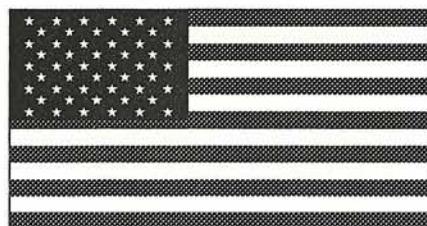


INDEX TO VOLUME 1 NO. 8



The Continuing Saga of Bob Hall's LETTERS FROM KOREA	Page	3
Vol. IV History of Marine Operations Continued from Vol. 1 No. 7	Page	16
The Story of "DARKHORSE" By LtCol Robert Tapplett USMC	Page	22



The Continuing Saga of Bob Hall's LETTERS FROM KOREA

North of Hongchon, Korea
March 25, 1951 (Easter)

Here is the situation now. We're three miles north of Hongchon. We moved up about 40 miles yesterday. We had been back the other side of Hoengsong sending up the rest of the contents of the old dump. We had several hundred truckloads in it too. We were short of men to load the trucks and they were soon exhausted. Also, it got rather cold at night. There were two of us stock records men, a sergeant and I, and we worked in shifts, making out our shipping tickets and so on. Actually we had it rather easy.

We got into Hongchon, the location of our new dump, yesterday, and then one platoon and I came up here to set up the advance dump.

In some ways Hongchon resembles Stateside. The dump is beautifully arranged on what resembles a parade ground. There are movies, a barbershop, PX's, etc. The only advantage in being up here is the distance from the company commander and the stricter battalion regulations. I was going to look up some of the men from our old platoon at Pendleton who are scattered among the different outfits, some had already stopped by, but I won't have a chance for a while now. I have moved my "office" (desk, lamp, chair, etc.) into one end of the squad tent. I went out this morning and took inventory at the new dump and all I will have to do here is submit daily reports to the main dump.

We hear reports about the Marines being off the front lines temporarily, about the purpose of this dump,

and even a rumor that all inactive reservists and C.O.G.'s (those held after expiration of enlistment) will be discharged before long, but I'm not giving that one much credence.

I went with a buddy of mine the other night to see Bill again. We kid each other about being "rear echelon." I've got the best of him at the moment, but I'm still 15 miles behind the lines. Bill is still working in the 7th Motor Transport Battalion shop and has no complaints. He's as full of wisecracks as he always was.

Yesterday we came up over a very bumpy road from Hoengsong choking in dust all the way. Part of the trip was over a treacherous pass. Before we reached the pass we passed through "Massacre Valley," so named by the Marines when they moved up because of the war material, bodies, etc., left behind during the army retreat in February. It has been interesting to read of these places in Time and Newsweek in the Korean coverage. Practically everything they have written about has referred to this area, even though most exact locations have been omitted. The Stars and Stripes is purposely vague and seldom mentions the Marines, but refers to the "battle hardened" 25th, the "heroic" 3rd, and so on. Most of the Marines call it "that propaganda sheet," with possibly a touch of envy and refuse to read it.

The gunner (warrant officer) has arranged for a chaplain to come up today since the men requested church services. One of the men is even dyeing hard boiled eggs with onion skins or something similar.

The men are starting to gather around here, asking me for the scoop on the dump, the company, etc., and

telling me what they think of their platoon sergeant. I think the same thing, of course, but kept a discreet silence.

Hongchon, Korea
March 27, 1951

I went out this morning and sketched a map of that part of the dump where we keep our small arms and mortar ammo so I would know where they were located and then I took a walk around the rest where the heavier ammo is stored.

We are in some kind of field, not the usual rice paddy, where something like beans or peas was once raised. Anyhow, we must have good drainage because we just had a heavy rain and it's almost dry already. We are close to the Hongchon River, not very wide and quite shallow. If it should warm up again, we can at least bathe in the river.

There are quite a few houses around this area, especially across the river, and quite a few seem to be occupied, one not over a hundred yards from here. If the sun should appear today, I expect to get a few pictures. As I was walking around this morning, a little boy came across the road, crying and dodging trucks, and wanting to follow me around. I couldn't get him to go home but his older brother finally came after him. They came over here and one of the men playing volleyball and I gave them some candy bars. We are given three or four chocolate bars every day and, since I eat very few, I'm accumulating quite a hoard.

A few of us went for a hike on the hill behind us yesterday. Just this side of the top is a deep trench dug all the way along the hill. It must have required a lot of hard work and undoubt-

edly was dug by the Chinese. All over the hill are little dugouts covered with pine trees and dirt for camouflage. Scattered around we found Chinese newspapers, rice, and some ammo clips, probably Chinese or British. The Chinese use everything from Russian to American weapons, including a lot of Japanese weapons, some of their heavy machine guns at least look very good, but I'm not sure how they operate. We found three Russian anti-tank grenades, which the other two guys brought back. I kept my distance because those things are really powerful and I can't see taking any unnecessary chances. Somehow the grenade is propelled toward the target and a cloth parachute opens to keep it stable in flight in order to hit the tank at the proper angle. The grenade will produce a three-inch hole in a tank, far exceeding the explosive power of our rockets and anti-tank grenades. The problem is in getting close enough to the tank to launch the grenade. We try to maintain close infantry support for our tanks because their visibility is so limited.

I don't think I told you that Don Bruns dropped in to see me. I went back to the main dump in Hongchon day before yesterday (Easter) and while I was there he drove up. He looks a little older, I think, than when I saw him last summer. He has had some rather harrowing escapes on these frequent army retreats. On the retreat from Pyongyang (N. Korean capital) his group of 'dozer men' was told to head south and little else. They traveled for several days until they were finally located by plane and told that they had gone through several enemy "road blocks."

I suppose Bill is located somewhere around here by now. If he is, he will drop in some day. He told me the other night his boss had said he could

have an afternoon off when he wanted it.

Hongchon, Korea
March 31, 1951

Most of us have been taking our weapons up into the hills and firing them, everything from machine guns to revolvers. I went up with three others yesterday, taking my M-1 and two bandoleers of ammo although I fired only about 50 rounds. There was a little stone monument about 250 yards across the valley that I considered a good target because I could see the chips fly when I hit it. My rifle worked perfectly. The sights are set so that I can aim at 6 o'clock, the bottom of the target, and it will take care of the rest. After a while the monument ceased to exist. I never gave a thought to the significance of the monument. Another "ugly American"?

I took a walk up the road last night for a couple of miles. The first thing I came on was a burning Korean house. The thatch roofs on these houses are extremely flammable and I think I know how the fire started. (Someone came along and touched a match to it.) At the scene was an elderly Korean, his wife, and a small boy as well as two old men, evidently neighbors, offering advice. The owner was running frantically around trying to pull boards off the house and rescue other things he considered of value. His wife was carrying out the household effect, such as they were: some crude tools, pottery, small pieces of wood, and few blankets and clothes, and other odds and ends that we would hesitate even to call junk. The poor old fellow was near exhaustion and pieces of wood were beginning to fall down around him when his wife finally persuaded him to move away from the burning house.

