

# INDEX TO VOLUME 1 NO. 7



<b>Chosin to Hungnam</b> By Gen. Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr.	<b>Page</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Inchon Landing</b> Marine Corps Gazette; Gen. O.P. Smith	<b>Page</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The Chosin Reservoir</b> Marine Corps Gazette; Gen. O.P. Smith	<b>Page</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Obituaies</b>	<b>Page</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Hagaru 1950</b> Continued from Vol I-6	<b>Page</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>The Continuing Saga of Bill Hall's LETTERS FROM KOREA</b>	<b>Page</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Volume IV Marine Operations The Pohang Guerilla Hunt</b>	<b>Page</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Editor's comments</b>	<b>Page</b>	<b>24</b>

Another "ancient" record we found in our "musty archives. We thought you might enjoy.

### **Chosin Reservoir To Hungnam**

*Late in the month of November, 1950, the 1st Marine Division, under the command of MajGen Oliver P. Smith, began its withdrawal from the Chosin Reservoir area to the port of Hungnam where it was to be evacuated. Months will pass before the complete record of the withdrawal is written. The following is the statement for the press by LtGen Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, and released upon his return from Hungnam, is quoted herewith:*

**Pearl Harbor, T. H.,  
16 December 1950:**

I left Hungnam, Korea, the day before yesterday after a 10 day visit to inspect the air and ground elements of the Fleet Marine Force, Pacific.

Much has been said of their actions and exploits during the past three weeks and I shall not attempt to review all of the details. There are certain things, however, which I feel are badly in need of saying with reference to the Marines in Korea and their recent experiences.

To begin with, and despite the frequent accounts in the press, the men of the First Marine Division did not retreat. They obeyed orders - sensible orders from higher authority - to conduct an orderly move from exposed positions to a more secure area near Hamhung.

Secondly, the First Marine Division was not "trapped" at Hagaru-ri, despite the frequent misuse of that word. When

they began their advance into the Chosin Reservoir area, the Marines were well aware that guerrilla forces might cut their supply lines. They prepared for this eventuality by assembling heavy stocks of supplies in forward dumps and preparing for delivery of needed material by air. Because of these factors, when the crisis arose, it was readily met.

When, on the 26th of November, our forces in Korea found themselves in a new and different war, engaged with a numerically superior and fresh enemy, a logical action on the part of the X Corps, of which the 1st Marine Division is a part, was to concentrate its forces. This involved moving the First Marine Division southward over 75 miles of the most tortuous mountain roads conceivable. Upon receiving its order to move, the Division found itself heavily engaged with six Chinese Communist Divisions and, in order to carry out its mission, it was necessary to defeat those Communist forces.

Whereupon the First Marine Division turned in its traces and launched a series of deadly attacks which resulted in the complete rout of all six of the Chinese Divisions opposing it. Fighting in ice, snow and subzero weather, the Division assembled itself, first at Hagaru-ri and then at Koto-ri, and drove its way through to its assigned objective.

The opposing Chinese forces were so punished by the Marines as to constitute no further threat to our cause. I believe that by no stretch of the imagination can this be described as retreat, since a retreat presupposes a defeat, and the only defeat involved in this battle was the one suffered by the Chinese. Furthermore, when the Marines arrived in Hamhung, they had

their arms, equipment, vehicles and supplies with them. Their spirits were high and they were proud of their accomplishments.

In all of this I have spoken only of the ground Marines involved. Actually, accomplishment of their difficult task would have been rendered immeasurably more complicated had it not been for the tireless efforts of the First Marine Air Wing, which provided close and accurate air support day and night, snow and shine, for their comrades on the ground. I have seen this Marine air-ground team grow stronger and sounder during the past 25 years, but I felt it had reached its full bloom when I talked to men on the bleak plateau of Koto-ri and watched tears come to their eyes when they spoke about the effectiveness of their air support.

As a final word, I know it will gratify many who have felt concern in the matter to learn that I personally know that the Marines were adequately provided with the clothing and equipment necessary for fighting in the brutal winter weather which exists on the North Korean plateau. Nevertheless, and with the best of equipment which they had, their fighting was still accompanied by great hardship. The way they bore this hardship was the most impressive aspect of my visit. The men faced their lot with cheerful understanding and demonstrated the same steadfast character that has come to be associated with Marines everywhere. They even kept their sense of humor. On one tank parked on the windswept plateau near Koto-ri I saw the following timely inscription: "Only 14 more shooting days until Christmas."

---

#### Marine Corps Gazette - 1960

Today, the Inchon landing, in the eyes of the public, is symbolized by its bold and brilliant concept. It is so known because the execution of the concept was an unqualified success. To me, a remarkable and little remembered aspect of this landing was the ability of the Navy and Marine Corps to place a combat ready Marine division off the beaches of Inchon within the time limits imposed, and with the resources in men, ships, and material then available in the peacetime establishment.

The first impact of the concept of the Inchon Landing on the 1stMarDiv came on 25 July 1950. The Division did not then know that on 15 September, 52 days later, it would be landing at Inchon, Korea. All the information it had was contained in a directive to bring the Division (less 1 RCT) to war strength and sail it for the Far East between August 10th and 15th, 16 days later, ready for combat. This meant that within 16 days the Division had to begin the embarkation of some 15,400 ground troops in augmented war strength units with the additional equipment required. For the Navy it meant assembling, on short notice, 19 ships of all classes.

What were the immediate resources in men, equipment, and ships? There were 3,500 shorttimers at Camp Pendleton. Earlier, the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade (about 5,200 ground troops), drawn from the 1stMarDiv, had been rushed to Korea. The bulk of the required additional equipment was in "mothballs" at Barstow in the Mojave Desert. The Navy had little amphibious shipping on the West Coast and had to

use available commercial types.

To meet the personnel requirements, authority was granted to extend the enlistments of the shorttimers, and Marines were ordered in from posts and stations throughout the United States, from the 2dMarDiv at Camp Lejeune, and from the Reserves. "Mothballed" equipment was dusted off at Barstow and rushed to Camp Pendleton, or direct to the docks. There was not time to test all of the equipment; some had to be checked after arrival in Japan. By working around the clock, incoming Marines were classified and those deemed combat ready were integrated into units. Loading facilities at San Diego were cramped. Some of the ships were slow in arriving. One ship, after being 20 per cent loaded, blew two boilers, and had to be unloaded and replaced. Ships were routed to Kobe, Japan, as soon as loaded. Despite the delays and setbacks all ships were sailed within acceptable time limits.

The full impact of the concept of the Inchon Landing was felt by the Division when the division commander arrived in Tokyo on 22 August and was told that the Division would make an assault landing at Inchon on 15 September, the only day in September when the tides were suitable for a major landing. Twenty-four days remained in which to draw up plans, issue an order, reload the Division in amphibious shipping at Kobe, forward to Korea the additional personnel and equipment to bring the units of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade up to war strength, and then proceed to Inchon, rendezvousing with the units of the Brigade en route. On 22 August the main body of the Division were on USS Mt McKinley in Tokyo.

