held the hills until rear elements of 1st Marine Division’s column halted.

At 7 AM on December 9, the attack resumed. The 31st Infantry’s first two objectives overlooking the Funchilin Pass were quickly secured against light opposition but an intense snowstorm began during the attack and the temperature dropped 10 degrees, reaching 20˚ below zero. At 10 AM, the unit dug in on hills overlooking the evacuation route and remained there until the morning of December 10. At 7 AM on December 10, the attack continued, linking up with reconnaissance elements of the US 3d Infantry Division near Chinhung-ni. There, the men loaded aboard trucks and continued south to Hamhung where it arrived just before noon the next day. There, the Provisional Battalion was dissolved and its survivors were reunited with their parent regiments. The 3rd Battalion 31st Infantry had only 1 officer and 47 enlisted men and around 40 KATUSAs left.

Official casualty figures for the 31st Infantry Regiment show that 496 Americans were killed in action or died after being captured in North Korea between November 8 and December 12, 1950. No accounting exists for KATUSAs who constituted roughly half the regiment’s strength. Estimates of the number of American and KATUSA soldiers killed or missing at or near the Chosin Reservoir between November 27 and December 2, 1950 range between 1200 and 1500. Most were likely buried near where they fell. Although many died in and around the two battalion perimeters, many more were killed along the road and railroad as the column moved south and others died on the slopes of Hill 1221 trying to overcome the ambush. Several hundred died in and near the destroyed trucks, a convoy that stretched over four kilometers. More than twice that number were wounded or suffered frost injuries so severe that they had to be evacuated to Japan or the US.

On December 15, the 31st Infantry’s remnant departed Hungnam by sea, arriving at Pusan four days later. Behind them, engineers rigged the docks and important buildings with tons of explosives. Forlorn North Korean refugees crowded
into the dock area to get aboard the departing American ships. Many were Christians, desperate to get away from the advancing Chinese. Although more than 100,000 were evacuated, thousands probably perished when engineers set off the charges as the last landing craft departed on Christmas Eve.

On December 26, the regiment moved 80 miles north of Pusan to Yongchon, where it rested, refitted, and received replacements. Since B Company, part of the 2nd Battalion, and nearly all of the 3rd Battalion had been destroyed in North Korea, men from the strongest companies were transferred to the battered remnants of others, evening the distribution of combat experience as replacements were absorbed.

The Chinese were not resting and refitting. They were simply absorbing whatever manpower could be scraped together in Manchuria to pursue retreating UN forces deep into South Korea. As Seoul and other major South Korean cities fell one after another, there were again doubts at high levels that the UN Command could establish and hold a coherent line with units that had been decimated in North Korea. Rumors flew that allied forces would soon be evacuated to Japan. Two factors intervened to prevent that disaster from happening. First, the Chinese were nearing the end of their logistical tether and their best combat units had taken serious losses in driving the UN out of North Korea. The North Koreans were little help since their Army, the *Immun Gun*, had all but evaporated by the end of November and was being rebuilt almost from scratch by forcibly recruiting men and boys everywhere possible, including POW Camps. Second, the US Army proved to be much more resilient and determined than its critics were willing to admit. Infused with new blood, units that had been all but wiped out a month before suddenly became vengeance-bent tigers, eager to erase the stain of defeat they had suffered in North Korea.

### Combat Losses North Korea 8 November-15 December 1950

(3 Officers, 27 Enlisted)

*Remains have not been recovered*

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<th>Date</th>
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**29 Nov**

