



Col Litzenberg's 7th Marines led off the march south from Hagaru-ri on 6 December. Here one of his units pauses at the roadblock held by Weapons Company, 3d Battalion, 1st

Photo by Sgt Frank C. Kerr, Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A5464 Marines, before exiting the town to watch a drop of napalm by a Marine Corsair against a camp abandoned by Army engineers, now infested with Chinese.

Meanwhile Lockwood's 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, had run into more serious trouble another mile down the road. Davis' 1st Battalion, up in the hills, could see the enemy; Lockwood's battalion, on the road itself, could not. Fox Company, with some help from Dog-Easy Company and the Army mini-battalions under Anderson, pushed through at about 1500. Davis' battalion continued to play company-sized hopscotch from hilltop to hilltop on the right of the road. By dark, lead elements of RCT-7 were about three miles south of Hagaru-ri. Enemy resistance stiffened and air reconnaissance spoke of Chinese columns coming in from the east, but Litzenberg decided to push on. After two more miles of advance, Lockwood's battalion was stopped in what Drysdale had called Hell Fire Valley by what seemed to be a solitary Chinese machine gun firing from the left. An Army tank solved

that problem. Another half-mile down the road a blown bridge halted the column. The engineers did their job, the march resumed, but then there was another blown bridge. At dawn on Thursday things got better. Air came overhead, and 2d Battalion, 7th

Marines, had no more trouble as it marched the last few miles into Koto-ri. Through all of this Lockwood, sick with severe bronchitis, had sat numbly in his jeep. Early that morning his executive officer, Major Sawyer, had been wounded in the leg by a mortar

Coming out of Hagaru-ri, Col Litzenberg used LtCol Lockwood's 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, reinforced with tanks, as his advance guard. Here a heavy machine gun squad rests by the side of the road while a M-26 Pershing medium tank trundles by. The M-26 mounted a powerful flat-trajectory 90mm gun.

Photo by Sgt Frank C. Kerr, National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A5469





Photo by Sgt Frank C. Kerr, Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A5428

Marching, encumbered with weapons, packs, and winter clothing, on the road from Hagaru-ri to Koto-ri was heavy work, even without Chinese interference. This unit of the 7th Marines, taking advantage of a halt, manages a quick nap. Most of the fighting was on the high ground on both sides of the MSR, but occasionally the Chinese reached the road.

fragment and was out of action. Major James F. Lawrence, Jr., 32, University of North Carolina 1941, the battalion S-3, had become the de facto commander.

Things were going even less well on the left flank and rear of the column. The Army provisional battalion, fragile to begin with, had fought itself out and was replaced by Harris' 3d Battalion, 7th Marines. By 2100 the Chinese had come down to within hand-grenade range of the trucks on the road. Harris deployed his George and Item Companies to push them back. Sometime before dawn, Lieutenant Colonel William Harris, son of Major General Field Harris, disappeared. He was last seen walking down the road with two rifles slung over his shoulder. A search for him found no body and it was presumed he had been taken prisoner. Major Warren Morris, the executive officer of the 1st Battalion, took over command of the 3d Battalion and it reached

Koto-ri at about 0700 on Thursday morning.

Chinese prisoners taken along the road from Hagaru-ri to Koto-ri

The role of the rifle companies in the breakout from Hagaru-ri on 6 December was to take the high ground on both sides of the road. Much fought over "East Hill" dominated the exit from Hagaru-ri. It was never completely taken, but the Chinese were pushed back far enough to permit the relatively safe passage of the division trains of vehicles.

Photo by Sgt Frank C. Kerr, Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A5465



were identified as being from the 76th and 77th Divisions of 26th CCF Army.

For Almond, most of Wednesday, 6 December, was absorbed with a visit by General J. Lawton Collins, the Army chief of staff. Collins and Almond dropped in at the command posts of the Army's 7th and 3d Infantry Divisions, but "weather precluded flying to Koto-ri" for a visit with Smith. Collins left at nightfall for Tokyo. The visit had gone well and Almond noted contentedly in his diary: "Gen. Collins seemed completely satisfied with the operation of X Corps and apparently was much relieved in finding the situation well in hand."