By dedicated work on the part of the Division staff, and with the wholehearted cooperation of Adm Doyle's PhibGruOne staff, within three days a detailed plan for the Inchon Landing was drawn up, and two days later an advance planning draft of 1stMarDiv OpO 250 (Inchon Landing) was issued.

The plan had yet to be executed. The situation in Korea worsened, and the release of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade was deferred, but D-Day still remained 15 September. The Brigade was finally released from combat at midnight, 5 September, six days before its first LST had to sail for Inchon. At Kobe, as ships carrying the main body of the Division began to arrive, men and equipment had to be reloaded into amphibious shipping. The last ship carrying men and equipment needed for the landing arrived at Kobe on 3 September; the LSTs had to depart for Inchon on 10 September. On 3 September, typhoon Jane hit Kobe.

The docks were flooded, ships broke their moorings, and one AKA had a damaged propeller requiring drydocking. Reloading was set back 24 hours. SS Noonday developed a fire in one of its holds while approaching Kobe. On 8 September, by order of the Secretary of the Navy, 500 men, all those under 18 years of age, had to be put ashore. On 10 September, after the LSTs had sailed from Kobe, Adm Doyle received another typhoon warning. Typhoon Kezia was approaching Kobe, and the sailing of the APA and AKA was advanced from 12 September to 11 September. This cut another day from reloading time, yet the Division met its deadline.

In the early morning hours of 15 September, D-Day, Marines were finally

in their assigned landing area ready to proceed to the beaches. These Marines had been drawn from many sources, but their training and indoctrination had been uniform. Furthermore, a large proportion of the officers and senior noncommissioned officers had had combat experience in amphibious operations. There had been no time for a rehearsal, but they knew what to do, and history records that they did it. All that had preceded—the accelerated planning, the constant pressure, the around the clock working parties, and the surmounting of seemingly insurmountable obstacles—all were vital to the success of the landing, with its inexorable deadline of 15 September. Today, perhaps only the participants realize this.

---

*These articles (The preceding & the following: Ed.) were written in response to a request by Lynn Montross, historian at Marine Headquarters for the past ten years. They are the first comments for publication on the Korean War ever granted by Gen O. P. Smith.*

*The last articles he published in the Gazette were in 1925 or 1926, when the magazine was a quarterly. He has, however, prepared for Marine Corps archives a total of more than 2,000 typed pages of historical material about the Korean War. His purpose was to make sure the accomplishments of his men from August 1950 to April 1951 were preserved for the future. The only fault that could be found with these records, as Mr. Montross says, is that they are so completely objective and self-effacing that Gen Smith himself does not receive the credit he deserves. In this same spirit he has requested that payment for these two articles be turned over to the Scholarship Fund of the 1stMarDiv Association.*

***This article appeared in the  
Marine Corps Gazette - Sept 1960***

**By Gen O. P. Smith, USMC (Ret)**

The setting and character of the Chosin Reservoir Operation were entirely different from those of the Inchon/Seoul Operation. The mountains in the Chosin Reservoir area were forbidding. In late November the weather was bitter; the single road available to the Division was tortuous; and the enemy situation was ominous.

Early in November the 1st Marine Division had decimated one Chinese division near Chinhungni, then continued the northward advance in accordance with the general plan of the higher command to drive to the Yalu River. Two other Chinese divisions were known to be in the general area, but were like will o'the wisp.

In late November, identifications of captured Chinese indicated the presence of additional fresh Chinese divisions. Somewhere, in the bleak mountains surrounding us and beyond the reach of our ground patrols, the Chinese were swarming. The excellent air discipline observed by the Chinese during daylight hours prevented our air from giving us any clear picture of what was in front of us.

In addition to the uncertainty as to the enemy, our situation gave us a feeling of isolation. There was a gap of 80 miles between the 1stMar Div and the 8th Army to the southwest. A small Army task force was on the east side of the Reservoir near us, but beyond was a gap of 125 miles to the nearest friendly unit to the northeast. To the south, it was 75 miles from Yudamni, on the

western arm of the Chosin Reservoir, to the coast. This feeling of isolation took on a menacing aspect when the Chinese closed in around us on 28 November to a depth of 35 miles.

Under such conditions Marines are at their best. Discipline, devotion, and loyalty are accentuated. The greater the danger, the greater their cohesiveness. Only an organization with these qualities could have made the breakout from the Chosin Reservoir.

The Chinese plan was to fragment our force and then destroy the fragments. By employing their great numerical superiority and by exploiting the gaps on our flanks, the Chinese did succeed initially in fragmenting the combat elements of the Division to a depth of 35 miles. For Korea, we were considered to be well concentrated for combat. Our combat elements, however, were disposed in depth, with the major part of the force in the most advanced position and garrisons at four other locations to the rear, protecting our vulnerable main supply road. Our plan, after we received the order to withdraw, was to gather our strength; hold firmly the intermediate garrisons to the rear; then, starting with the 5th and 7th RCTs at Yudamni, drive southward, successively rejoining the garrisons to the rear, and gaining strength as each garrison was rejoined. We succeeded in our plan, the Chinese failed in theirs.

Throughout the operation the action was sustained; yet, to my mind, there was a turning point. This came when the 5th and 7th RCTs fought their way from Yudamni to Hagaru-ri. At Hagaru-ri we had accumulated supplies, and our engineers had completed an airstrip capable of handling two-engine planes. With the airstrip we could bring in supplies and

replacements and evacuate our casualties. Hagaru-ri was also a suitable location for the airdrop of supplies by the Air Force. To indicate some measure of the importance of the airstrip to us, in a period of six days more than 4,200 casualties, 3,100 of them Marines, were evacuated from this strip by the combined efforts of Air Force, Navy, and Marine planes, leaving us casualty-free for the breakout from Hagaru-ri to Kotori.

Although the RCTs and the garrison at Hagaru-ri had been depleted by casualties, there was a net gain in strength. When the Chinese struck Yudamni on the night of 27/28 November, the combined strength of the 5th and 7th RCTs was about 8200. When the breakout from Hagaru-ri to Kotori was launched on 6 December, the breakout force comprised some 10,000 troops. These were 10,000 fighting men, for, until the column incurred new casualties, there was no train of wounded to burden the operation.

Furthermore, this was a very powerful force. It was well supplied with ammunition, fuel, and rations; was powerfully supported by Marine and carrier based air; possessed organically artillery, tanks, and the whole gamut of infantry weapons; and had dedicated officers and men to carry the fight to the enemy. The Chinese strength consisted of their superiority in numbers and their habitual employment of night attacks, but these could not stop the advance.

The fight from Hagaru-ri to Kotori cost us 500 casualties. These casualties were immediately evacuated by air and the advance was resumed the following day. Now, including the Marine battalion fighting up the mountain from

Chinhungni, there were over 16,000 men to make the final successful breakout.

In this 13 day operation, fought mostly at elevations over 3,500 feet, with the thermometer dropping to 25 degrees below zero, the 1stMar Div outlasted and outfought the eight Chinese divisions it encountered. Throughout, the Division maintained its integrity and brought out its equipment, its wounded, and even its prisoners.