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<td>CPT George R Cody</td>
<td>Tuscaloosa, AL</td>
<td>Hvy Mort Co Cdr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPT James Wilver Conner*</td>
<td>San Juan, PR</td>
<td>3d Bn Chaplain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPT Auburn Marr*</td>
<td>(Salt Lake City, UT)</td>
<td>I Co Cdr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPT Leon A Pingenot</td>
<td>Houston, TX</td>
<td>3d Bn Surgeon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPT Lester Rudolph Rulik*</td>
<td>Saginaw, MI</td>
<td>KIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1LT George S Crisp</td>
<td>Bowie, MD</td>
<td>MIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1LT Paul Nesbit Dill</td>
<td>Wilmington, DE</td>
<td>M Co XO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1LT Jule Carl Rybolt*</td>
<td>Beatrice, NE</td>
<td>3d Bn Commo Plt Ldr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1LT Maynard Schmermerhorn</td>
<td>Binghamton, NY</td>
<td>MIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1LT Robert Geard Schmidt*</td>
<td>Fessenden, NE</td>
<td>M Co Mort Plt Ldr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1LT Rollin W Skilton</td>
<td>Litchfield, CT</td>
<td>MIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1LT Edgar T Snipes, Jr.</td>
<td>Havana, IL</td>
<td>DOI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2LT Archibald S. MacFarlane</td>
<td>Orange, TX</td>
<td>KIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSG Charles Ogden</td>
<td>Lowell, MA</td>
<td>KIA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MSG Richard Nolen, Jr (Columbia, TN) KIA
MSG David Barr Smith* (Norfolk, VA) 3d Bn S-1 NCO KIA
SFC Ernie E Wescott (Riley, KS) KIA
SGT Theodore Bockhoff (Lawrence, MA) KIA
SGT George Chastain (Gaston, NC) KIA
SGT Willie V Galvan (San Antonio, TX) KIA
SGT Sheldon Harriman (Kalamazoo, MI) KIA
SGT James W Keith (Chattanooga, TN) KIA
SGT Richard H Murphy (Oswego, NY) KIA
CPL Howard R Belden (Lake George, NY) KIA
CPL Charles H Grubb (Williamson, WV) KIA
CPL James V Johnson (Gainesville, FL) KIA
CPL Willie F Kee (Lewisburg, TN) KIA
CPL William C Long (White Bluff, TN) KIA
CPL Milo G Paynovich (Chicago, IL) KIA
CPL Earl Russell (Phoenix, AZ) KIA
CPL Agapito Sabando (Philippines) KIA
CPL Gail F Sells (Somerset, OH) KIA
CPL Herbert Schmitt (California, MO) KIA
CPL Johnstone, NY)
CPL Joseph Trepasso (Johnstown, NY) KIA
PFC William Cunningham (Kinston, NC) KIA
PFC Bobby C Brown (Ripley, TN) KIA
PFC William L Bryant (Riverside, CA) KIA
PFC Richard H Finley (Millersburg, OH) KIA
PFC William S Gebou (Johnstown, NY) KIA
PFC Sterling C Gower (Bethlehem, PA) KIA
PFC Lynn R Peterson (Oswego, NY) KIA
PFC Edwin C Petts (Harristown, MI) KIA
PFC Phillip C Skiles (Salisbury, MD) KIA
PFC David J Wishon, Jr (Baltimore, MD) KIA
PVT Joseph Campbell (Columbus, GA) DOI
PVT Paul L Dickerson (Roanoke, VA) KIA
PVT Melburn Eldridge (Sparta, TN) KIA

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**Correspondence, telephone interviews, and interviews at regimental reunions with:**
John A. Lynch, Hugh Robbins, and Laverne Tate regarding the fate of the national and regimental colors during the withdrawal from the Chosin Reservoir.
John Q Adams, Richard G Cooper, and Willis S Muney, concerning the fate of the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon after it was ordered by Brigadier General Henry I. Hodes to reconnoiter a trail east of Hundong-ni.
Joseph C. Rogers and John J Zitzelberger concerning the Medical Company’s ambush at Hill 1221.
James A Adkins (Svc Co), William J McCaffrey (X Corps S-3), Johnny C Powell (Tk Co), George Rasula (Asst Regt S-3), Donald L Stanton (Commo Officer), and Carl G Witte (Regt S-2) concerning actions of elements ordered by Brigadier General Hodes to withdraw from Hundong-ni to the Marine perimeter at Hagaru-ri.
Stanley E Anderson (L Co 31st Inf), Robert J Baty (I Co 31st Inf), George D Birk (I Co 31st Inf), James R Brawner (Hvy Mort Co 31st Inf), Gerald Clinton (I Co 31st Inf), Rocco A Conforti (K Co 31st Inf), Kenneth J Dawson (HHC 3d Bn), James C DeLong (K Co 31st Inf), Ed Farley (K Co 31st Inf), Gerard Francois (HHC 3d Bn), John Gray (M Co), Robert Hibbard (HHC 3d Bn), Earle H Jordan (M Co), Donald Lindgren (I Co), Darrell Main (K Co), Milton R Margan (K Co), Thomas F Marker (Hvy Mort Co), Donald G Mayville (HHC 3d Bn), Richard D Norgart (Hvy Mort Co), Robert E Olsen (Hvy Mort Co), James R Owens (L Co), Ed Reeves (K Co), Bill G Rowland (I Co), Fred Runnells (L Co), Floyd G Scalp (I Co), George T Sisson (Med Co), Albert J Snyder (I Co), James M Spencer (L Co), Benny Takatsu (57th FA), Raymond C Vallowe (57th FA), Pat N Westfall (Hvy Mort Co) concerning actions at the reservoir and during the withdrawal 27 Nov to 2 Dec 1950.
Thomas A Batts (B Co), Hubert D Bissett (B Co), William H Meanor (B Co), and James C Vickers (B Co) concerning actions of Task Force Drysdale near Koto-ri.
William Chisholm (G Co), James H Cowles (G Co), Max Guernsey (F Co), Glenn M Justice (G Co), Ronald L McPeek (G Co), Paul Mendoza (G Co), Joseph P Nocera (G Co), Raymond E Phares (F Co), Ernest A Rajala (G Co), Rudy Reyes (F Co), Ronald G Todd (G Co), C Lee Viviano (H Co), and Arthur W Wilson (Hvy Mort Co), concerning actions of the 2d Battalion enroute to Koto-ri.