At Koto-ri, 7 December

First Lieutenant Leo R. Ryan, the adjutant of the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, alarmed by Lieutenant Colonel Lockwood's apathy, pressed the battalion surgeon and assistant surgeon, Lieutenants (jg)



Soldiers, readily recognizable as such in their short parkas, march in single file on 6 December along the MSR south of Hagaru-ri. RCT-31, badly mauled east of the reservoir and

reduced in combat effectives to a small provisional battalion commanded by LtCol Berry K. Anderson, USA, was attached to the 7th Marines for the breakout.

Laverne F. Peiffer and Stanley I. Wolf, to examine him. Neither doctor was a psychiatrist, but they came to the conclusion that Lockwood was suffering from a neurosis that made him unfit for command. This was communicated to Colonel Litzenberg who confirmed Major Lawrence as the acting commander.

In mid-morning, Thursday, 7 December, to ease the passage of the division train, both the 2d and 3d Battalions, 7th Marines, were ordered to face about, move north again, and set up blocking positions on both sides of the road between Koto-ri and Hill 1182. On the way the 2d Battalion picked up 22 Royal Marine survivors who had been laagered up in a Korean house ever since Task Force

Drysdale had passed that way. A VMO-6 pilot had spotted them three days earlier by the letters "H-E-L-P" stamped in the snow and had dropped rations and medical supplies.

Elsewhere on Thursday, 7 December, X Corps and Eighth Army had received orders from GHQ Tokyo to plan to withdraw, in successive positions if necessary, to the Pusan area. Eighth Army was to hold on to the Inchon-Seoul area as long as possible. X Corps was to withdraw through Hungnam and eventually to pass to the command of Eighth Army.

Almond visited Smith at Koto-ri and assured him that Soule's 3d Infantry Division would provide maximum protection from Chinhung-ni on into Hamhung. Smith

LtCol William F. Harris, commanding officer of the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, and son of MajGen Field Harris, disappeared on the march from Hagaru-ri to Koto-ri. He was last seen moving down the road with two rifles slung over his shoulder. His exact fate remains a mystery.

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A45353





National Archives Photo (USA) 111-SC354254
General J. Lawton Collins, the Army chief of staff, left, visited X Corps on 6 December and warmly praised MajGen Almond, right, for his conduct of the battle. Collins got to the command posts of the 3d and 7th Infantry Divisions, but bad weather kept him from seeing MajGen Smith and the command post of the 1st Marine Division at Koto-ri.

was concerned over the coordination of artillery fire by the 3d Division. Almond promised that it would be under Marine control. He spoke briefly with Puller and Litzenberg and noted that night in his diary, "Morale is high in the Marine Division."

All elements of RCT-7 had closed into Koto-ri by 1700 on the evening of 7 December; but Division Train No. 1, which they were to have shepherded, did not get out of Hagaru-ri until 1600 on the 6th. A little more than a mile out of Hagaru-ri the Chinese came down on the column. They might have thought the train would be easy pickings; if so, they were wrong. They hit Major Francis "Fox" Parry's 3d Battalion, 11th Marines. The artillerymen, fighting as infantry, held them off. Another

mile down the road and the process was repeated. This time the gunners got to use their howitzers, firing at pointblank range, and happily, if optimistically, guessed that they had killed or wounded all but about 50 of the estimated 500 to 800 attackers.

As the night wore on there was more fighting along the road. The division headquarters had a stiff scuffle sometime after midnight. The members of the division band were given the opportunity to demonstrate their skills as machine gunners. The Military Police Company was bringing out a bag of 160 able-bodied prisoners of war. The prisoners got caught between Chinese and American fires and most were killed. Night hecklers from David Wolfe's VMF(N)-513 helped and at dawn the omnipresent Corsairs from Frank Cole's VMF-312 came on station and resolved the situation. The column moved through the stark debris—there were still bodies lying about and many broken vehicles—of Hell Fire Valley and by 1000 on 7 December Division Train No. 1, after an all-night march, was in Koto-ri.

Eleven miles away in Hagaru, Division Train No. 2, unable to move onto the road until Division Train No. 1 had cleared, did not get started until well after dark on 6 December. At midnight, the head of the train was still barely out of the town. Lieutenant Colonel Milne, the train commander, asked for infantry help. Taplett's 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, was detailed to the job. Taplett moved forward with two companies. Nothing much happened until dawn on 7 December when the column was able to continue on under air cover.