The enemy suffered staggering combat losses. In addition, the Chinese ineffectives due to the cold far exceeded ours. We had frostbite, but there was no delay due solely to exposure and only two deaths where exposure was a contributing factor. The Chinese, lacking tentage and having a rudimentary medical service, undoubtedly lost many of their seriously wounded due to exposure. The 1stMarDiv was well equipped with organic weapons and was ably supported by air, not only for close support, but also for airdrop and airlanding of supplies, and for the evacuation of casualties.

Yet, in the final analysis, the weapons and support would have been of no avail had not these Marines, in their 35 mile fight from Yudamni to Chinhungni, demonstrated to a superlative degree that physical obstacles, weather, and the enemy could not stop men who maintained their discipline, were professionally competent, loyal, devoted, and capable of self-sacrifice.

*When Marines of 1stMarDiv launched their drive from Hagaru-ri on 6 Dec 1950, they had already been fighting south for nearly a week. Ahead lay steeper mountains, colder day and*

*nights, many more of the enemy. Gen Smith was Division Commander, had led his men from the late summer assault at Inchon north to Chosin Reservoir. He directed the breakout from its beginning at Yudamni to its final goal, the seaport of Hungnam, 75 miles away. This article is the second of two by Gen Smith covering operations in Korea.*

*His first, INCHON LANDING, appeared in the Gazette: Sep '60. They are the first comments for publication on the Korean War ever granted by the author, and are part of more than 2000 typed pages of material he prepared for Marine Corps archives. Purpose: to make sure the deeds of his men are preserved for the future.*

---

---

#### OBITUARIES:

We have been informed that the following Marines have passed on:  
Darrell C. Thorseth, I/3/5  
Sault Saint Marie. Michigan  
10 March 1990

Don A. Anderson (Unit unknown)  
LaJolla, California  
21 January 1990

*I've buried my friend this mournful day.  
Why do we grieve so when friends pass  
away?  
It can't be for them for they are beyond our  
tears and pain.  
If truth be known, tis ourselves alone for  
whom grief is a gain.*

*How so, you say?  
Tis the space in our hearts that it must  
heal,  
So sorrow is but balm  
to repair the void that remains so real;  
But not too long to suffer this grievous loss,  
For life is at best a gamble, won on the toss*

*Our friend who has left us would not want  
us long mourning his passing,  
For friends never want but love's reward,*

*not our pain or a sorrowful chord.  
So be of good cheer, and find a brighter  
side,  
Our friend has gone where we soon will be,  
warmed by our love for eternity.*

*It's times like these that a man's deeds we  
record,  
Life's efforts and their reward.  
We relive the fights we fought, the battles  
won,  
The girls we loved, our wives, our  
daughters, our sons,*

*We all will pass through this gate soon  
enough,  
And therein lies our sorrow.  
What could I have done,  
Had I but tomorrow?*

**HAGARU 1950**  
**Continued from Vol. 1-6**

At 0400 there was little to prevent the communists on East Hill from pouring into the perimeter except their own lack of numbers. After the Division CP had been hit by several bullets and mortar shell fragments, a bodyguard was assigned to the commanding general in case of a breakthrough. The hero of this anxious hour was a radio operator who voluntarily remained alone at his post and sent back information about the enemy.

Toward dawn, the CO of 3/1 gave his executive officer the mission of assembling what troops he could scrape together and attacking to restore the lines on East Hill. It was broad daylight when this composite force of about 200 men, odds and ends of a dozen service units combined with stragglers, climbed the slope with artillery and air support. Casualties were not heavy, but steep, icy heights had as frustrating an effect as CCF automatic weapons fire on the 75 exhausted men who were stopped

near the crest. After an unsuccessful attempt to hold their ground, they fell back and dug in at the foot of the 500-foot hill. Their disappointment was tempered, however, by the satisfaction of rescuing the radio operator, who had been wounded.

Marine air and artillery worked over the reverse slopes vigorously, and a second unsuccessful attack on East Hill was made that afternoon by a platoon of Able Co engineers. After toiling up the north slope with great difficulty, they were pinned down by automatic weapons fire from Chinese communists in estimated platoon strength, and directed to withdraw.

The casualty-thinned perimeter defenders now fixed their hopes on reinforcements getting through from Koto-ri. A task force had fought its way over half the distance by late afternoon and requested a command decision as to the advisability of proceeding. Upon being ordered by CG 1st MarDiv to resume the advance, George Co of 3/1, the company-size 41st British Commando and 2 platoons of Marine tanks slugged ahead against stubborn resistance while the rear elements of the column returned to Koto-ri. This left an Army infantry company, a Commando platoon and about 100 Marine service troops isolated with their vehicles in "Hell Fire Valley. After a brave all-night fight the survivors ran out of ammunition, and those who could not escape were forced to surrender.

About 1915, the head of the task force fought through to Hagaru at grievous cost in casualties. There were no CCF attacks of any consequence on the night of 29-30 November and, at 0800, George Co moved out in an attempt to retake East Hill with air and

artillery support. Again it was found that the terrain itself offered as many difficulties as the enemy; and though the Marines recovered some of the lost ground, they were unable to close the gap to the left.

That night, 3 bugle calls and a green flare were the signals for a large-scale attack at 2335 on the Item Co front, followed half an hour later by an assault in force on the new George Co line near the crest of East Hill. Artillery and mortar fire supported communists who poured into the gap on the left, which was taken under direct fire by How Btry howitzers.

From the doorway of his CP the commanding general watched the fight by the flickering light of a burning Korean house. Advancing communists, silhouetted against the flames, made lucrative targets for the machine guns of stationary Marine tanks and the rocket launchers of the AT Co, 7th Marines.

George Co, under attack both from front and flank, pulled back until it could form a V-shaped line of defense. But at last the CO of 3/1 had the luxury of a few good combat troops in reserve, and he sent a detachment from the 41st Commando as reinforcement. By daybreak the MLR had been regained on East Hill and enemy action in the Item Co zone was reduced to scattered small arms fire.

The new day, 1 December, proved to be a turning point for the Hagaru perimeter. That afternoon the first cargo plane landed on the 40 per cent completed airstrip and took off with 39 wounded men. It was to be the forerunner of others during the next 5 days until all casualties were evacuated and 573 Marine replacements flown in.

Equally heartening was the radio message to the effect that the Marines at Yudam-ni and Toktong Pass had seized the initiative and begun their fighting breakout to Hagaru.

Although the CO of 3/1 and his officers could not have realized their good fortune, the enemy had already shot his bolt at Hagaru for the time being. There were to be no more large-scale CCF attacks on the perimeter from 1 December until the 5th, after 3/1 was relieved at 1200 by the 5th Marines, recently arrived from Yudam-ni. During this period, with the CG 1st MarDiv in operational control of all Army as well as Marine units in the area, the remnants of 3 hard-hit 7th Infantry Division battalions east of the Reservoir were taken into the perimeter. Supplies were replenished by airdrop after the arrival of the Yudamni Marines, and final preparations made for initiating the breakout from Hagaru to the sea on 6 December.