From Ray Vallowe: COMBINED D-DAY; Eighth Army and X. Corps; Offensive, Scheduled 240800
November 1950.

MG Almond activates X. Corps, Plan 8 - Draft Two, on 21 Nov.* This plan does not include the 7th Infantry Division in this offensive; OPN O 23, (1.b) 7th ID, Continue advance within zone to N. [within center of X Corps] New X. Corps order sent Marine RCT- 7, forward on the west side of the Chosin Reservoir and RCT- 5 on the east side. RCT- 1 was to be relieved at Chigyong by 3ID. In effect the division would have two RCT's in assault and one in reserve. This Marine advance was ordered for the combined offensive of Eighth Army and X. Corps scheduled for the 24th. New X Corps orders of the 24th outlined the part of the I st Mar Div in the general offensive. RCT- 7 was to seize Yudam-ni at once.** [W/O delay]

On 24 November, D-Day of the combined offensive; General Douglas MacArthur, issues his message to the world...."the eastern or X Corps sector of the pincers had advanced to reach a commanding enveloping position." Meaning Marine RCT- 7, will be in position to lead off westward from Yudam-ni. However, due to O.P. Smith's delay in ordering them there, they are not in position for the scheduled combined offensive. In effect this offensive is now canceled for the Marine Division. Thus there is no official date for the start of "The Changjin Reservoir Campaign" to be recorded in history as 24 November - 11 December. What Happened?

MG Almond now picks Draft Three; a revised plan to include the Army 7ID forces. Early authors speculate his reasons; "On a whim."" He wanted the 7ID involved." "He didn't want to extend his lines too far north, etc." Whatever that reason, the offensive is now offset until 270800 Nov. 1950. The entire offensive has now shifted to the Army 7ID. [OPN O 25, (1.b) transfers this westward mission to the 7ID.] MG Smith no longer responsible to attack on either side of the reservoir as of 270800 Nov. He will not regain operational control of this area until 292017 Nov.

To correct history-damage control-the Marine Division campaign date for their orders, being retroactive-to 24 Nov-an attempt to superseding those of the 7ID within this entire time frame. The Army RCT 31 records lost or hidden prevents the Army forces from knowing the real story about their own involvement at Chosin and the sacrifice made there on the east side of that reservoir. That is sad, that is an injustice, and a disgrace, but nevertheless that is the
history of the Changjin Campaign as solely claimed by the 1st Marine Division. But updated history will no longer support those marine dates in their sole claim to fame. General Smith failed to order his division forward as ordered. Still he relocates RCT-5 to Yudam-ni when they had no X Corps orders to be there! That move severely jeopardized Hagaru-ri and that of the 7ID forces sent into the reservoir to compensate for his delays. Had General David Barr delayed in kind, not three days, but a mere 24 hours, his losses would have been far less at Chosin. However, the Marine Division losses would have been extremely higher.


Ray Vallowe

7ID Day Two & Three at Chosin

Day Two, 25 Nov.'50; X Corps Opn 0 7, issued. LTC Faith's 1/32 Bn. arrival East of Chosin "satisfied" MG Barr's transferring zone to 7ID. Col. MacLean-3/31 RCT, on move early morning to RR Station at Pukchong for briefing & relocation to Chosin. [see CJ. 02.25.04] 1st Marine Division now confused over LTC Faith's position and importance in this area. MG Smith is totally out of the X Corps loop.

In Appleman's [E/T-p.51] He mistakenly states that the 1st Marine Division received a X Corps order 24 Nov.'50 orienting its axis of attack from Yudam-ni. That would be an earlier order now superseded by the 7ID order to seize Mupyong-ni. [Documented via (1b) OPN 0 25, "1b, 7th Inf Div atks 270800, Nov. seizes Mupyong-ni, adv to Yalu Riv..."] In reality only the 7th Marine Regiments prior "blocking position" remained in effect.

Day Three; 26 Nov.'50; General Hodes arrives to brief LTC Faith on his mission. Hodes; as 7ID ADC now effectively clarifies the 7ID authority here. This is now officially their zone, The 5th Marines ordered to vacate ASAP to clear area for incoming forces. Faith requested the lead battalions [3/5] position, -rear unit [2/5] leaves early afternoon for Yudam-ni.

While the 2/5 Marine Bn. was moving, through Hagaru-ri -a company size recon patrol, [see CJ 03.08.00, ref; p-84-85] led by 1st Lt. Frank Mitchell, of A Co. 1st Bn. 7th Marine's; wandered into a "large" force of CCF at Hansang-ni. [Author Roe; (D/S, p. 265) reported 2,000 CCF, at Hansang-ni.] A Red Alert should have been indicated here; as this company withdrew, after engaging the CCF and losing Lt. Mitchell as a KIA,-MIA, [awarded a MOH] an unreported (?)
clash with an active CCF force. It was a fundamental tradition that the Marine Corps always retrieved their dead. [A criticism strongly against the Army] Their own neglect to historically list any MIA's on total charts [rather N/L] degrades tradition and one of their own MIA's awarded a Medal Of Honor.