The old man came over near me, sat down, and started coughing from the smoke he had inhaled. All he could do was stare at the ground in his grief, and I knew how he must feel, the same as any of the rest of us would feel back in the States if we were forced to watch our house go up in flames. A man's home is his castle whatever the monetary value. The house had a wood frame but it was mostly mud. Now part of the roof was falling down around the sides, setting fire to the parts of the wood frame that weren't covered by mud, so I went over and pushed it away with a long stick. The old man realized that that was all anyone could do and when I last saw him, he was trying to save the walls in that way. I gave him a candy bar for the little boy and he carried on in Korean for several minutes explaining how the fire got started. I nodded sympathetically but I didn't understand a word, of course. The woman didn't waste much time grieving over their loss but started moving their few possessions to a deserted house nearby. Even I could see that it was inferior to the one now almost reduced to ashes.

Somewhat saddened by the experience, I walked up the road to a bluff overlooking the river. A wide valley extends several miles to the north. I could see several houses across the river and you can be sure that every square inch of arable land was under cultivation. Most of the land is devoted to rice with paddies extending up all the little valleys formed by tributaries of the river, but the bottom lands seem to be used also to grow corn, some kind of pea or bean, melons, cotton, and something that looks like an elongated pepper. What else they raise, I'm not sure. In one of the houses nearby I found a sack of commercial fertilizer from Pasadena, Texas. I suppose the UN or

U.S. found it rather difficult to persuade the Koreans to use this fertilizer when their centuries-old technique of the honey bucket and ladle has proved quite satisfactory.

The biggest news around here right now involves an inspection scheduled for Monday, the 2nd. Here we are, out in the field, and someone calls for an inspection. Maybe they want to find out whether we're in shape to pull out of here in a hurry.

No one knows for sure whether we will cross the parallel or not. We may go across for a short distance to take up more advantageous positions than we would have on this side of it. It

seems to me if the powers-that-be now decide to invade North Korea they have made a bad mistake in waiting this long and giving the Chinese time to dig in and take a heavier toll of UN troops.

I went down to the main area in Hongchon yesterday with one squad from this platoon to take a shower. The engineers have set up a shower unit, with warm water, next to the river. The first person I saw in the shower was Bill Hall, a buddy of mine from LeGrande, Oregon. We were both fire team leaders in the same squad at Tent Camp in Pendleton. He is in a mortar section in the 7th Regiment. He told me about three of the guys from our old platoon that I had lost track of. One of them, Simpson, who is in one of the pictures of Big Bear that I sent back, was wounded seriously when he crawled out in front of the line to rescue his squad leader, who, as it turned out, was already dead. I believe the kid is up for some kind of medal. If he isn't, he should be. I've often wondered why it is so much easier for an officer to earn a medal or am I just prejudiced?

Another one of the men, John L. Smith from Texas, I remember especially because he hated Tent Camp with a passion and talked incessantly about going back to Texas, where they would never find him again. He was among the first infantrymen to move into Hongchon, where he stepped on an anti-personnel mine and was blown to smithereens. Ironically, these mines, called butterfly bombs because of the way they flutter down, were dropped by our own planes. The bomb disposal unit attached to us for a while destroyed about a thousand of them and other outfits did too, but there are still quite a few left in the ashes of the town. They are so sensitive that a slight pressure will detonate them. Bomb disposal can put a charge next to one, light the fuse, and then get away and sometimes another one 15 to 20 feet away will explode when the charge detonates.

Another man in the platoon was a corporal by name of Stockholm. He had been through several operations in the last war and was enthusiastic about everything, or "gung ho," in Marine lingo and, consequently, not very popular in the platoon at that time. To weave the story together, when we were at Wonju I saw a little Italian-American, who was also in our platoon, and he told me that Stockholm had gone into mortars, made sergeant, and was up for staff sergeant, and going great guns. Bill Hall told me the rest. The little Italian was shortly transferred into the same mortar platoon with Stockholm. Just before the Marines took Hongchon, Stockholm's mortar section moved into an ideal location south of town. No sooner had they set up the mortars than the gooks started lobbing in their own mortar shells. The mortar section was practically wiped out by one shell that landed between Stockholm and

their lieutenant. Apparently the Chinks had zeroed in the position with their 120 m.m. (five inch) mortars, anticipating that our troops would set up there. At any rate, the Italian saw Stockholm get hit, after seeing Smith carried away, and "cracked up" for about four days. I believe he has now recovered, but will it be permanently? This is the sort of thing the line troops face constantly and I can't help wondering if their sacrifices are really appreciated back home. It makes one stop and think once in a while. I wonder whether Smith and Stockholm wouldn't have preferred to cope with the taxes and high prices back home instead of what they got, if they had had a choice. Actually, I don't wonder at all.

The weather has turned warm again. It's warm out this morning but it gets cool at night, just like California. Chow here is not bad at all. We have steak quite often. We don't get up until 7 or 7:30, a few minutes before breakfast, those of us who do get up. One squad has guard duty every night. The rest of us keep rifles, grenades, etc., handy. I don't think I've done over half a day's work since we've been here.

I might go for a hike this afternoon. One of the guys went five miles or so up in the hills yesterday and saw Chinese entrenchments everywhere as well as Chinese ammo and weapons and a few dead Chinese. I may go up and get some pictures. I haven't found out yet if Bill is up this way. His outfit is down the road a mile or so, but the rest of his company may be elsewhere.

We have a chance to go down to the main dump every night to see a movie. I haven't been to a show since I've been over here, probably because it's not that boring. Last war, at Pearl Harbor, I missed very few in the two

years I was there.

(WHEN I THINK ABOUT THE BOMB DISPOSAL SQUAD JUST REFERRED TO, I AM AGAIN REMINDED OF AN INCIDENT THAT WILL NEVER FADE FROM MY MEMORY. I AM AT A LOSS TO EXPLAIN WHY IT ISN'T MENTIONED IN ANY OF MY LETTERS. EITHER I THOUGHT IT TOO GRISLY AN AFFAIR TO WRITE HOME ABOUT OR THE LETTER CONTAINING IT WAS LOST OR DESTROYED.

WE HAD SET UP A.S.P. #4 (AMMUNITION SUPPLY POINT) NORTH OF WONJU, WHERE WE SAW MACARTHUR AND HIS RETINUE AND WHERE THE CRAZY KOREAN WOMAN AND HER BABY PLODDED THE DUSTY ROADS SEARCHING FOR HER FALLEN HUSBAND.

TO THE NORTH OF US ON A SLIGHT RISE WAS A LEVEL AREA BEING USED BY HELICOPTERS EVACUATING WOUNDED TROOPS TO FIELD HOSPITALS, AS SHOWN IN M.A.S.H. ON TELEVISION. FROM THE MAIN ROAD TO THE WEST OUR OWN "ROAD" LOOPED THROUGH THE COMPANY AREA AND BACK TO THE MAIN ROAD. I WAS IN THE TENT NEAREST THE MAIN ROAD WITH SEVERAL HIGHER RANKING NONCOMS. SOUTH OF US WAS A SEPARATE AREA WHERE THE NEWLY ATTACHED BOMB DISPOSAL SQUAD STORED CAPTURED ENEMY AMMUNITION AND WEAPONS, AND A STRANGE ASSORTMENT IT WAS WITH WEAPONS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD.