Not until then, when it was too late, did the enemy at last make the all-out attack on East Hill which would probably have resulted in a disastrous breakthrough at a time when the perimeter depended on 2 Marine rifle companies as its main pillars of defense. As it was, the battle-hardened 5th Marines had a tough fight and took heavy casualties to stop a CCF assault in force.

Losses of 3/1 were 33 KIA, 10 DOW, 270 WIA, 2 MIA and 105 non-battle casualties, chiefly frostbite cases.

Although the total losses of the many other diverse units is still unknown, the cost in casualties of defending a perimeter 7,650 yards in circumference and 4,670,000 square

yards in area, can only be considered remarkably moderate.

Enemy units during the period were identified by prisoners as the 172d, 173d and 174th Regiments of the 58th CCF Division and the 176th Regiment of the 59th Division. Casualties, as estimated by prisoners, were 90 per cent for the 172d and 50 per cent for the other 3 regiments, making a total of 8,550 killed and wounded.

Some puzzling aspects of CCF tactics were also cleared up by prisoner interrogations. It was hard to understand, for instance, why the Chinese attacked in force on the night of 28-29 November and again in the early morning hours of 1 December, only to allow 3/1 a comparative lull during the next 4 nights. The answer seems to be that the 2 CCF divisions, depending on animal and human transport, reached the objective area with a limited amount of ammunition; and when it was expended, operations had to be curtailed accordingly.

Each infantry battalion, according to POW testimony, left the Yalu with 180 rounds for its two 82mm mortars and 240 rounds for its eight 60mm mortars. One box of cartridges was allotted to each of the 12 light machine guns in every infantry company, and the 120 enlisted men received 80 rounds of small arms ammunition apiece. Thus, it is evident that the communists had staked everything on delivering a quick knockout blow to the 1stMar Div, and their losses must have been frightful after a repulse left them stranded in sub-zero weather with inadequate food and shelter and only the most primitive care for the sick and wounded. Moreover, the continued air and artillery harassment and interdiction compounded these

problems of the CCF.

The limitations of CCF ammunition also explain why so few enemy artillery and mortar rounds ever hit the interior of a vulnerable perimeter. Apparently the Communists saved every available shell for the front lines in an effort to set up a decisive breakthrough.

On the other hand, there can be no doubt that the Marine battalion, so much outnumbered in terms of warm bodies, owed its defensive victory to unstinted use of ammunition as well as a great superiority in supporting arms. Not many reliable statistics have been compiled, but we do know that the 2 infantry companies fired 2900 60mm rounds alone during the critical night of 28-29 November, or more than 10 times the entire supply of a CCF battalion. During the same period, the 81mm mortars of 3/1 fired some 1100 rounds and Dog Btry about 1200 rounds.

A Marine engineer officer found 3/1 supporting arms an awesome spectacle that night as seen from the high ground north of Hagaru. "At times," he said, "the whole perimeter seemed to erupt like a volcano in one great explosion. The chatter of the machine guns and the drumfire of the mortars and howitzers never stopped the whole night long."

The importance of supporting arms, then, appears to be the first lesson of the Hagaru perimeter. A close second is the necessity for good local intelligence, such as the CIC team provided, not only for the disposition of troops around the perimeter but also the assignment of targets for artillery and mortar interdiction fires. For there is no question that more than one potential CCF attack was broken up or seriously blunted in the assembly area.

There were object lessons, too. Foremost was the lapse in terrain reconnaissance which led to so much trouble on East Hill. For lack of time this ground was evaluated from a distance, during the appraisal of the area in general. As a consequence, when the Marines lost the original MLR, they were at such a handicap in terrain, that comparatively small CCF numbers could not be dislodged by attackers using ropes to climb the icy slopes. Fortunately, it took the Chinese 48 hours to perceive their advantage; and by the time they sent reinforcements, the Marines had a rifle company in line instead of service troops.

But even allowing for errors of commission and omission in an operation with a 3 hour planning period, the conduct of the defense left precepts which can be studied with profit. Judging by the results, it would be hard to find a more economical means of holding vital ground against superior numbers. In fact, the moral of Hagaru is that if you can't be everywhere at once during a fight against odds, the next best thing is to be in a perimeter.

---

---

**The Continuing Saga of Bob Hall's  
LETTERS FROM KOREA**

Pohang, Korea  
February 5, 1951

I must be about 15 letters behind now...received four night before last. Letters average seven or eight days getting here and five or six to get back to the States. I wrote Bill tonight so he would hear from me before he left. I have no doubt that he'll be sent directly to Korea. Everyone seems to hear that he is going to be sent somewhere else

before he is shipped over here.

We have one more man in our tent now learning the work, but it still isn't crowded. Yesterday I took over the office and made all the reports, as well as assigning the ammunition to the various revetments when it arrived. I have to learn quite a few codes yet, but one doesn't do that in a day. I had little to do today but read part of a copy of Newsweek and listen to the stories told by the men who came in from the field to draw ammunition.

I think I can say that very little is happening around here except that we're chasing down guerrillas, sometimes in large groups and sometimes in small ones. They're so elusive that once, when our people had them trapped in a village and gave them time to get the women and children out before the bombardment commenced, it was found that the village had been completely evacuated. Occasionally they will ambush a truck or jeep in hopes of finding ammunition or food. I'm using "we" very loosely, of course.

We had a little snow last night and it looks threatening again. We have an oil barrel attached to the stove and it works quite well, especially during warm weather.

We received shots for smallpox this morning and no one objected.

We're willing to take any shots they want to give us, especially for typhus. We were even given lice powder to put on seams, etc.

I don't know how the war is progressing, but I wouldn't be surprised if we moved from here in the near future. The Marines have never stayed in one place for very long over here.

They know from experience that as soon as they get comfortable, they can be certain that they will be told to pack up and move out. I wouldn't mind seeing more of Korea anyhow. I'm beginning to get tired of this place.

A jet fighter cracked up on the air strip near here a few days ago. The plane burned and the pilot was unable to get out.

I took over the office again today. I'm still learning about ammunition: nomenclature, codes, etc. I even got a haircut today, my first in about a month. I'm trying to grow a mustache, it seems to be the style over here. (No luck)

p. 12/4

There is a lot of scuttlebutt about some of the men being sent back to the States on a rotation plan, but it wouldn't affect me anyhow. T/Sgt. Bowen says he will call you up if he gets back to Silverdale under this rotation plan.

Pohang, Korea  
February 14, 1951  
Happy Valentine's Day!

I know I haven't written for some time. It may be longer before I write again, but don't worry if that's the case. I can't say any more than that changes are in the offing.

We've had our share of rain lately and everywhere we walk there are two or three inches of mud, the stickiest kind I ever saw. A wind came up suddenly and the tent is shaking as if it might come down.

One of our interpreters was here a while ago, a graduate of Seoul University, and I was trying to help him read an edition of Stars and Stripes. He does very well but some words are hard to explain, of course. He knows his English is weak and he wants to improve it. We told him he speaks better English than some of the men in the company and that isn't stretching the truth very far.