MG Smith should have been well aware of this clash with the enemy and the loss of Lt Mitchell. If he was aware, that would indicated his disregard for the safety of Hagaru-ri. (If he was unaware, his G-2 should be!) He now had a loose regiment of men with only his orders of placement for them. The 3rd & 1st Battalion [in this order] passing Hagaru-ri the next morning. This would free the 1st Marine Bn as the sole force securing his newly transferred CP to Hagaru-ri. Question here, Why was he so opposed to reinforcing Hagaru-ri? This last reasoning in light of author LaBree; [G/W p. 152] over placement of the 5th Marines. A different spin on their relocation; "Smith had to seek permission from Almond to bring the RCT 5 to Hagaru-ri and Yudam-ni in support of RCT 7." It would be hard to "support" your rear force, as well as lead an offensive.

Why are there so many inconstancies over the placement-and schedule-for the 5th Marine Regiment? Here MG Smith 'seeking' approval for moving them. Roe; (D/S-p.261) states he "declines to move" pending his conditional ultimatum. Appleman (E/T-p.30) states order to move from E of Chosin, 27th Nov, still the 2nd Battalion moves afternoon of the 26th. [E/T-p.16] "The full regiment [7th] proceeded to concentrate at Yudam-ni, in preparation for the attack west from there on 27 November." The confusion increases over the placement of the 5th Marine's! Confirms my second paragraph at the top.

Newspaper coverage:
American Seventh Division units diverted from the division drive northward, were reported on Monday to have reached the shores of the Fusen reservoir, 20 miles northeast of the Chosin . Some 1,500 Chinese troops were reported in the vicinity of the Fusen.” (The Fusen being that mission assigned to the 1st Marine Division, now diverted to the 7th Division! The lower end of the Fusen being parallel on a line above the 5th Marines advance east of Chosin!)

The point on the above seems to me to be building a case for the “diversion” mentioned in above example, what was that “diverted” issue? The answer is found in General Smith’s own interview of 1969, That he talked General Almond into using the 7th Division because there was no road leading around the Fusen Reservoir. Plan 6, issued November 11, 1950 set the zone for the X Corps. It included the 40 mile stretch along the Yalu River for the 1st Marine Division, inclusive of the Fusen Reservoir. The 7th Division had the center 30 miles between west, Samsu and east of the Korean Capital Division to Hapsu.

Two Allied Columns Head for Manchuria
U.S. 7th Division and South Korean Capital Begin March.
Tokyo (UP) - Two United Nations columns jumped off in Northeast Korea towards the Manchurian and Siberian borders today after smashing what spokesman said were
the last strong enemy forces in their path. The U.S. Seventh Division, attacked through mountains in two inches of fresh snow toward Manchuria, 20 miles to the north. It expected to take the bombed out enemy strong point of Kapsan today and reach the border by next Tuesday.

On the northeast coast, the South Korean Capital Division struck out anew up the coastal highway towards Siberia, 90 miles to the northeast. “(Volume 94-272) All sources, Belleville News-Democrat.

U.S. 7th Division at Manchurian Border.

U.S. Commander Fears Reds Preparing New Assault With 100,000 Troops.

Tokyo, Wednesday (UP)- “Communist resistance virtually disappeared on the Korean front today in the wake of the U.S. Seventh Division surge to the Manchurian border, but American commanders feared a new assault by 100,000 Reds was building up in the northwest. The South Korean Capital Division, east of the American Seventh, broke through the last known Communist defense south of the port of Chongjin and drove to within 15 miles of the city and to within 67 miles of the Russian border.” (Volume 94-274) November 22, 1950.

This last above states fear of 100,000 force army in the northwest, that is Eighth Army’s territory! Yet, the 7th Division that far north on the Manchurian border would be deprived of its rear guard here at Kapsan—the need to retain the 1st Battalion of the 31st there—and relocate Task Force MacLean some 150 miles away at Chosin!

This was embarrassing to the 1st Marine Division, their drive now to move westward.

As General Smith is on record as deliberately delaying his mission.

But before we can move out, towards Chosin Reservoir, we must identify the position of MacLean and his forces, and his mission prior to its relocation, that being removed from history, that being some 140 plus miles by road network between the two areas.

For that information we must turn to and consider Operational order # 23 (Declassified 7/13/91)

The date of this order by MacLean is 222400 Nov. 50, its location is vicinity; Untaek, Korea. Note this date is the day following the arrive of the 17th Regiment at the Yalu River, and at Hyesanjin. The newspapers heavy with headlines on this achievement by the forces of the 7th Infantry Division. The next day 23 November would be Thanksgiving Day to be observed with turkey dinner in this strange and foreign land.