ONE EVENING, WHEN I STEPPED OUT OF THE TENT, I NOTICED THAT THE SQUAD HAD JUST RETURNED FROM A DAY IN THE FIELD AND WERE UNLOADING SACKS OF ENEMY AMMUNITION. I HAD

STEPPED BACK INTO THE TENT WHEN I HEARD A TREMENDOUS EXPLOSION. PROBABLY A HAND GRENADE IN ONE OF THE SACKS HAD DETONATED WHEN A PIN CAME LOOSE OR SOMETHING SIMILAR OCCURRED. I RAN OUT OF THE TENT IN TIME TO WITNESS A SCENE OF UTTER CONFUSION AND, YES, HORROR. ONE MAN'S CLOTHES HAD BEEN BLOWN OFF AND HE WAS STAGGERING AROUND IN SHOCK, COVERED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD. RESCUERS WERE SOON ON THE SCENE AND I STAYED AWAY. PIECES OF FLESH HAD RAINED DOWN EVERYWHERE. TWO OR THREE OF THE MEN WERE QUICKLY EVACUATED BY HELICOPTER, AND I DON'T RECALL HOW MANY SURVIVED, IF ANY.)

(STRANGELY, THERE IS ONE MONTH HIATUS BETWEEN LETTERS HERE AND I HAVE NO WAY OF ACCOUNTING FOR THE MISSING LETTERS. THE SUBSEQUENT EVENTS, THE EVACUATION OF THE DUMP, ETC., TOOK PLACE AT CHUNCHON.

ALTHOUGH I NOW REMEMBER HANGCHON ONLY FAINTLY, I CAN REMEMBER CHUNCHON CLEARLY. WE HAD SET UP OUR MAIN DUMP ON WHAT ONCE MAY HAVE BEEN A COLLEGE OR HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC FIELD. IT WAS AN IDEAL LOCATION. I WANDERED THROUGH THE RUINS OF THE CITY TAKING AN OCCASIONAL PICTURE AND EXAMINING THE RUBBLE. A FEW CIVILIANS REMAINED, NO DOUBT IN VIOLATION OF A MILITARY EVACUATION ORDER.

I FOUND A MIDDLE-AGED KOREAN IN A HUT NEAR OUR CAMP WHO AGREED TO DO OUR LAUNDRY FOR A PITTANCE. I DON'T RECALL WHERE THE KOREANS OBTAINED THEIR SOAP, IF THEY HAD ANY, BUT OUR

CLOTHES ALWAYS CAME BACK LOOKING SPOTLESS, EVEN PRESSED. SEVERAL TIMES I HAD WATCHED THE KOREANS POUNDING THE DIRT OUT OF THEIR CLOTHES AT THE WATER'S EDGE IN THE IMMEMORIAL THIRD WORLD MANNER AND I'M SURE OURS RECEIVED THE SAME TREATMENT.

NOT FAR AWAY I FOUND A LIBRARY, PART OF ITS ROOF DESTROYED BY BOMBING OR ARTILLERY FIRE. BOOKS HAD BEEN BLOWN OUT OF THE SHELVES BY THE FORCE OF THE EXPLOSIONS AND IT WAS A CHAOTIC SCENE. I INSPECTED A FEW OF THE BOOKS AND WAS SURPRISED TO FIND THEM PRINTED IN ENGLISH. I THINK NOW IT MUST HAVE BEEN A U. S. INFORMATION SERVICE LIBRARY. I "BORROWED" A BOOK OF LITERARY CRITICISM AND KEPT IT IN MY SEABAG FOR MONTHS UNTIL IT EVENTUALLY DISAPPEARED.)

Hongchon, Korea
April 30, 1951

I know I haven't written for a long time, but I haven't had any spare time since the Chinese offensive began. Everything was going well on our front until the Chinese found out where the R.O.K.'s were. When the Korean Blue Star Division was hit, the men dropped everything and took off for the rear, exposing the rest of the line to flank or rear attacks. An army artillery unit supporting the R.O.K.'s was overrun and its guns captured. Our First Regiment was called out of reserve and one battalion went in to recover the guns. At one time all four companies were surrounded by Chinks. They recovered the guns and patched up the line as well as possible. Thousands of Chinese had broken through and were scattered all through

the area immediately behind the penetration.

Subsequent events are not very clear. We held and it was hoped that the Chinese in the rear would soon be captured or eliminated. An encouraging development was the performance of a regiment of Korean Marines attached to our First Division. They charged the Chinese repeatedly and refused to return until our general personally ordered them to do so. We supply them with the ammunition so I've had a chance to talk with some of them. They have the same attitude toward the R.O.K.'s that we have toward the U. S. Army.

Later the Chinese attacked another sector of the line and forced a large-scale withdrawal to our west. This left our flank exposed again so we had no choice but to withdraw. Now things looked rather grim. We carried on as usual for a time while nearby the army hastily evacuated their dump. We persuaded them to let us have some of their ammunition, including some items that we were critically short of.

Then we received word to move out and work proceeded night and day. We tried to catch a little sleep whenever we could, officers and all, but it amounted to very little.

(I MUST PAUSE AGAIN TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT. MODESTY MAY HAVE CAUSED ME TO DOWNGRADE MY ROLE IN THE EVACUATION, BUT THE DECADES SINCE THEN HAVE WORN THAT MODESTY A LITTLE THIN, IF THAT WAS THE CASE.

THE CAPTAIN ASSIGNED THE SERGEANT IN CHARGE AN EMERGENCY PROJECT. THE SPEED OF THE CHINESE ADVANCE WAS NOT

CLEAR AT THE TIME AND THERE WAS A POSSIBILITY THAT WE MIGHT HAVE TO DESTROY MOST OF THE DUMP IN ORDER TO PREVENT ITS FALLING INTO ENEMY HANDS. WE POSSESSED TWO LARGE TRAILERS, EACH WITH A CAPACITY OF AT LEAST TEN TONS. THE CAPTAIN WANTED THEM LOADED WITH WELL BALANCED LOADS BASED ON OUR USUAL DRAWS OF AMMUNITION AT THE DUMP. THE SERGEANT WAS IN A QUANDARY AND COULD ONLY SCRATCH HIS HEAD. I SAT DOWN AND IN ABOUT A HALF HOUR LISTED THE TYPES OF AMMO THAT SHOULD BE PUT ABOARD AND, SO FAR AS I CAN RECALL, IT WAS DONE THAT WAY AND THE SERGEANT TOOK THE CREDIT. BUT WHO CARED? IT HAD TO BE A CONCERTED EFFORT IF WE WERE TO SUCCEED.

NOW THAT MY PREJUDICE TOWARD THE ARMY HAS PRETTY WELL DISSIPATED, IT IS TIME TO GIVE CREDIT WHERE IT'S DUE. WE COULD NOT HAVE TRANSPORTED ALL THAT AMMUNITION WITH OUR OWN LIMITED NUMBER OF TRUCKS. SOME ARMY TRUCK CONVOYS ARRIVED IN THE NICK OF TIME AND THEIR HELP PROVED INVALUABLE. ALSO, AS WE LEFT THE TOWN, I WILL NEVER FORGET THE SIGHT OF THE HUGE ARMY MOBILE 240 M.M. GUNS FIRING OVER THE TOWN TOWARD THE NORTH. I CAN'T REMEMBER THE NAME OF THE UNIT AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, BUT I CAN RECALL THE RED DEVILS EMBLAZONED ON THE CARRIAGES. THANKS, U.S. ARMY, AFTER ALL THESE YEARS.)

Everything was carried out in an orderly manner and every round of ammunition, several hundred truck-loads, was removed to the rear. The

Chinks were expected momentarily so there was never a dull moment. Some of our Korean laborers chose this occasion to run away so we put guards on the rest. Whose country is this anyhow? The night before we left I sat up all night directing convoys in and helping to maintain order in the dump. The army drivers would ask how far we were from the front and we would tell them it was just across the river, which was not much of an exaggeration. A few tanks defended the area to the north and an infantry group was entrenched on a ridge to the southwest above the Soyang River just before it joins the Pukhan. Early in the afternoon they began firing their machine guns toward the hills across the river. The artillery to our rear had been firing for a couple of days, and the salvos continually swished overhead. In the afternoon the shells began bursting on the hills in front of us. It was probably the gunners getting their bearings on the probable approach routes of the Chinese, at least we hoped so.