I still don't know much about the situation on the front lines. I've heard that the army is moving forward and, now that they've met a few Chinese, seems to be getting bogged down again. They seem to scare too easily. With our superiority in air power we should be able to handle an infinite number of Chinese. We've heard that they are using abandoned army tanks dug in as pill boxes.

I'm reading my second ammunition book now. I've learned a good deal since I've been in the A.S.P. (ammunition supply point) office here. I really believe I now know almost as much about the job as the sergeant (not Bowen) in here who has been with the company for about a year. We don't get along very well either. Every now and then he reminds me, indirectly, that he is a SERGEANT. I feel like reminding him that I was in the Corps when he was still in the eighth grade. Who knows, I could even be a Pfc. one of these days if I can't overcome the temptation to poke him squarely on his oversized nose. He may settle down yet and we may be able to get along. I'm willing to meet him more than half way.

I haven't heard from Glenn and Gloria for quite a while. I did get a long letter from Mrs. Keel, telling me about Bill's getting the measles, etc. Unless I misunderstood, Bill is on his way over here. If so, I hope I get to see him. It's been almost two months since I left the states. A few men are finally being sent back on rotation, those who were among the first to arrive here last summer. I wouldn't want to be sent back right now anyhow because I would no doubt be sent back here before long with another outfit.

Wonju, Korea  
February 25, 1951

Recently I've been either extremely busy or where I couldn't mail a letter so I didn't try to write.

We've been on the move for about a week now. We got up in the middle of the night to pull out and stayed that night in Sangju. An army outfit was in the same building and one of the doggies (a Negro) shot himself in the arm that night to get evacuated, I

suppose. When we came over from Japan in that old Japanese ship I mentioned earlier, an ambulance was brought up to haul off two doggies who had got some bad whiskey and fallen off the ramp and broken some bones.

Anyhow, next day we headed for Chungju over the worst road I've ever been on. It reminded me of the Fraser Canyon road, only it winds more and is even narrower. We saw a lot of snow and everything was covered with a heavy coat of dust.

We finally reached Chungju and stayed there several days in order to set up an ammunition dump. There were only a few of us because we were the forward echelon for the battalion. After moving around for awhile we finally set up the dump right in the middle of town in an area that had been completely demolished.

We were situated next to what appeared to be a former Jap housing area. People obviously left in a hurry because we found half-filled rice bowls, etc. Most of the furniture was still there. I enjoyed looking over the area and I've become somewhat familiar with Japanese architecture.

We found some abacuses (Jap counting devices) and Sgt. Bowen, the lieutenant, and I spent some time learning to operate them. In one of the structures was a Japanese bathtub, a big iron pot set in concrete with space beneath for a fire. Bowen asked the interpreter to round up a Korean and some kids and they started a fire under it the next morning.

Bowen took the first bath, the lieutenant was next, and I was third. Bowen hopped right into the tub but found out that was a mistake. Jap style,

we found out, is to stand outside, put soap on, rinse it off, and then get into the tub and soak. The rest of us followed that routine and didn't have to change the water so often.

We also engaged some Koreans to wash our clothes and they worked at it all day and were paid by Bowen 2,000 yuan (50 cents). We found a barber to cut our hair, 20 men, and he was paid 3,000 yuan.

I went over to visit a nearby church that was still standing. It was built of red brick, a New England style building in fairly good condition, considering the condition of the rest of the town. I examined the quarters once apparently occupied by a missionary and underneath found about a ton of silk cocoons, evidently the basis of a silk industry. There were quite a few straw hats there too. Only a few civilians were left in the town and they had been ordered to leave that day.

We had to cross another mountain range to get here, but the road was not so high this time. Still, it was raining and the road was in poor condition, barely passable, from the enormous amount of traffic it had to carry. One truck loaded with infantrymen slipped over the side, killing two men and injuring eight. It was a real strain on the drivers and I think they deserve a world of credit for negotiating the road as well as they did. To make matters worse, some of them had to head back late that night for another load. I felt cold and miserable when we got here until I saw the infantry slogging along in the mud, headed for the front. The doggies came along riding in trucks and the Marines, who were walking, still had enough spunk to bark at them or make wisecracks.

We were dumped off in the middle of a rice paddy, as usual, and had to pitch our tents in the dark. Bowen and I stayed in the cook's tent. It poured all night and everything was damp, but we were able to dry out most of our things the next day. We took over an abandoned army dump and I spent all day yesterday inventorying. The weather has improved and it's spring-like today, but the roads and bridges were rendered almost impassable by the rain. We've been watching the cargo planes dropping supplies by parachute into the fields near us.

Right near the area where we first pitched our tents we found our chief attraction for a while, a gook with the top of his head blown off. I was a little hesitant at first about looking at him, but in short order I was able to pass by and go on to chow without my appetite being affected at all. I suppose it's a sad commentary on the nature of so-called civilized beings, but I wouldn't be surprised if this sort of thing becomes more common as we move forward.

I suppose our move up here is no secret now, if it ever was. We don't exactly know what is going on in the vicinity, but we have a fairly good idea. How I would like to hear a news broadcast or see a late paper so I could get a better understanding of the overall situation. I wouldn't be surprised if this drive carries us back to the parallel where we will stop only if the Chinese show any indication of wanting to settle this dispute. We are apparently making better use of planes and artillery instead of sacrificing men wholesale as we did in the last war, which is not to say that our casualties are not high. I just hope that the army doesn't turn tail again. I'm not worried about the Marines at all. If we could keep supplied I think we could fight our way right

back to Manchuria.

Wonju occupies a strategic position controlling important road junctions and has been the scene of some very bitter fighting. The town was probably leveled long ago. I haven't actually been in it. All around are foxholes, gun emplacements, ruined buildings, etc. I hear that the areas north of us were heavily mined by the gooks, not that it has held up our advance very much.

The night before we left Pohang I got three packages, the candy from Grandma Fenno and the package you sent airmail.

I certainly am grateful. However, the watch was badly damaged and has never really run but I can easily get along without one.

Those of us in the A.S.P. office aren't very busy at the moment. We issue what ammunition we can but our supplies are very limited. I'm still learning about ammunition and will probably continue to as long as I'm here. There were a lot of items in the army dump that I had never seen before because we don't carry them. Of course, they removed all of those items as well as some we had hoped they would leave.

I doubt that I'll be writing very often for a while until things settle down a little. Don't worry about me. I have things rather easy at present, in fact, too easy. I volunteered for guard duty back at Chungju but Bowen wouldn't hear of it. We are quite some distance behind the lines now and, since this is a Marine area, we'll probably be much farther before long.

South of Hoengsong, Korea  
March 19, 1951

I realize I haven't written for some time. I suppose the main events are General MacArthur's arrival, seeing Bill last night, and the latest move of the dump, which is a continual process, and I haven't arranged these items in the order of their importance. This time I'll be staying behind. I'll probably be here a week or two before we move up to Hongchon, approximately 20 miles ahead. I suppose the lines are only 20-25 miles from the Parallel by now.