Important point is 1.b. What the rest of the division is doing. within zone assigned.

SECRET
Declassified 7/13/91
National Archives
RCT 31
222400 NOV. 50
Vic Untaek, Korea

Order # 23
Map: Korea 1:250,000

   b. (1) 7th Inf Div: Continues adv in Z to N.
   c. (2) C Co, 13th Engr Bn, sup RCT 31.

2. a. RCT 31, b Division Res. (Division Reserve) secures MSR (Main Supply Route)
3. b. 1st Bn. Atchd USAF TACP No. 7
   (1) Block en movement into Z (Zone) from W (West) Occupy blocking position vicinity S and Y.
   (2) Be prepared to reinforce 3rd and 2nd Battalions.

3. b. 2nd Battalion Attached 2nd Platoon 31st Heavy Mortar Company.
   (1) Division control N/C
   (2) Upon release to RCT 31 control, block enemy movement into zone vicinity Pung-san.
   Prepare to reinforce 1st and 3rd Battalion.

4. e. 3rd Battalion (Will become Task Force MacLean’s next operational order number, this places and dates its prior position) continue its present mission.
   (1) Blocks enemy movement into zone from S (South) and E (East)
   (2) Prepare to reinforce 1st and 2nd Battalion.

5. d. 57th Field Artillery Battalion. D/S (Direct Support) RCT 31
6. e. 31st Heavy Mortar Company
   (1) 2nd Platoon attached 2nd Battalion.

7. f. 31st Tank Company, Provides local security MSR, vicinity assembly area.
   (2) Prepare for employment N on O (North on Order)

This order-as #22 would be marked “Secret” through #25, it will locate the 31st RCT east of the Fusen Reservoir -20 air miles east of Chosin Reservoir, with orders to proceed north upwards towards the Yalu River within our boundary zone set by General Almond on November 11, 1950.

It will “Block” enemy movement into zone South and East this being further away from Chosin Reservoir towards Kapsan and the eastern boundary limits south-easterly downward from Hapsu into Iwon, to the Sea of Japan!

This order # 23 time frame 48 Hours prior to order # 24.

Operation Order 24:

Colonel MacLean Creates his Chosin Force
SECRET
Declassified 7/13/91
National Archives

Operational Order # 24
RCT 31st
242400 November 50
Untaek Korea  
Map: Korea 1:250,000

1. a. Omitted. [What the rest of the division has been alerted to do]
   b. Omitted

2. RCT 31 (-) moves 250800 Nov 50 to assembly area vicinity Railroad station Pukchong. Prepare for further movement to the South and West by Railroad and motor.
   (Thus the movement to the west and Chosin)

Of special note, the time element between Order #23 and #24 222400 Nov 50 and 242400 Nov 50, what changed? Only that within this time frame Colonel Chiles, Almond’s G-3, was on the plane to Tokyo to see General MacArthur about Plan 8, Draft #3: Chiles being the X Corps Operational Officer, he is the expert on the plan and the one designated by Almond to present it in person to MacArthur and the one to explain any glitches in the plan. Whatever he told MacArthur causes a major change more so than the reported “minor” one of moving the boundary line into Eighth Army area. It removes completely any boundary lines set by Almond on November 11, this change effective W/O Delay, in reality it gives Almond full authority to use the 7th Division as his needs require. Chiles returns back in Korea at X Corps Headquarters prior to MacLean issuing order #24. Was there a connection? Whatever the answer Chiles brought some major changes with him via MacArthur!
   b. (1) Annex 1 -Route overlay
      (Contains the declassification notation for all three pages)
   (2) Annex 2 - March Table

3. a. 1st Battalion: Continues present mission. (per order #23;
      (1) Block
      enemy into Zone from West. Occupy blocking position vic S and Y.)
   b. 2d Bn: Atchd: 2d Plat HV Mort Co. 31st Inf. Continues present mission.

Here no change for them as well, apparently all the details are not laid out for MacLean. The 2nd Battalion while added to MacLean’s next operational order #25 will be ordered into Chosin to seize Objective (a) of that order. That is not revealed here nor are they added to the March Table which is part of this operational order #24.