Things warmed up as the day progressed. I could hear what I thought were answering bursts from the hills across from the infantry every time their machine guns fired a few short bursts. Nothing ever landed near the dump. Late in the afternoon there were some loud explosions on the base of the ridge held by the

infantry. I presumed these were Chinese mortar shells but that was never confirmed.

Late in the afternoon the last group of trucks arrived and they were loaded in record time. Our gear was thrown aboard the Marine trucks and we took off for Hongchon.

We heard later that the division's withdrawal was delayed 48 hours so all

the ammunition could be removed. Long before we left our demolition team had mined each stack in case we ran out of time. Bill dropped in several times during those last hectic days and I was certainly pleased to see him. He represented normality in the midst of perplexing times. His outfit had been north of the river and had been forced to move out in the middle of the night.

We were part of a long convoy that got underway about dusk. Chunchon was in flames when we left. All unoccupied houses were burned (our version of the scorched earth policy) to keep the Chinese out in the open. I believe the city fell that night, but I'm not sure.

In our truck was most of the headquarters section of Ammo Co.

The first sergeant was riding up front and six of us were in the back curled up on top of our gear trying to get some much-needed rest. That was not easy to do as we traveled over the rough road in the heavy truck. One time we pulled off the road while some more important vehicles passed by. Another time I looked out and saw the road lined with Korean soldiers and then civilians. We passed a sleeping army camp, the whole area weirdly bathed in the light from two huge searchlights that was reflected off the low-hanging clouds. One of them feebly illuminated a nearby hill and the stubby trees were cast in an eerie green light. We had heard that the army used searchlights in this manner but had never had a chance to witness it.

I had just about drifted off to sleep again when I became aware that the truck had slowed down and begun to ease toward the edge of the road. I believe that the driver had fallen asleep but I never heard for sure. It was all

over in a flash, leaving little time for panic. Something struck me a hard blow on the nose, the edge of the truck bed struck the ground near me with a heavy thud, the truck continued rolling over, and then there was an ominous silence. Still in a daze, I had enough presence of mind to feel grateful for being alive. I picked myself up and started down the hill. Then someone began calling for help. I started back up the hill to get help, in the belief that someone might be pinned under the truck. One of our men was already up on the road and had flagged down a truck so I made my way in the dark down to the truck, where I found Sgt. Keith of my section lying next to the truck. When a few men arrived we made a stretcher from blankets and rifles and carried him away from it until the ambulance arrived. When it pulled up to the edge of the road we put two of the men who were stretcher cases in the ambulance and I went with them to the field hospital to determine the extent of their injuries, intending to return to the company with the information the following day.

At the hospital the doctor was aghast when he saw me. My face was covered with blood and so was the front of my field jacket. I had landed on my face and my nose had bled for some time. The doctor decided to keep me a couple of days on general principles. I was given a shot or two in the hip. The doctor, despite my protests, said all of us looked very tired and the rest would do us good. I pestered the doctor until he finally released me yesterday, after two nights and a day and a half in the hospital.

It was quite an experience. There were several combat casualties in our tent and they sat around us as we discussed the incident and seemed to

feel that we had had a close call. Actually, I think most of us were a little awed to be in their presence and realized that we were after all only "rear echelon."

I came back here finally after talking my way out of casual company up at division headquarters to find myself a minor hero, with everybody congratulating me on my good fortune and asking about the rest of the men. Two of them have already been evacuated to Japan, and the rest should be back in a few days. They are swathed in bandages and limping around, but not seriously injured. I lost my cot and, apparently, my rifle in the confusion. I should have looked around that night but took the word of a sergeant who seemed to be in charge that everything would be returned to us.

Next day some of the truck's wheels and the carburetor were found to be missing, along with a tent and some more of our gear. I wonder what happened to the rolls of barbed wire that made up part of the load as well as the barber chair, occupied, I think, that was positioned up front near the cab.

I am now in charge of the stock records section since Sgt. Keith has been evacuated and I will have three or four clerks working for me. I don't anticipate any problems, once we get to a new location and set up a conventional dump. Things here are a mess. The idea was to get unloaded in a hurry and go back for more loads. I hear that I have been promoted, but I haven't seen the warrant yet. I've been hearing rumors about the inactive reserves. Maybe I'll be able to get back in time for school this fall. I could go to summer school and still finish in '52.

As for things over here, the situation is cloudy. I've heard the army is pushing the Chinks back and the withdrawal is at an end. I hope so. It looked dark for a while. Thank God the Chinks don't have the air power, artillery, and mobile equipment that we do or they might easily have followed up their breakthrough and pushed us out completely.

South of Hongchon, Korea
May 6, 1951

Two more men came back from the hospital. Three were evacuated to Pusan and two, I've heard, to Japan. None was seriously hurt. However, the jinx is still with the battalion. Day before yesterday an old building up on the hill was being burned for some reason when a hand grenade inside exploded. The battalion adjutant and two other officers went to investigate and another grenade exploded. The adjutant was riddled with fragments and had to be evacuated to Japan. Counting the four who were involved in the hand grenade incident, our casualties have been rather high for service troops.

At the moment our sector is quiet. The Marines have already become uneasy and have been moving back toward Chunchon, inviting the Chinese to attack and fall into a trap they have set for them.

I heard last night about the slaughter that occurred above Chunchon recently when the Marines stopped the Chinese and pushed them back into an area where we had tanks, machine guns, and even rocket batteries waiting for them. When it was over and before they withdrew, they stacked the enemy corpses in rows, like cordwood, for the psychological effect. That

might be one reason for the lack of activity on our front but I doubt it.

I understand the British brigade on our left was trapped for some time until army units reached them and advised them to leave. They contacted our division and asked if we intended to stay and when they found out we did, they told the army to retreat if they wanted to.

The army ammunition we brought with us from Chunchon has not been reclaimed by the army. Our dump is only half the size it once was and part of it is on 10-ton trailers pulled by tractors.

We are learning, painfully, that we will have to adjust our techniques to conform with those of the army. That means to travel light. But we will never learn to pull out the way they do. We have less to worry about in that respect because we know how to get organized, how to use firepower to the best advantage, and how to escape from a trap, if necessary. The Marines' principal advantage is confidence, not only in themselves individually but in their fellow Marines as well, in a word, morale. It's based on training, tradition, and not a little cockiness.

Bill's outfit is only a short distance away, but I haven't seen him since Chunchon. I took the daily reports to the division C.P. last night by jeep and had an interesting talk with the division ordnance people. We are getting along much better now than formerly. Since I've been in charge of the office, I've reorganized things to some extent and we're operating more smoothly.

The weather is getting quite warm, so our stoves have been removed. We're near a good-sized stream where we can bathe any time we want.

I'm expecting a hot summer, meteorologically speaking. What a place for extremes.

We may have to move forward at any time. When the line moves ahead we have to establish a dump nearby. The military moves on food and ammunition.

South of Hongchon, Korea
May 23, 1951

Since the last Chinese drive started a couple of weeks ago, we haven't had a spare minute. I would have had some time except that I've had to be on duty more often because two of my men are not very experienced and are inclined to make mistakes in the wrong places.