In Hagaru-ri engineers and ordnance men were busy blowing up everything that could be blown up

and burning the rest. Stevens' 1st Battalion, 5th Marines; Ridge's 3d Battalion, 1st Marines; and Drysdale's 41 Commando stood poised to leave but could not get out of town until Thursday morning, 7 December, after some fighting in Hagaru-ri itself, because of the clogged roads. Roise's 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, came off East Hill and fell in behind them as rear guard at about 1000. The Chinese once again seemed more interested in looting what was left of the town than in further fighting. After some light interference on the road, all elements of RCT-5 were safely tucked into the Koto-ri perimeter before midnight on the 7th.

A number of units—including Roise's 2d Battalion, 5th Marines; Ridge's 3d Battalion, 1st Marines; and Drake's 31st Tank Company—assert that they provided the rear point coming out of Hagaru-ri. Able Company engineers, however, busy with last-minute demolitions in the already burning town, probably have the best claim. In round figures, 10,000 Marines and soldiers, shepherding 1,000 vehicles, had marched 11 miles in 38 hours. Marine losses were 103 dead, 7 missing, and 506 wounded.

Marine engineers, arguably the greatest heroes of the campaign, had widened and improved the airstrip at Koto-ri so that it could handle World War II TBMs, no longer used as torpedo bombers, but now stripped-down utility aircraft that could bring in a few passengers—as many as nine—and lift out a corresponding number of wounded. The TBMs, plus the light aircraft and helicopters from VMO-6, took out about 200 casualties on 7 December and 225 more on the 8th. Most of the TBMs were piloted, not by squadron pilots, but by otherwise desk-bound aviators on the wing and group staffs.



National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A5457

Chinese prisoners within the Hagaru-ri perimeter were herded into a stockade guarded by a detachment of Capt John H. Griffin's Military Police Company. When the Marines evacuated the town they left the wounded prisoners of war behind in a compound, telling them that their comrades would soon be down from the hills to help them.

March South from Koto-ri

There would be no rest at Koto-ri. By somebody's count 14,229 men had piled into Koto-ri, including the long-awaited Army's 2d Battalion, 31st Infantry, which had arrived far too late to go forward to join its regiment, the shredded RCT-31, east of the reservoir. Reidy's battalion was to continue as part of Puller's RCT-1 in the break out.

Anderson's two-battalion collection of soldiers, quite separate from Reidy's battalion, had suffered additional casualties—both battle and from the cold—coming in from Hagaru-ri. Major Witte, one of the battalion commanders, was among the wounded. Anderson reorganized his shrinking command into two companies: a 31st Company under Captain George A. Rasula, a canny Finnish-American from Minnesota who knew what cold weather was all about, and a 32d Company under Captain Robert J. Kitz, who had

been a company commander in Reilly's 3d Battalion, 31st Infantry, in Task Force Faith. Anderson then stepped aside from immediate command, giving the battalion to Major Robert E. Jones who had been Don Faith's S-1 and adjutant.

As a paratrooper in World War II, Jones had jumped with the 101st Airborne Division near Eindhoven, Holland. Now, coming out of Koto-ri, his improvised battalion remained part of Litzenberg's RCT-7.

The Marines left Hagaru-ri in flames, wanting to leave no shelter for the Chinese. Veterans still argue as to which unit was the last to leave the town. Marines from Company A, 1st Engineer Battalion, charged with last minute demolitions, probably have the best claim to this honor.

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A5458





Photo by David Douglas Duncan

As the Marines moved south from Hagaru-ri to Koto-ri they had to pass through "Hell Fire Valley," site of Task Force Drysdale's heaviest losses. The Chinese had made no attempt to salvage the abandoned vehicles, but the Marines did and learned that some needed nothing more than a push to start them.

The march south was to be resumed at first light on Friday, 8 December. It would be a "skin-the-cat" maneuver with the rifle companies leap-frogging along the high ground on each side of the road while the heavily laden vehicles of the division trains made their way toward Funchilin Pass and then down the pass to Chinhung-ni. At the foot of the

pass the Marines could expect to find elements of the Army's 3d Infantry Division manning the outer defenses of the Hamhung-Hungnam area. But the road was not yet open. Smith had been warned, as early as 4 December, that the Chinese had blown a critical bridge halfway down the pass. Here water came out from the Changjin Reservoir through a tunnel

into four giant pipes called "penstocks." The bridge had crossed over the penstocks at a point where the road clung to an almost sheer cliff. If the division was to get out its tanks, artillery, and vehicles the 24-foot gap would somehow have to be bridged.