Here the isolation and movement of the 3rd Bn. is outlined.
   c. Atchd HV Mort Co (-) 31st Inf.
      Coll (Collection) Plat (-) Med Co. 31st Inf.
      This latter unit (Medical Company) will be separated at road block at Hudong-ni, never a part of the Task Force MacLean-Faith. It will however contribute to assist the wounded at Hagaru-ri

      I&R Platoon
      AT&M Platoon
      Moves to assy area vic Pukchong, Annex 2- March Table.

   d. 57th FA. Bn. (Less C Battery)*
Atchd 15th AAA Bn, D Battery
Moves to assy area vic Pukchong, Annex 2-March Table.
* C Battery would become attached to the 2nd Battalion

e. HV TK Co 31st Inf. (Stopped at road block)
Moves to assy area vic Pukchong, Annex 2-March Table
f. Med Co, 31st Inf:
(1) Coll Plat (-), atchd to 3d Bn, moves to assy area vic Pukchong, Annex 2-March Table.
(2) Co (-) continues mission.
g. HV Mort. Co., 31st Inf.
(1) Co (-) moves to assy area vic Pukchong, Annex 2-March Table.
(2) 2d Plat atchd 2d Bn.
h. I&R Plat atchd 3d Bn.
i. Co C, 13th Engr (C) Bn:
Facilitates move of RCT by work on MSR.
j. A T & M Plat: Atchd to 3d Bn.
x. (1) Halts: 15 min on odd hr starting at 0900. Noon meal halt from 1300 to 1400.
(2) Rate of march as dictated by rd conditions.
4. Administrative details later as announced.
5. a. N/C
b. (1) RCT 31 CP (fwd) in column at rear of 57th FA Bn.
(2) RCT 31st CP (rear) present location.
(3) Others report upon reaching Pukchong.

MacLean
Col
Declassified 7/13/91
National Archives

On the following page is the last page of Order # 24, it contains the authorization for its declassification. The other pages, the order itself and the March Table are part of this complete order!

This is the order of march to Pukchong the units must react in an urgent move to gather at the rail station there, here will be issued further instructions for the march towards Chosin. Those units to be shipped by rail, men and tanks to save time will load and leave from here, those with trucks at their disposal will head out on orders from their commanding officers. Some trucks will be deadlined and otherwise delayed due to required maintenance of these units. Time was too short for delay. Thus this force begins its first phase in its Rendezvous with Death. Within the time span of one short week; This force will vanish from history, erased from its pages, recorded men as MIA’s. Lost to history for some 30 years. Its total accounting - never to be truly known!

-Movement in Miles-

Untaek is located east of Kapsan vicinity, in order to reach Pukchong assembly area this force like that of Lt. Col. Don Faith’s force would require movement east of the Fusen Reservoir parallel below Hapsu. To move southeast to the junction west of Chorin. From there downward it would join the MSR (Leading east to the coast
and

Iwon) it will continue downward to the railroad station near Pukchong
covering an
estimated road distance of 60 miles. From Pukchong to Hamhung another 50
miles, here we will follow the same route of Faith's forces some hours
earlier-records and memory of time lines long lost to history- the battle event to come
long erasing minor memory! From here the route would continue from Hamhung
into Sinhu another 50 miles.

There being no direct route into Chosin from Kapsan nor Pungsan; only
via Hamhung was a road sufficient for rapid movement of troops and supplies. So
on midnight of November 24-25 warming tents were struck and would become a
thing of the past for us, only barrel fires would be permitted for 15 minute
stops on odd hours along the 160 mile route and road mach into Chosin.

**********

Main body of order 24: On the following page is the last page of Order # 24
, it contains the authorization for its declassification. The other pages,
the order itself and the March Table are part of this complete order!

General Almond Comments on General O.P. Smith
and the Army's History

The following is taken from a letter from General Edward M. Almond, USA (Ret) to
Almond is commenting on a draft of Volume III of the Army history of the Korean War
Policy and Direction.

It has been edited to leave out extraneous references, except where necessary, and to
provide some continuity. General Almond's spelling, punctuation and capitalization has
been followed as closely as possible. The original can be found in the National Archives.
For serious students of the Korean War or those who might be concerned with the way it
has been edited I'll be glad to provide a photocopy of the original letter.

The Invasion of North Korea

Reference to the delay in beginning the landing operation of the X CORPS troops after the
planned date of 20 October, as stated cm Page 31, this should be expanded to show that
General. Almond, appreciating the rapid advance of the RCK troops to the WONSAN area
had moved a small command and communication group from X CORPS by air from KIMPO
AIRFIELD to WONSAN AIRFIELD on 15 October and this actually became the X CORPS
Advance CP at WONSAN on 20 October when the troop landings was delayed. On 19
October General Almond went by boat from the Mt. McKinley, the Command Ship, to the
battleship MISSOURI and from the MISSOURI to WONSAN by helicopter. He took
command of all ROK troops in Northeast Korea-, the leading elements of which were then
moving on HAMHUNG, and thus acted in consonance with GHQ orders issued on 16
October;
The arrangements between Admiral Struble and Admiral Doyle and General Almond, whereby this new landing site at IWON, for the 7th U. S. Division were agreed upon and executed should be expanded with a description the operation in more detail as illustrating a great lesson in the basic principles of war: COOPERATION. This agreement was a new and justified change in the original plan based on the changed tactical situation on the east coast of KOREA. General Smith of the Marines had nothing to do with the change and the single reference to his "chronicles" is beside the point and of no value. X CORPS records, and my own personal DIARY which is an official publication from my Headquarters and now microfilmed in the U. S. Marine Corps Headquarters, are the correct references for this discussion.