The weather has really been mild lately. I've been going around without a shirt. I even got rid of the top part of my winter underwear. Another cold spell is just beginning so I may have to put it back on again.

Gen. MacArthur, Gen. Ridgway, our own Gen. O. P. Smith, and other brass arrived the other day or, rather, passed by on an inspection tour of the Marine sector. I took a couple of pictures of Mac, but I doubt if they turn out. A helicopter followed the party along, probably on the lookout for snipers.

Two of us have been driving up forward to division headquarters at night with the daily reports. One of us drives and the other rides "shotgun," that is, armed in case of ambush. Our company commander takes the jeep up forward every day souvenir hunting and doesn't return until dark, thus our late night trip. It's a fairly long drive and the territory looks rather forbidding at night. The captain would never make the drive at night, too dangerous, I suppose. He comes back and hunkers down in his tent and remains there unless he hears some shots. If he does, he grabs his rifle and rouses everyone

to go investigate while he calls up all the outfits around us to find out what happened. We have several outposts here, machine guns, etc., but he still wants some of us in the office to stay awake as additional guards.

Furthermore, he is one of the stupidest, as well as the most egotistical and insolent men I've ever met and the company officers hold the same opinion. Next to the Chinese, he is the major obstacle we have to contend with over here, and, except for him, things are going quite well.

(ONCE IN A WHILE ON OUR NOCTURNAL TRIPS TO DIVISION HEADQUARTERS THE POSSIBILITY OF AN AMBUSH ENTERED MY HEAD. I RECALLED THE AMBUSHES I HAD HEARD ABOUT WHEN WE WERE BACK AT POHANG. BUT WE WERE NO LONGER IN THE SAME AREA AND THE NORTH KOREAN GUERRILLAS HAD BEEN WIPED OUT. WE WERE NOW BEHIND THE MARINE LINES AND THAT WOULD HAVE TO BE THE SAFEST AREA IN KOREA. I NEVER SHARED MY THOUGHTS WITH MY COMPANION AND HE NEVER BROUGHT UP THE SUBJECT EITHER).

An enemy plane flies over occasionally at night, so we have a complete blackout here. I heard that Don Bruns' outfit got bombed the other night.

We are right on the MSR (main supply route) so see everything passing through to the front. Quite a few truckloads of prisoners have come through lately; in fact, I got some pictures of them the other day. Also, quite a few South Koreans have been brought back recently too. There are two versions. Either they are deserters or, more likely, they were captured by

the North, taken to China for political indoctrination, returned to the lines with safe conduct passes, and sent back to us with best wishes...

On our way back from division headquarters last night we stopped at the 7th Motor Transport Battalion area back in the woods and found Bill's company and then him. I yelled through the door, "Keel, open the door," because I couldn't see how it opened, and he nearly fell off his cot when I walked in. I gave him the latest Islander that Frd Nicol had sent and some candy bars that I got at the battalion PX in Hoengsong yesterday. He's working in their shop and he could be much worse off. We visited for about 15 minutes and I told him where we are located and then it was time to leave. We're only a couple of miles apart. Don Bruns' outfit is not far away either. If I had moved up to the forward dump, I might have seen him.

Hoengsong, three or four miles north of here, was completely leveled as most Korean towns have been. From there it's about 20 miles to Hongchon, with part of it being a narrow, treacherous "road" through a mountain pass. I haven't been over it yet.

While I think of it, I now have an excellent map of Korea, obtained by one of the warrant officers from G-2 at division headquarters. There were only a few so I consider myself lucky.

I was glad to hear about the new sink and refrigerator. That Bruce is a conscientious little guy to get up so early and get the fire ready.

I saw something this morning that I won't forget for a while. A Korean woman walked slowly past one tent with a fairly large baby on her back.

The baby was wailing for some reason, possibly because he was hungry, though he didn't appear to be starving. They say the woman is out of her mind. Her husband, a ROK (Republic of Korea soldier) was killed somewhere in this area about two weeks ago and she is looking for him. She stares at the ground as she walks and does appear to be deranged. Gunner Alexander, one of the warrant officers, said he saw her walking along in the same manner the other day about 20 miles up the road. One of the men took some of my candy bars out to give to her. She saw him coming and started walking faster, but the baby reached out and grabbed the candy and, I believe, started eating some. Anyhow, he stopped squalling for a while. This is one little example of the aftermath of war, insignificant but pathetic just the same.

I heard that until recently, maybe even yet, there were a large number of bodies of soldiers from a U.S. division along the road to Hongchon, where they were ambushed in retreat by a large group of infiltrating Chinese. I've also heard that the Chinese (or North Koreans) had shot quite a few civilians in the same area, probably to keep them quiet. It's also been reported that some of the Chinese dead have been "marked up" a little by some of our own troops, something that would have surprised me once but does no longer because I'm beginning to realize that life on the front lines is dehumanizing and a man can easily lose his sense of values and his respect for human life and almost everything else.

The road north is littered with trucks and equipment where it was either caught by the Chinese or destroyed by the army, probably the former. I can vouch for the part of the road I've traveled. The same thing is

true beginning a few feet from our tent and each truck would have its own story to tell. There are rifles, sleeping bags, nails, gas cans, ammunition, mines, rackets, etc., lying around the wrecks, and even an occasional leg or arm or a Chinese hand grenade.

The way things are going at present in our sector it looks as if we will be up near the Parallel in a week or two and then it's anybody's guess as to what happens next. I hope the Chinese see the folly of their ways and don't force us to grind along like this all the way to China. No one would gain much.

I'm not doing much right now except playing volley ball, pinochle, checkers, and cribbage and doing a lot of reading.

**(To be Continued)**

---

---

**From Volume IV  
History of Marine Operations  
The Pohang Guerrilla Hunt**

*The New Marine Zone of Operations—1st MAW Moves to Bofu—Marine Rice Paddy Patrol operations THUNDERBOLT and ROUNDUP—Action in the Pohang-Andong Zone—KMC Regiment Joins 1st Marine Division—10th NPKA Division Scattered—New Mission for the Marines*

ON 15 JANUARY 1951, a reinforced regiment of the U.S. 25th Infantry Division drove northward from Line D to a point about half a mile from Suwon in the I Corps sector. VMF-212, flying from the CVE *Bataan*, supported the movement along with land-based Air Force planes. No CCF troops were encountered during a two-day thrust dignified with the name Operation

WOLFHOUND. Its only importance lay in its distinction as the first Eighth Army counterstroke in reply to the enemy's January offensive. Other EUSAK advances were soon to follow, each more ambitious than the last and bearing a more bristling code name.

General Ridgway proposed by this means to exert continual and increasing pressure on an enemy paying for victory with extended supply lines. Meanwhile, he hoped to build up the morale of his own troops without asking too much of them at first.

In less than seven weeks, from 1 December 1950 to 15 January 1951, the Eighth Army had been pushed back an average distance of 200 miles. Never before in the Nation's history had an American army given up so much ground and equipment in so short a time, and damage to morale was inevitable. Yet the commanding general was confident that a cure would be effected by better combat leadership and discipline. He planned to emphasize the need for these remedies until he restored the Eighth Army to tactical health.