We shipped most of our ammunition down to Hoengsong, we loaded another part on 10-ton trailers, and then we've been issuing up to 50 loads of 105 m.m. and 155 m.m. ammunition daily, sometimes double that amount. I suspect there is a great amount of shooting at invisible targets, army style. What an expensive war, and we're only one division. We probably furnish a half million dollars' worth of ammunition every day.

There are quite a few critical items that are always in short supply and we have to order them continually from army supply points. We also have a shortage of trucks. One day the infantry regiments have to build up ammo supplies to a mandatory level and the next day the requirements are changed, so they return all the excess, which doesn't make our job any easier. We have to report on the artillery situation to division headquarters every four hours and once a day to corps head-

quarters by phone.

I think we will be moving the dump soon to keep up with the advancing division lines. I wish I could hear the news once in a while and not have to depend on rumors so much. We've heard that several army regiments, possibly divisions, were cut to pieces during this last Chinese offensive.

Planes were diving and bombing a few miles to our left (west). Now we hear the Chinese are on the run and we were never hit very hard. The Chinks are avoiding the Marines so we have been able to throw some of our units into the gaps left by the army. I read recently in Newsweek about the Chinese offensive that forced our withdrawal from Chunchon. The army retreated so fast north of Seoul that their commanders bragged about not losing a man or vehicle. The British couldn't, or wouldn't, so they were surrounded all by themselves over on our left flank and a battalion (about 1000 men) was nearly annihilated. The army should be proud! Apparently it's everyone for himself. It's not pleasant to ponder what might happen if the army were not provided with superior air and fire power.

It's been cold and rainy again, especially at night, but it does seem to be gradually warming up. I found time yesterday to go down to the creek where a shower has been rigged up with a device like a water trough and take a cool shower.

Several days ago I went on another patrol in the hills above us to see if there had been any recent guerrilla activity. We found extensive fortification, miles of trenches, dugouts, log bunkers, some Chink ammunition and signs of the recent struggle but no fresh signs of activity. It was a six or seven

mile hike but not too difficult except for the first part.

Bill has stopped by several times recently. Last time I gave him some ammo. I usually give him all the Islanders I have since they're arriving on a regular basis, which is more than I can say for the rest of the mail.

Since Lt. Miller returned to Wonju to keep the ammunition coming, I've taken his place in working with the captain. We have to decide what types we want and don't want, what kind of fuses are preferred for our projectiles, the most popular mortar shells, etc. I can tell him about how many rounds of the various types he can get in a three-ton truck load and I know the code names for the ammo, demolitions, and miscellaneous items we carry. I feel that I'm making a worthwhile contribution now. We have a lot of new men in the company who know little about ammunition and it's playing havoc with the records, but I'm finally learning to take it all in stride.

We have to ship back every possible salvageable item such as the ammo containers, especially for artillery projectiles, etc., and keep track of it. This, in addition to everything else. In one 24-hour period we loaded and unloaded 250 truckloads of ammunition!

Somewhere in Korea
May 30, 1951

I don't know where I was when I wrote last but we've really been on the move lately. I saw Bill on May 28, his birthday, at Dump #15 down north of Hongchon. Instead of returning to Chunchon again, we're moving north and east on another "highway." You probably know the overall situation better than I. We are supposed to have

100,000 Chinks trapped between us and the coast (I hope they realize it) and the rest are reported to be taking off for Manchuria, although some must remain because we've had ferocious fighting up ahead lately. I don't know why the Chinese lines cracked over here but they did. Just a short while ago they hit the army's Second Division and cut them to pieces. The Marines found 500 dead in one area before they stopped picking them up. We passed a lot of burned out equipment, jeeps, tanks, etc., that the army destroyed to make them unusable. I heard that one of their regimental colonels was captured. At any rate, this is one of the swiftest and farthest advances we've made in Korea.

We moved in here yesterday and it was hot at the time. As soon as our tents were set up, we rushed to a nearby creek and washed off the dust. Today it hasn't stopped raining and we're nearly knee-deep in mud. So much Chinese ammunition has been hauled in here lately that we've established a separate dump for it. We plan to remove a lot of items that they had captured from the army, such as mortar ammo and TNT, and put them in stock. We have been unable to get TNT ourselves. It has been difficult to move all these things and keep the records up-to-date. I have five or six men in my section and only a couple of them can do the work without making serious mistakes, but it won't last forever. In our area quite a few Chinese horses were captured and a large number of dead Chinese are awaiting burial.

Somewhere north of the 38th Parallel
June 15, 1951

We've been extremely busy lately as usual, but things are beginning to

calm down. I was happy to hear that you got the tractor. Also, that Glenn and Buyral are going into business together.

It seems that the papers have been misleading about an early release of the reserves. I expect to be home before Christmas, but not much before. I'm in the first class of reserves, but so far they're taking the first three groups according to seniority of call-up and that leaves me far down the list.

We've had some heavy rains lately and the rainy season hasn't even arrived. We had a torrential downpour tonight. I was drenched while digging ditches but now I have dry clothes on. We were afraid for a while that the tent might wash away.

I now have one man who can take over when I leave and another will be able to before long. It looks as if I may have to request a transfer for one or two. They don't seem to have the ability to do the job. I don't have time to check everyone's work and mistakes can lead to trouble for all of us. I have about six men in my section, two being with the forward dumps we just established. I'm also in charge of the headquarters' section including the jeep drivers. I have general supervision over the dump and all these things take time. We now have two army truck companies working for us and we often have to call for trucks from one of our own battalions, including Bill's outfit, the 7th Motor Transport Battalion.

I went down to Hongchon about a week ago and had four fillings put in. I even decided to get a new wrist watch, finally.

By the way, we are located somewhere north of the 38th now. I don't

think I mentioned it previously. Just how far, I'm not sure, but a few miles anyway.

The war seems to be progressing well. We've not had an easy time in our sector. The North Koreans have put up a terrific struggle and seem to be well equipped, even with heavy artillery. Our casualties have been unusually heavy. The division has been on the line since early February, which is a record for a Marine division, and those men who haven't been killed or wounded are near exhaustion. Men can only take so much. The First Division has been given the toughest assignments by the army high command since it went on line. This area is where the Chinese launched their last major offensive. When we first entered the fray at Wonju the line bulged far to the south, but in a few days it bulged toward the north. I have to read Stars and Stripes because it's the only newspaper available but I'm not happy with it. The only reference to the First Marine Division is an ambiguous phrase like "friendly troops" or something similar. Are they taking too much for granted?

North of the 38th, Korea
July 1, 1951

It's so hot again today everybody is sitting around trying to keep cool. I don't know what the temperature is, but I know it's much hotter than it is back there.

My section is keeping rather busy. We're moving out of this dump into our forward dumps, and it is almost impossible to keep records of all the activity everywhere. One of my men was transferred south after I had spent six weeks trying to train him and a new man has just replaced him. I've almost

reached the point where I just don't care any more.

Things are rather quiet along our sector. We hear all kinds of rumors about the division going into reserve and about different groups going home. I expect to be on my way out by September 1 now, possibly before, though I've heard nothing definite. Everyone thinks he is going home right away so we'll just have to wait and see. Hope springs eternal. Men are being returned for discharge, though. We're all hoping for peace, or at least a truce.

At least chow has improved. Yesterday morning we had steak and eggs for breakfast and ice cream and cake at night. Ice cream never tasted so good. I hadn't had any since coming over on the ship.