Lieutenant Colonel Partridge, the division engineer, had made an aerial reconnaissance on 6 December and determined that the gap could be spanned by four sections of an M-2 steel "Treadway" bridge. He had no such bridge sections, but fortuitously there was a detachment of the Treadway Bridge Company from the Army's 58th Engineer Battalion at Koto-ri with two Brockway trucks that could carry the bridge sections if they could be air-delivered. A section was test-dropped at Yonpo by an Air Force C-119 and got smashed up in the process. Not discouraged, Partridge pressed for an airdrop of eight sections—to give himself a 100 percent insurance factor that at least four sections would land in useable condition. The 2,500-pound bridge sections began their parachute drop at 0930 on 7 December. One fell into the hands of the Chinese. Another was banged up beyond use. But six sections landed intact. Plywood center sections for wheeled traffic were also dropped. Next, the Brockway trucks would have to deliver the sections to the bridge site three-and-a-half miles away, a location likely to be defended fiercely by the Chinese.

Partridge met with Litzenberg and it was decided that the Brockway trucks would move at the front of the 7th Marines' regimental train after RCT-7 jumped-off at 0800 on 8 December. The bridge site was dominated by Hill 1081 so Lieutenant Colonel Schmuck's 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, at Chinhung-ni was



Photo by Sgt William R. Keating, Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A5461

One of the vehicles salvaged by the Marines in "Hell Fire Valley" was a bullet-ridden Army ambulance. Battered, but still in running condition, the Marines used it to evacuate casualties incurred along the line of march. Once safely in Masan, a large number of Army vehicles were returned to the Army.

ordered to advance overland three miles to the north to take the hill. All of this required exquisite timing.

First objective for Litzenberg's 7th Marines coming out of Koto-ri was the high ground on the right of the road for a distance of about a mile-and-a-half. Murray's 5th Marines would then pass through the 7th Marines and take and hold the high ground for the next mile. Puller's 1st Marines was to stay in Koto-ri until the division and regimental trains had cleared and then was to relieve the 5th and 7th Marines on their high ground positions so the trains could pass on to Funchilin Pass. The 5th and 7th Marines, relieved by the 1st, would then move on down the pass toward Hamhung. The 11th Marines artillery would displace from battery firing position to battery firing position but for much of the time would be limbered up and on the road. Heavy reliance for fire support would be placed on

the Corsairs and organic mortars. Tanks would follow at the end of the vehicular column so there would be no chance of a crippled

Koto-ri as it looked on 8 December, the day that the march to the south continued. Virtually all the combat strength of the 1st Marine Division, plus some Army troops, had concentrated there for the breakout. The next critical terrain feature would be Funchilin Pass where a blown bridge threatened to halt the march. Its repair posed a problem for Marine engineers.

Photo by Sgt William R. Keating, Department of Defense (USMC) A5354



tank blocking the road.

Task Force Dog, under Brigadier General Mead and consisting of the 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry, liberally reinforced with tanks and artillery, had started north on 7 December, passed through Su-dong, and by late afternoon had reached Chinhung-ni. Schmuck's 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, after being relieved by Task Force Dog, moved into an assembly area several miles north of Chinhung-ni.

The jump-offs from both Koto-ri and Chinhung-ni on the morning of 8 December were made in a swirling snowstorm. Schmuck's Marines started the six-mile march up the MSR to the line of departure at 0200. His plan was for Captain Robert P. Wray's Company C to take Hill 891, the southwestern nose of Hill 1081, and hold it while his other two rifle companies passed through and continued the attack. Captain Barrow's Company A was to attack east of the road and on up to the summit of Hill 1081. Captain Noren's



Photo by Sgt William R. Keating, Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A5361

Snow-dusted M-4A3 Sherman tanks of LtCol Harry T. Milne's 1st Tank Battalion await the word at Koto-ri to move out to the south. The tanks had turned in a disap-

pointing performance with Task Force Drysdale. There would be further problems with the tanks in Funchilin Pass.

Immediately outside of Koto-ri, two Chinese soldiers willingly surrender to members of a Marine rifle company early on 9 December. Each leg of the withdrawal, from Yudam-ni to

Hagaru-ri, from Hagaru-ri to Koto-ri, and from Koto-ri to Chibung-ni, showed a marked improvement in Marine tactics to deal with the situation.