Ridgway agreed with Marine generals that the 1st Marine Division had come out of its 13-day battle in the Chosin Reservoir area with its fighting spirit undulled. Minor respiratory ills seemed to be the only consequences felt by the survivors. "A hacking cough," recalled a Marine staff officer long afterwards, "was the symbol of the Bean Patch."

Such ills soon responded to rest and medical care, and it was a physically fit division that made the move to the new zone of operations. About one man out of three in the infantry and artillery battalions was a

newcomer to Korea. These replacements were shaping up nicely, and the new operation promised to be ideal combat training.

The move took nearly a week. While the other troops proceeded by motor, LSTs 898 and 914 sailed with elements of the Tank, Ordnance, Engineer, and Service Battalions. The Division CP opened at Sinhung, about 5 miles southeast of Pohang, on 16 January. By the following day all designated motor and water lifts were completed.

On the 18th the Marines were assigned a three-fold mission by Division OpnO 3-51:

- (1) the protection of the Pohang-Kyongju-Andong MSR (main supply route);
- (2) the securing of Andong and the two airstrips in the vicinity; and
- (3) the prevention of hostile penetrations in force to the south of the Andong-Yongdok road.

The following zones of patrol responsibility were assigned to Marine units:

*Zone A:* RCT-1: an area about 10 miles east and west of the Uisong-Andong road, including both Uisong and Andong.

*Zone B:* RCT-5: an area some 15 to 20 miles wide astride the Kyongju-Yongchon-Uisong road, including Kyongju but excluding Uisong.

*Zone C:* RCT-7: an area 20 to 25 miles wide from east to west and extending north from the latitude of Pohang to the Andong/Yongdok road.

*Zone D:* 11th Marines: a strip seven miles wide along the coast astride the road from Pohang to a point about 10 miles north of Yongdok.

*Zone E:* 1st Tank Battalion: the area bounded by the road from Pohang to Kyongju and thence to the east coast

at a point about 19 miles southeast of Pohang.

Keeping open the 75-mile stretch of MSR from Pohang to Andong was considered the principal mission of the Division. Strong points were set up at Pohang, Yongchon, Uisong, and Andong.

Captured documents indicated that enemy forces in unknown numbers had already infiltrated through gaps in the eastern sectors of the Eighth Army's Line D. Guerrilla activity was reported as far west as Tanyang, on the MSR of IX Corps, and as far south as Taejon, threatening the supply line of I Corps. Train ambushes occurred on 13 January in the Namchang area and to the south of Wonju. Other attacks took place on the rail line about 60 miles north of Taegu. In expectation of further attempts, trains were provided with a sandbagged car, pushed ahead of the engine, to absorb the shock of landmine explosions. Another car was occupied by guards who had the duty of dealing with direct guerrilla attacks.

The tactical problem of the Marines was quite simple on paper. About 1,600 square miles, most of them standing on end in mountainous terrain, were included in the new zone of operations. The experience of World War II had demonstrated how effective guerrilla warfare could be as an adjunct to large-scale military operations. Officers of the 1st Marine Division had no illusions about their mission, therefore, when they received unconfirmed reports of NKPA guerrilla infiltrations behind the EUSAK lines toward Andong.

All uncertainty vanished on 18 January, shortly after the issuing of OpnO 3-51, when a patrol of the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, flushed out an

undetermined number of North Korean troops east of Andong. They took to their heels so earnestly that the Marines barely managed to catch three of them after a long chase.

The prisoners identified their unit as the 27th Infantry of the NKPA 10th Infantry Division. The other two regiments, the 25th and 29th, were also in the general area. All three were supported more in theory than fact by artillery, mortar, medical, and engineer units organic to the division. In reality, however, the estimated total of 6,000 troops consisted largely of infantry. A few mortars, according to the prisoners, were the largest weapons.

Following the Inchon-Seoul operation, the remnants of the badly mauled NKPA 10th Infantry Division had straggled back across the 38th Parallel to the Hwachon area. There they were reorganized by the Chinese for guerrilla operations and placed under the command of NKPA Major General Lee Ban Nam.

Late in December the rebuilt division, still short of arms and equipment, departed Hwachon with a mission of infiltrating through the UN lines to cut communications and harass rear installations of the Andong-Taegu area. Shots were exchanged with United Nations troops near Wonju, but General Lee Ban Nam and his troops contrived to slip to the east through the mountains. Stealthily moving southward, marching by night and hiding by day, they were soon in a position to heckle the rear of the X Corps sector. This advantage did not last long. Before they could strike a blow, the element of surprise was lost along with the three prisoners taken by the Marines.

As the Marine units moved into their assigned zones, General Ridgway flew to Pohang to confer with General Smith. Not only did he express confidence that the Marines would soon have the situation well under control; he also suggested the possibility of small amphibious landings along the east coast. The purpose was to block a possible southward advance of the three CCF armies that had operated in Northeast Korea during the Chosin Reservoir campaign.

The east coast littoral was considered the most likely route of approach. Smith was of the opinion, however, that an amphibious landing should be made in strength, if at all. And there the matter rested.

### **1st MAW Moves to Bofu**

During the operations of the first few days the Marine ground forces had to depend for air support on FEAF planes sent by JOC. The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing had its hands full at this time with housekeeping activities. Work began at Bofu on 20 January as a Seabee detachment arrived with its graders and bulldozers. They were assisted by details of Marines from MAG-33.

The job went ahead with typical Seabee efficiency. While specialists installed plumbing for the galleys and barracks, other crews graded taxiways, laid pierced steel planking, and poured concrete to patch up runways, parking ramps, and warm-up aprons.

MAG-12 kept busy at the task of moving men and equipment from Itami and other Japanese fields to Korea. Aircraft of VMR-152, commanded by Colonel Deane C. Roberts, provided

transportation. Since safety measures precluded the use of the K-1 runway during construction activity, K-9 substituted temporarily. As fast as the planes unloaded, passengers and gear were trucked 15 miles through Pusan to K-1.

It was a transition period in more ways than one for the 1st MAW. Following are the changes of commanders that took place during the last 2 weeks of January:

Colonel Radford C. West, relieved by Lieutenant Colonel Paul J. Fontana as commanding officer of MAG-33;

Lieutenant Colonel Frank J. Cole, joined MAG-33 staff as personnel officer after being relieved of VMF-312 command by Major Donald P. Frame;

Major Arnold A. Lund of VMF-323, relieved by Major Stanley S. Nicolay and assigned to General Harris' staff as assistant operations officer;

Major William M. Lundin, relieved of VMF-214 command by Major James A. Feeney, Jr., and transferred to the command of Service and Maintenance Squadron-33 (SMS 33).

This left only Lieutenant Colonel Richard W. Wyczawski of VMF-212 and Lieutenant Colonel Max J. Volcansek, Jr., of VMF(N)-542 still in command of the tactical squadrons they brought to Korea; and the latter was to be relieved by Lieutenant Colonel James R. Anderson in February.