It's too hot to think of anything more. I haven't had time lately to go down to the river. We may be moving up to one of the forward dumps before long, probably Yanggu. We are also in the Inje sector. We have been getting an issue of beer occasionally, which we bury in the ground and pour water over to keep cool.

I wish I were back there, especially at this time of the year. How I miss the water and, of course, all of you. I won't even complain if it's snowing when I get back. I'll probably get a good second-hand car. We've been looking over the new car folders that several of the men have received and they certainly look nice.

To be Continued

Volume IV
History of Marine Operations
Continued from Vol. 1 No. 7

**Operations THUNDERBOLT and
ROUNDUP**

On 25 January two corps of the Eighth Army jumped off in Operation THUNDERBOLT. Advancing side by side, I Corps and IX Corps had orders to launch limited objective attacks and regain solid contact with the enemy, who was obviously preparing for a new offensive.

The EUSAK commander moved his CP from Taegu to Chonan, the I Corps headquarters, in order to maintain personal control of the operation. He requested the Navy to step up offshore patrolling on the west coast as left-flank protection. Emphasis was also placed on aerial reconnaissance, both visual and photographic, as well as deep support directed by the Mosquitoes.

Even VMF(N)-542 at Itazuke had orders to conduct long flights to Seoul and maintain continuous patrols to report any attempt of the enemy to retire across the frozen Han River. The F7F-3N pilots shot up camp areas, convoys, and other lucrative targets but found no indications of large-scale crossings over the ice. So varied were the missions of the squadron that it came as no surprise to be assigned to naval gunfire spotting for the USS *St. Paul* and the other British and American cruisers shelling Inchon.

All Marine tactical squadrons were in action on 28 January for the first time since December. Nearly two-thirds of the flights from Bofu and K-9

were diverted from armed reconnaissance to troop support. A typical operation was carried out by four VMF-312 planes on their second day of duty at Bofu. After reporting to MELLOW they were directed to Mosquito Cobalt, which had received a message that enemy troops were hiding in a village just north of Suwon, occupied that day by the U.S. 35th Infantry. Under the Mosquito's direction they bombed, strafed, and napalmed some 40 buildings containing CCF soldiers.

The fall of Suwon opened the way to Inchon and Seoul as Chinese resistance stiffened. Eighth Army progress was anything but reckless, but Ridgway had served notice on the enemy that he held the initiative and intended to keep it. Operation ROUNDUP followed on the heels of THUNDERBOLT. Merely a change in name was involved, for the advance continued at the same prudent pace without any important amendments to the original mission.

Action in the Pohang-Andong Zone

The Marines in the Pohang-Andong zone had their first brush with the elusive enemy on 22 January. A patrol of the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, flushed out a guerrilla force near Mukkye-dong, several miles southeast of Andong (Map 5). Captain Robert P. Wray's Charlie Company deployed for action at sunset and shots were exchanged. The Marines had no casualties and the enemy could not have suffered many losses before he disappeared into the winter dusk.

Even at this early date the Korean Reds seemed to have lost confidence in their guerrilla operations. In a message dated 23 January taken from a prisoner, the commanding general of the II

NKPA Corps directed General Lee Ban Nam to withdraw if possible. It read as follows:

"Get all of your troops out of the enemy encirclement and withdraw to north of Pyongchang without delay. Liaison team sent with radio. If you will inform us of your escape route we will assist by clearing your advance. If you cannot escape, stay in the rear of enemy as guerrillas."

By the 24th an enemy drift southeast from the zones of the 1st and 5th Marines to 7th Marines territory was apparent. The 1/7 command post and Company A received scattered mortar fire late that afternoon. Action picked up the next morning when dawn brought an attack by an estimated 100 guerrillas on the regimental command post. After a brisk 90-minute fire fight the Korean Reds withdrew to the east, leaving seven dead behind and taking with them an unknown number of wounded.

Later that morning the 7th Marines teamed up with the National Police against the Chiso-dong area. Nine bodies were counted as the 3d battalion seized its objective, but 1/7 was slowed by an entrenched enemy who offered an unyielding defense. The Marine battalion ground to a halt just one mile short of Chiso-dong and dug in for the night as artillery continued to pound the enemy. The air strikes on the 25th were flown by VMF(N)-513 and VMF-323, both based at K-9, but the pilots could not contact the FAC and had to make dummy runs over the enemy.

Marine planes and artillery cleared the way on 26 January as 1/7 advanced against scattered opposition. Nearly 400 guerrillas put up a ragged and futile resistance, but by 1530 Marine firepower prevailed and Chiso-dong

was taken. The 2d Battalion had meanwhile occupied Hapton-ni, eight miles southeast of Topyong-dong. A light enemy counterattack was repulsed with ease. Altogether, enemy casualties for the day amounted to 161 KIA or POW.

The VMF-323 flight led by Captain Don H. Fisher and Captain Floyd K. Fulton's VMF(N)-513 flight merit recognition as the first successful instance of Marine air-ground cooperation since the Chosin Reservoir campaign.

While the 7th Marines served eviction notices on the enemy in its area, action elsewhere was light. Task Force Puller hastened on the 26th to Chongja-dong, seven miles northeast of Uisong, to investigate a police report that 300 enemy had seized the town. A Marine attack, following an artillery preparation, was planned for 1500. Captain Thomas J. Bohannon led Able Company in but discovered that the shells had fallen on empty huts.

During the next few days the rice paddy patrols continued to range over the countryside, searching out the enemy. Combat units were sent to areas where the 2 red arrows indicated an NKPA build-up. On the morning of the 29th, the 5th Marines tried to organize an attack on a large enemy force reported near Chachon-dong, 12 miles west of Topyong-dong. Captain Jack R. Jones' Charlie Company, moving out at night in small foot patrols to maintain secrecy, scoured the area in an attempt to pin down the enemy.

Marine intelligence reports had warned of a dawn raid on the town for the purpose of plundering food from the inhabitants and arms from the Korean police station. First Lieutenant Richard J. Schenning, executive officer, led a scouting force ahead of the main body

to reconnoiter the area. He urged that a trap be set for the enemy, and the company commander has left a description of one of the most elaborate ambushes ever attempted by the Marines during the war:

"Well before daylight, a cordon was stealthily braided around Chachon-dong and we settled down to await the raiders. A later daylight inspection of the deployment showed that the men had done a splendid job of locating themselves so as to avoid detection. They were concealed under porches beneath the brambles, and in the heaviest foliage and trees. But no guerrilla attack materialized, probably due to a 'grapevine' warning of our movement and intent.... During the remaining days in the village we conducted extensive patrolling in an attempt to catch at least one guerrilla for our effort. Patrols were kept small to maintain secrecy. We even dressed Marines in clothing worn by the 'locals' and sent them out in the hills with woodgathering details. Larger patrols up to a platoon in size were sent on combat missions at night. One thing was certain: it was easier to talk about capturing guerrillas than it was to lay a hand on them."

The elusiveness of the enemy could not always be credited to effective guerrilla tactics. Often it was due to distaste for combat. As evidence of low NKPA morale, Major Yu Dung Nam, a battalion commander, was condemned to death and shot late in January because he planned to surrender, according to POW testimony. Rations were at a bare subsistence level and typhus had claimed many victims.