The last sentence on Page 33 is misleading because as CG X CORPS I sent a Radio on 30 October "Personal to MacArthur" stating that: "On this date I have interviewed prisoners captured by ROK troops near the CHOSIN RESERVOIR in the number of 16 Chinese soldiers (of a Mortar and Artillery Unit) which crossed the YALU RIVER near MANPOJIN on 18 October 14 days ago.

The Threshold of Victory

General Smith's estimate...of what X CORPS thought, namely that the Chinese were volunteers, is directly opposite to what the X CORPS estimate actually did evaluate. On 11 November the X CORPS knew that it was confronted by the 124th and by elements of the 125th and 126th Chinese Divisions General Smith's approval of Orders is beside the point; the X CORPS was complying with Orders from General MacArthur to resume the advance and that is what the Commander intended to do.

[The] record should make this point abundantly clear and not leave to "opinions" of General Smith as the only record of the case and thus to go unchallenged: Example: On 2 November the X CORPS knew that the 7th U. S. Marines, one of General Smith's Regiments, was opposed by Chinese troops of the 370th and 372nd Regiments; that both of these Regiments were from the 124th Chinese Division and that this had occurred at the CHANG-JIN POWER PLANT Northwest of Hamhung. General Smith's charges, on 10 November that the X Corps Commander and his Staff thought that his (Smith's) troops were opposed by Chinese "Volunteers" are totally unfounded and should not even be in this factual history.

General Smith's views...on the X CORPS attitude "Optimism or pessimism without middle ground," and his other views that are "also admirably illustrated," in his letter to General Cates namely, among which can be cited that, "Almond's Orders were wrong, etc.," leave much to be desired in objective historical reporting. General Almond=s orders were issued in execution of GHQ Order Part 2, CX 67291. General Smith, not only on this occasion, showed his objections, but he so often at other times thought that the orders he received were wrong. The periods in which he had feelings, to my certain knowledge, in the order here mentioned

1. In the planning for the INCHON LANDING General Smith thought it was impossible, and certainly impossible of execution in September, and maintained this position until General Almond offered to substitute for the 7th Marine Regiment the 32nd Infantry Regiment, two battalions of which had had amphibious training. This brought General Smith to his senses and he finally decided that the landing might be made after all.

2. There was his objection to the manner of execution of the landing at INCHON.
3. Then came his objection to plans for the capture of SEOUL.

4. He objected to the outloading of Marines on 7 October, among other reasons, stating that his own supplies had to be abandoned and when I questioned what supplies, he referred to he began to describe whereupon I demanded to see what he meant and found a warehouse full of steel clothes lockers which had been brought from Japan for the service of the Marines after the landing, when General Smith, and everyone involved, knew that ship space was at a great premium. In spite of this General Smith brought material useless for the landing operations in the form of steel clothes-lockers.

5. When the Japanese Stevedores struck at WONSAN about 25 October, General Smith objected to using any part of his combat troops to unload his own supplies, in spite of the fact that this was the only possible way to accomplish the operation; he wanted a "written order" before he would comply and he got it!

6. He objected to the advance against the enemy in the vicinity of the CHOSIN Reservoir area in the effort of the X CORPS to comply with Orders from General MacArthur;

7. He had many other objections on numerous other occasions, which an interview with the undersigned could establish

In my opinion, it is most unwise to quote General Smith on such matters as he has been quoted without affording rebuttal opportunities to those in opposition to his estimate, namely, the combat commanders concerned.

Returning to the particular objection of General Smith to push his Division North of Hamhung and toward the CHOSIN RESERVOIR where the enemy was, it is abundantly clear to me, and it was to my Staff, that what General Smith was really complaining about was the fact that his division happened to be the division used to, "Push into the forward area and meet an unknown force inland."

On the very day that General Smith was doubting the CORPS Commander=s judgment and leadership, by exposing his Division to the enemy unduly, and pushing beyond the flank of the Eighth Army, the Third U.S. Infantry Army Division was beginning to arrive at WONSAN for the purpose of supporting X CORPS and protecting its left flank where the gap was, and where Smith feared the worst, "That he would be out on a limb." The Third Division was the force that was to be in echelon and on the left (West) side. to the rear, the open flank side, of the Marine Division, for the purpose of protecting the gap of the exposed left of X CORPS, which General Smith SO loudly condemns.

General. Smith also fails to indicate that when the Marines withdrew From, the RESERVOIR area, early in December, that this same 3rd Division (U.S. Army) was in place and backed up this withdrawal and provided the wedge that moved to SUDONG and opened the avenue through which General Smith withdrew and at the same time that he issued his supposedly famous statement "Retreat hell - we're just attacking in another direction." It appears that the Marine General=s statements very decidedly appealed to the chronicler of this Chapter and also to the exclusion of all other aspects and other persons views of the operations under consideration.