The only combat operations of the 1st MAW during the week of housekeeping from 16 to 23 January were carried out by VMF-212 from the deck of the *Bataan*. This CVL carrier alternated with the British light fleet carrier HMS *Theseus* on the Korean west coast blockade. Their activities were coordinated by Vice Admiral Andrewes, RN, commanding the group

blockading the Korean west coast.

VMF-212 sent out a morning and afternoon reconnaissance flight each day up the coastline as far as the 39th parallel. On the trip north the pilots scanned the coastal waters for small enemy shipping which might indicate reinforcement from Chinese ports on the Yellow Sea. The return trip along the highways and railroads of the littoral was made to detect signs of any new enemy activity on land. Four aircraft flew each of the two coastal sweeps; eight maintained a defensive patrol over the carrier itself; and any remaining flights were under control of JOC, with FEAF Mosquitoes providing liaison between fighter-bombers and ground forces.

To insure sea room beyond the islands and mudbanks of the west coast, the *Bataan* had to stay outside the 100-fathom curve. This meant that the pilots must fly across 65 to 80 miles of open sea in order to reach the coast. The winter weather varied from unbelievable to unbearable, and bulky, uncomfortable survival suits were a necessity. They could be a death trap, however, if a leak developed or if they were not adjusted tightly at the throat and wrists. Captain Alfred H. Agan, for instance, was shot down southeast of Inchon and had to choose between landing in enemy territory and ditching in the sea. He tried for a small island offshore but crash-landed into the surf. Before a helicopter from the *Bataan* could fly 65 miles to the rescue, he died from the shock of icy water which partially filled his survival suit.

The pilots of VMF-212 reported an increase in enemy anti-aircraft fire, particularly in CCF rear areas. They were amazed to find troops dug in along the coast as far back as 50 or 60 miles

from the battle lines. These precautions were the enemy's tribute to Marine capabilities for amphibious warfare. The fear of another Inchon caused the Chinese to immobilize thousands of men on both coasts to guard against another such decisive landing far behind the front.

On the squadron's third day of sea operations, three planes were hit by rifle and machine gun fire on reconnaissance missions. One of them, flown by Captain Russell G. Patterson, Jr., was shot down behind the enemy lines but a FEAF helicopter rescued the pilot. First Lieutenant Alfred J. Ward was not so fortunate. His plane was riddled the following day by enemy fire and he crashed to his death in the midst of CCF soldiers.

Not until 22 January did the reconditioning of Bofu reach such an advanced stage that Lieutenant Colonel Fontana could set up his MAG-33 command post. VMF-312 moved in the next day and the first combat missions were launched to the vicinity of Seoul, 300 miles away. On the 24th General Harris established his headquarters. A few hours later VMF-214 and VMF-323 arrived from Itami, where they had put in an idle week, with no place to go, after their carrier duty. On the 26th, when they flew their first missions as land-based squadrons, MAG-33 was back in business and Bofu was a going concern.

No such claim could have been made for MAG-12 and K-1. Although Colonel Boeker C. Batterton set up his command post on 27 January 1951, two more weeks were to pass before the K-1 runway was fit for the flights to tactical aircraft. Meanwhile, the MAG-12 squadrons had to make out as best they could at K-9.

### **Marine Rice Paddy Patrols**

Operations of the first few days demonstrated to 1st Marine Division ground forces that locating the enemy was more of a problem than defeating him. Obviously, the NKPA 10th Division had few if any of the advantages which make for effective guerrilla warfare. Far from receiving any voluntary support from the inhabitants, the Korean Reds had their own movements promptly reported to the Marines. Retaliations on civilians, such as burning mountain villages, were not calculated to improve relations. Nor did the enemy possess any of the other requisites for successful operations in an opponent's rear, a base, a source of supply, good communications, and a reliable intelligence system.

If it came to a fight, there could be little doubt about the outcome. But Marine staff officers must have been reminded of the old recipe for rabbit pie which begins, "First, catch your rabbit."

Such a situation called for systematic patrolling in all Marine zones of action. Secondary roads and mountain trails were covered by "rice paddy patrols." Numbering from four men to a squad, these groups ranged far and wide on foot in an area that was more often vertical than horizontal. On a single day the 5th Marines alone had 29 of these rice paddy patrols in action. No better training for replacements could have been devised. Sometimes the men were on their own for several days, depending for supplies on helicopter drops. And while casualties were light, there was just enough danger from sniping and potential ambushes to keep the replacements on the alert.

Roads fit for vehicles, especially the

75-mile stretch of MSR from Pohang to Andong, were under the constant surveillance of motorized patrols, each supported by at least one tank or 195 howitzer. The farthest distance was 15 miles between the main Marine strong points at Pohang, Yongchon, Uisong, and Andong.

Close air support was seldom needed against such an elusive enemy as the Marines faced. General Craig put in a request, however, for an air squadron to be based at Pohang or Pusan (Map 2). The two Marine all-weather squadrons, VMF(N)-513 and VMF(N)-542, were General Harris' first and second choices. They had been flying under Air Force (314th Air Division) control in the defense of Japan, a mission of dull routine and waiting for something to break the monotony of patrolling.

The twin-engined F7F-3N Tigercats of VMF(N)-542 were well equipped with electronics equipment for night interceptor work. VMF(N)-513 flew F4U-SNs, the night-fighter modification of the latest Corsair.

General Harris' plan for VMF(N)-542 to take over the duties of VMF(N)-513 at Itazuke had the approval of General Partridge. This made it possible to send the latter squadron to K-9 at Pusan to replace the VMF-311 jets, which in turn left for Itami to await corrections of engineering defects.

VMF(N)-513 flew its first combat missions from K-9 on 22 January. These consisted of routine armed reconnaissance flights and an occasional deep support mission for the Eighth Army. Not until the 25th did the squadron respond to a request from Marine ground forces. And out of 49 combat missions (110 sorties) during

the remaining 6 days of the month, only three (10 sorties) were in support of the 1st Marine Division.

For routine operations the Marine ground forces found the support of VM0-6 sufficient. The nimble little OY observation planes were ideal for seeking out an enemy who had to be caught before he could be fought. And the helicopters did their part by dropping supplies, evacuating casualties, and laying wire.

Meanwhile, the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing strengthened its administrative ties with the 1st Marine Division. Although the two organizations had no common operational commander other than General MacArthur, they maintained a close liaison. Harris attached two TBM Avengers to VM0-6 for use as radio relays when ground-to-ground communications failed in the mountainous Pohang-Andong area. He also set up daily courier flights, at General Smith's request, to provide fast administrative liaison between widely dispersed Marine air and ground units in Korea and Japan.

### **To be Continued**

---

---

The fates willing and the creek don't rise, you will have received this newsletter, Volume I Number 7, along with all the LATE back issues. As I said once before, our problem was getting the computer/scanner hookup up and working. We finally accomplished that, though somewhat belatedly and crudely, but it works sufficient to make it possible to get these articles we are finding, printed in reasonable time, along with the selected chapters from the 5 volume History of Marine Operations in Korea. I am hopeful we will keep it timely.

---