Unrelenting Marine pressure throughout the first week of February wore the guerrillas down until groups larger than 50 men were seldom en-

countered. On the 3d an NKPA second lieutenant surrendered voluntarily to a RCT-7 patrol and brought three of his men with him. NKPA morale had sunk so low, he divulged, that all ranks were striving only for survival. The division commander, Major General Lee Ban Nam, had apparently become a victim of acute melancholia. He spent nearly all his time, according to the prisoner, in the solitude of foxholes dug into the slopes of hills for added protection. There he brooded constantly over his predicament, but without arriving at any better solution than alternate hiding and flight.

Certainly the military situation didn't offer much to gladden this Hamlet of the rice paddies, and the Marines continued to give him fresh causes for pessimism. His footsore remnants eluded RCT-5 only to stumble into the one of RCT-1, northeast of Uisong. Neither rest nor sanctuary awaited them, for the 1st and 2d battalions penetrated into the mountains near Sangyong to surprise and rout a force estimated at 400 men.

KMC Regiment Joins 1st Marine Division

Late in January the 1st KMC Regiment got into the fight after being attached once more to the 1st Marine Division by a EUSAK dispatch of the 21st. Lieutenant Colonel Charles W. Harrison headed a new group of Division liaison and advisory officers as the four KMC battalions moved out from Chinhae by LST and truck convoy to the Pohang area. Division OpnO 4-51 (26 January) assigned the regiment Sector F, astride the Yongdok-Andong road, which had been carved out of Sectors C and D, held by the 7th and 11th Marines respectively. The KMCs were ordered to conduct daily patrolling

from positions near Yongdok, Chaegok-tong, and Chinandong and prevent enemy concentrations in their sector.

Although the ROK Army and Eighth Army had the responsibility for supplying the KMCs, it proved necessary for the 1st Marine Division to cope with some of the gaps in equipment and rations. Contrary to a prevalent Western belief, Koreans did not subsist on a diet of rice alone. They were accustomed to having "side dishes" with their rice, such as eggs, meat, fish, or vegetables. Colonel Kim Sung Eun, the regimental commander, had an allotment of money for these purchases, but the sum was insufficient to meet inflation prices even if there had been enough food left in a district eaten bare. As a consequence, the KMCs had to get along on a monotonous and vitamin-poor diet until the ROK Army belatedly came to the rescue with issues of food for side dishes.

On 29 January the KMC Regiment opened its CP at Yongdok. Regimental OpnO 1 of that date divided Sector F into three parts, assigning the western, central, and eastern subsectors to the 3d, 1st, and 2d Battalions respectively. The 5th Battalion was attached to the 1st Marines and assigned to patrolling operations in the Andong area.

The first few days of February saw a brief flurry of activity before NKPA guerrilla resistance breathed its last gasps. Reports that the remnants of the NKPA 25th and 27th Regiments were in flight toward the zone of the 5th Marines led to a concentration for a knockout blow, but the enemy stole away to the north in the vicinity of Topyong-dong. There he discovered that he had jumped from the frying pan into the fire. The 2d and 3d Battalions of the

1st Marines closed in from one side while the 1st and 3d Battalions of the KMC Regiment blocked roads in the vicinity of Samgo-ri and Paekchadong. Only a wild flight in small groups saved the guerrillas from annihilation.

The nearest approach to effective NKPA resistance was encountered on 5 February after the 1st and 2d KMC Battalions had established blocking positions in zone at the request of the 7th Marines, which was driving the enemy northward. A platoon-size patrol of the 2d KMC Battalion came up against Korean Reds dug in with 81mm mortars and heavy and light machine guns a few miles southwest of Yongdok. The KMCs were scattered with losses of 1 KIA, 8 WIA, and 24 MIA in addition to all arms and equipment, though the missing men returned later.

It was the single NKPA success of the entire campaign.

An assault was launched the following morning on this enemy stronghold by a composite KMC battalion, supported by four VMF(N)-513 aircraft which attacked with rockets and bombs. The largest combat of the guerrilla hunt appeared to be in the making, but again the enemy vanished after putting up an ineffectual resistance with small arms and mortars.

An unusual air tactic was tested on 4 February in the 7th Marines zone when an interpreter in an R4D plane hailed the guerrillas by loud speaker in their own language with a demand that they surrender or suffer the consequences. Marine fighter-bombers were on station to back the threat, and about 150 supposed NKPA soldiers came in with uplifted hands while VMF-323 planes delivered the consequences to the holdouts in the form of bombs,

rockets, and napalm. Unfortunately, it developed that practically all of the prisoners were terrified civilians seeking an escape from the slave labor imposed upon them by the guerrillas.

10th NKPA Division Scattered

Reports of enemy activity were received daily from Korean civilians and police, and seldom was a smaller number than "about two thousand" mentioned. In reality, Marine patrols had difficulty in tracking down as many as ten of the skulking, half-starved fugitives split up into small bands hiding in the hills. On 5 February the situation was summed up by General Smith in reply to a EUSAK request for an estimate of the time required to complete the Marine mission:

"The original 10th NKPA Div forces in the 1st Marine Division area have been dispersed into many groups, reduced to an effective strength of 40 per cent, and are no longer capable of a major effort while dispersed.... It is considered that the situation in the Division area is sufficiently in hand to permit the withdrawal of the Division and the assignment of another mission at any time a new force to be assigned the responsibility for the area assumes such responsibility and the 1st Marine Division can be reassembled."

Patrolling continued as usual in all Marine regimental zones during the second week in February. Some units, such as the 11th Marines and the Division Reconnaissance Company, had made few enemy contacts throughout the operation. But at least the cannoners had found good pheasant hunting and enjoyed a change in the bill of fare. It was just as well that the tactical situation seldom made it necessary to call for air support at this stage, since

the 1st MAW was once again in the throes of moves which will be described in the following chapter. Bofu had been only a temporary base for MAG-33 squadrons which were making another transfer to K-9 while MAG-12 completed its shift to K-1.

VM0-6 took care of the reduced air requirements of the Division adequately. Another helicopter "first" was scored when First Lieutenant John L. Scott received credit for the first night casualty evacuation by a HTL (Bell), which then had no instruments for night flying. For a harrowing moment, however, it would be hard to beat the experience of Captain Clarence W. Parkins and Corpsman R. E. Krisky. While they were flying a casualty to the hospital ship *Consolation*, the patient became wildly delirious. It took the combined efforts of pilot and corpsman to subdue him and make a safe landing.

Any excitement would have been welcomed by the troops in general. For the area was as tranquil as if the guerrillas had never troubled its snowbound heights. Recently arrived Marines might have been pardoned for concluding that the NKPA 10th Division and its gloomy commander were but creatures of the imagination, phantoms to be compared to the crew of the *Flying Dutchman*, that legendary ship condemned to sail on endlessly until the Day of Judgment. The NKPA 10th Division also seemed doomed to perpetual flight as its ghostly survivors made their way from crag to crag of the remote ridgelines.

Thanks to the rice paddy patrols, the replacements were ready for combat and the Division was organizing a rotation draft for return to the States. Five officers and 600 men had already been selected on a basis of combat time, wounds received, and length of service.

Major General Edward A. Craig, who commanded the first Marines to land in Korea, was given a farewell dinner and congratulated on his second star. Two new brigadier generals were named, with Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller relieving Craig as ADC and Gregon A. Williams accompanying him on the voyage back to the States. Captain Eugene R. "Bud" Hering, (MC) USN, was also returning with the gratitude of all Marines for his care of casualties in the "Frozen Chosin" campaign.