It should be noted that in several places in the Chapter the impression is created that liaison ordered between the Eighth Army and the X CORPS' had not been made, prior to 14
November. This is entirely inadequate and is thoroughly covered by Appleman in his,
"SOUTH TO THE NAKTONG: NORTH TO THE YALU," record of events.

[With reference to the plan to attack west] it appears entirely unfair to infer that JSPOG
[Joint Strategic Plans and Operations Group of the Far Eastern Command headquarters]
was influenced in its strategic judgment partly due to the fact that General Almond was
still the Chief of Staff. This is not only unfair to General Almond, but to the officers who
composed the JSPOG organization. This whole page of analysis deserves a complete re-
analysis and the clarification that X CORPS was executing the Orders of GHQ as the
military situation was being developed, and everyone knows the situation was rapidly
changing; furthermore, that General Almond and his Staff were making revised estimates
as well as General Smith and JSPOG.

There is some attempt to accommodate the foregoing by quoting from General Almond's
letter to General Wright on the situation ..., but the damage by inference to which objection
is raised here has already been done in expressing the "charm of General Smith's views."
Twenty-twenty hindsight always intrigues the historiographer, and this occasion provides
no exception. Example: How would the Chinese force be determined except by moving into
it and developing its strength which was unknown, as is admitted in all references that I
have so far had the privilege of reading. General Almond's letter to Wright gives the
reasons for this developing action and the road net on X CORPS' West Flank with the gap,
as has been so abundantly described. The very presence of the Marines and the X CORPS
on the East Flank of the Eighth Army, and in spite of the gap, was to prevent the
envelopment of the Eighth Army East Flank, and as a matter of history, no one can dispute
the fact that the utilization of this so-called gap privilege by the Chinese never occurred.

The Chinese Take a Hand

The remarks in this Chapter are snide, when they refer to, "the somewhat less than
prophetic note" in General Almond's message to Barr, "...I am confident that you will hold
it." This seems to show an unfair attitude towards the X CORPS. General Barr did hold it
until he was ordered to withdraw from it as the situation changed on the Eighth Army
Front and the X CORPS West Left Flank due to the Chinese force being developed there,
and eventually amounting to seven or eight Chinese divisions which even the cautious
Marine Commander, General Smith, had not visualized!

It would seem that there would be some virtue in X CORPS having, by opposing these
Chinese Divisions, furnished some opposition to their having moved against Eighth Army's
East Flank, which they never did. This aspect appears to have escaped the "objective"
analysis being made here.

As to the number of lives saved by General Smith's cautious delays, such inferences are
subtle criticisms of an aggressive commander who was attempting to operate in
accordance with his Orders and certainly to the best interest, under the circumstances, of
the troops that he commanded.

It is difficult to rationalize the account of X CORPS leadership as set forth in Army official
records, "SOUTH TO THE NAKTONG - NORTH TO THE YALU" with this "Marine
interpreted" version in this manuscript. I refer to Pages 741-747 of "SOUTH TO THE
NAKTONG - NORTH TO THE YALU," to show the difference between the two versions of
the operations. The first describes what actually happened, and the latter, this manuscript,
is casting aspersions on GHQ and X CORPS leadership in a hazy fluctuating situation that
no one really understood, and the only development of which was that which occurred under pressure from both the Eighth Army and X CORPS.

A Strong Dilema

In commenting on the disposition of the Eighth Army and X CORPS on 10 December it should be made clear that:

a. The enemy had apparently withdrawn

b. The lack of roads between the two forces and the rugged terrain in the gap area, was within itself a degree of protection to rapid enemy movements in that area.

c. That the Marine Division was in itself the forward flanking protection of the X CORPS, and that the 3d U. S. (Army) Division was the left flank. X CORPS protected, echeloned to the left rear of the 1st Marine Division.

d. That in the arrangement of Left (West) Flank protection, one (26th ROK) Regiment of the 3rd Division was opposite HAMHUNG, and another Regiment, the 65th of the 3rd Division, was located opposite YONGHUNG on the West Flank; that another Regiment, the 15th of the 3rd Division, was at WONSAN and the 7th Regiment was in 3rd Division Reserve.

e. Finally, this gap between Eighth Army and X CORPS was never entered by the Chinese, principally because of the difficulty of terrain and lack of a road system. Reference here is found on Page 746, in "SOUTH TO THE NAKTONG - NORTH TO THE YALU." This reference gives a very thorough description of the importance of the gap and whether or not it was taken advantage of.

The evident urge, which constantly appears in these Chapters concerning X CORPS operations in Northeast Korea, seems to be to find fault with leadership of the commanders in KOREA from General MacArthur on down. The real objective should be to set forth aspects of terrain and the troop operations as they took place.