All Marine missions in the guerilla hunt had been successfully accomplished, so that the Division could be relieved at any time by the 2d ROK Division. There were 120 counted enemy dead and 184 prisoners. Only estimates are available for the wounded, but there is no doubt that the total NKPA casualties were crippling. At any rate, the NKPA 10th Division was destroyed as a fighting force without accomplishing any of its objectives. Marine casualties from 18 January to 15 February were 19 KIA, 7 DOW, 10 MIA, 148 WIA, and 1,751 of a nonbattle classification, largely frostbite cases soon restored to duty.

New Mission for the Marines

On 11 February, General Smith flew to Taegu to discuss the next Marine mission with General Ridgway. The EUSAk commander spoke favorably of employing the 1st Marine Division to relieve the 24th Infantry Division in the critical Han River corridor, where recent UN advances had been made. He also recognized the advantages of committing the Marines to the east coast, so that they could be held in readiness for an amphibious operation. A third possibility was the Yaju corridor of the IX Corps zone. As "the most powerful division in Korea," said Ridgway, "the

Marines would be astride" what he considered "the logical route for an expected enemy counterthrust."

No decision was reached that day. At midnight the CCF attack materialized; and the central front was the area of decision, as Ridgway had predicted.

Naturally, the next mission for the Marines had to be reconsidered in the light of this development. On 12 February EUSAk warning orders alerted the 1st Marine Division to be prepared to move to Chungju, in the rear area of the IX Corps front where the heaviest CCF attacks were taking place. The Division was further directed to make an immediate reconnaissance of the Chungju area while the 1st KMC Regiment prepared for a move to Samchok on the east coast and attachment to the ROK Capitol Division. The following day brought orders from the Eighth Army to initiate these movements on 15 February 1951. Thus the Pohang-Andong guerrilla hunt came to an end with the Marines on their way to new employment in the battle line of the Eighth Army.

You know how the television serials always leave you right in the middle of the story? Well, they want to whet your appetite for more. I guess we do the same here.

This next story of DARKHORSE by LtCol. Bob Taplett, covers the 3rd Bn 5th Marines and their remarkable actions as both rear guard at Yudam-ni and point to Hagaru, literally paving the way for the Division's ability to break-out of the Chinese encirclement.

This is the 1st time I read this story and it is a spellbinder. Stay tuned!

THE STORY OF "DARKHORSE" LtCol Robert Taplett USMC

Darkhorse had been called upon before to work alone as a battalion in the early fighting in Korea. In fact it had been singled out to make the assault on Wolmi-do, key to the success of the Inchon landing.

It was no better or no worse than other outfits, but it had the advantage of more service and more training. The nucleus of the battalion was made up of regulars who had been serving together since 1948. It made for a cocky bunch with a tremendous amount of pride and loyalty in their organization, an outfit that considered it a pat on the back to be selected for a special mission — the tougher the better.

Darkhorse was the Third Battalion, Fifth Marines, and it was to play a featured role in the bitter fighting during the attack from Yudam-ni to Hagaru as the First Marine Division battled its way back from Chosin Reservoir.

On the 27th of November 1950, the First Marine Division was continuing the attack north and west of Yudamni on its advance to the Yalu River. The CCF (Chinese Communist Forces) had previously crossed the Yalu and had moved into North Korea in considerable strength. They had halted the advance of the Eighth Army in the west and had forced a withdrawal of that unit. The continuation of the attack by the Marines in the heart of Korea, west of Yudam-ni, was planned and directed to divert the attention of the CCF from the Eighth Army and especially to relieve the pressure on the right flank of the Eighth Army now hurriedly retreating to the south. Because of the Eighth Army withdrawal and the intelligence reports of strong

concentrations of CCF troops blocking the MSRs to the west and to the north of Yudam-ni, and because of the logistical problems involved in supplying units already spread out in a dangerously thin line, the Marines were becoming somewhat alarmed and apprehensive over their mission to continue the attack to the west of the Chosin Reservoir.

Such were the circumstances the day the 3d Bn, 5th Marines, reinforced, moved from the northeast side of the Chosin Reservoir to the northwestern sector of Yudam-ni. It was the last day the Marines were to make any further advance to the north and west. Enemy resistance confronting the 5th RCT up until this time had been light and sporadic. Considerable activity by the CCFs on the east side of the reservoir had been encountered but no sizeable contacts had been made. The 7th RCT, however, on its push to Yudam-ni, had run into mounting resistance but had seized the area from the withdrawing CCFs. RCT5 which had been ordered to move from the east side of the reservoir and pass through RCT7 west of Yudamni, had commenced the attack in the morning. The 5th's plan called for an attack with the battalions in column, the 2d Bn leading.

The column passed through and then was assisted by 3/7 in the westward push along the MSR to Mupyong-ni. The 3d Bn was to be prepared to assist 2/5 or to pass through it and continue the attack to the west when ordered.

The night of 27/28 November was bright and cold. The Marines do not recall too vividly whether the moon was up or what quarter it was in, but they do recall that it was light enough so that all enemy dressed in white could

be seen at a distance of up to a hundred yards in open terrain. They also recall that it was very cold with temperatures going down to as low as twenty degrees below zero. In spite of the snow and bitter cold, however, as the early mountain night descended and 3/5 blacked out, the assembly area was relatively quiet and peaceful. But there was something in the air.

The cold, quiet peacefulness was charged with apprehension, apprehension brought on not only by nightfall, but also because so little was known about the new enemy, his strength, and his location. The attack made by 2/5 during the day, though successful, had run into strong enemy resistance about four thousand yards west of the village of Yudamni, and the attack was halted in the middle of the afternoon. It was strongly indicated that there would be heavier fighting ahead in order to break through the tough CCF defenses. Each company had tied-in to the command post at dark. Foxholes were chipped in the frozen earth to provide some sort of cover, and infantry weapons were sighted in.

Supporting weapons were not laid-in since it was known that friendly units were occupying most of the key terrain features along the perimeter. The quiet of the assembly area was disturbed only by the activity involved in posting additional squads and platoons at outpost positions to cover critical terrain features around the battalion perimeter. Since the 3/5 assembly area was well within the perimeter defenses of RCT-5 and RCT-7 there was a feeling of comparative security and safety. Everyone counted on some rest and only the normal twenty-five percent alert was required.

The picture was to change. Little

did the Marines in 3/5 realize that heavy fighting would come soon and would be done in their assembly area, including the command post. This was the night 27/28 November and the CCF had selected the 1st Mar Div for annihilation in detail. About 2100, I Co and the Wharang platoon (a unit of Korean National Police attached to H&S 3/5) in the north and east sector of the assembly area reported receiving small-arms fire in their sector.

A short time later Marines from H/7 began entering the area. Some of them were without shoes and outer clothing and they reported that Hill 1402, which they had taken earlier in the day, was under heavy attack and that two platoon sectors had been overrun and communications had been lost with the CP of 3/7. A check with 3/7 verified that the battalion was out of communications with How Co and that it had only meager information of the company's situation. As additional stragglers came in they reported that elements of H/7 were still holding part of Hill 1402.

All units of Darkhorse were now on a fifty percent alert. The battalion communications officer, Lt Hercules Kelley, started a wire team laying wire from H/5 to H/7 in order to tie them into the 3/5 communication system. Thereafter, except for occasional casualties coming off 1402 and occasional small-arms fire, the area remained ominously quiet. H and I Companies were alerted to be especially cautious in taking unidentified persons under fire because of stragglers and casualties coming off Hill 1402.

To be continued