Photo by Cpl Peter W. McDonald, National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A5388



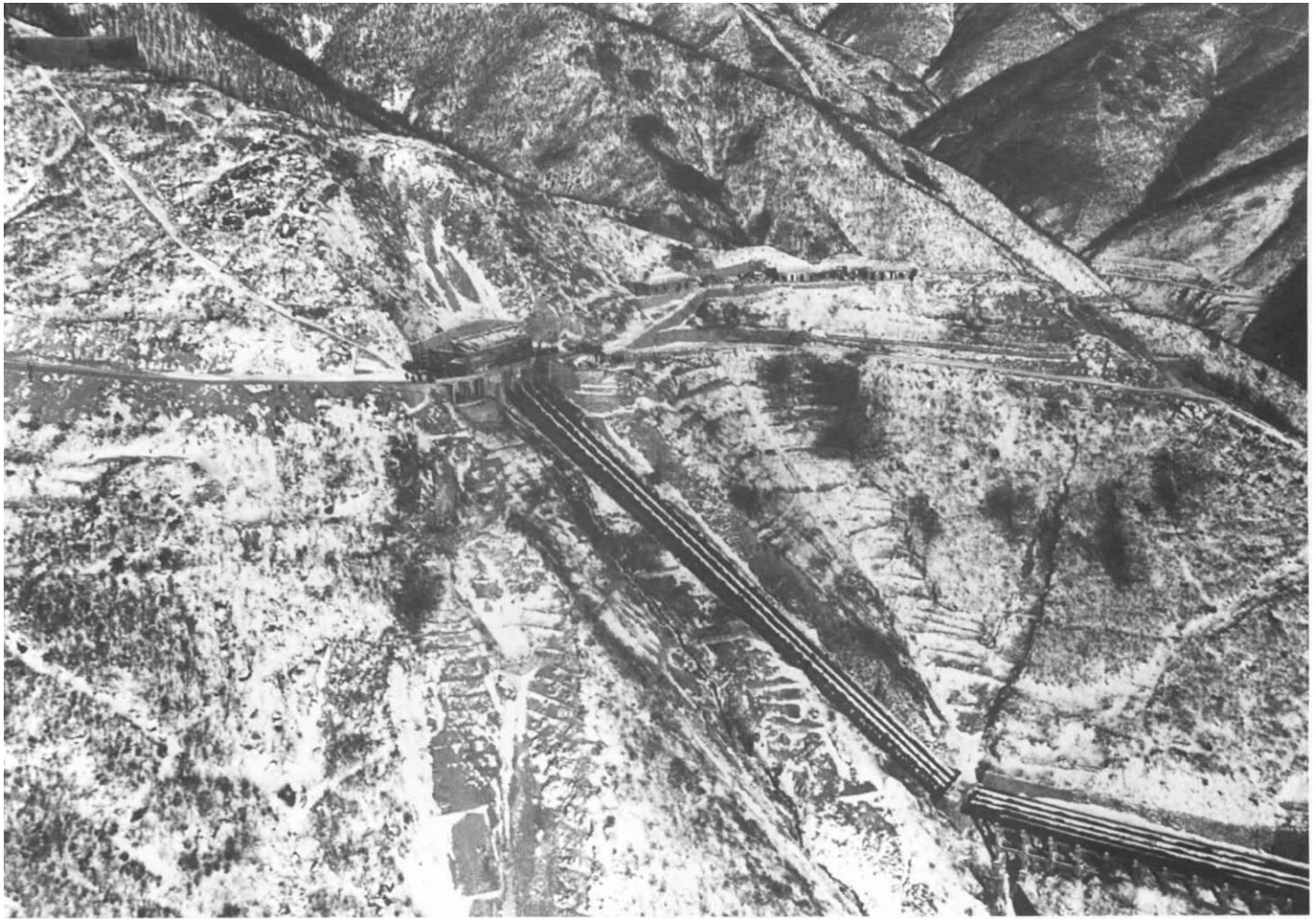


Photo by SSgt Ed Barnum, Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A130504

Aerial view taken from one of VMO-6's light observation aircraft, flown by 1stLt John D. Cotton, shows the power station, the pipes or "penstocks" that carried off the water, and

the precarious nature of the road occupying a thin shelf cut into the precipitous slope.

Company B would be on the left flank, moving along the slope between Barrow and the road.

Wray had his objective by dawn. On it Schmuck built up a base of fire with his 81mm mortars and an attached platoon of 4.2-inch mortars—the effective, but road-bound “four-deuces.” Also effective, but tied to the road, were five Army self-propelled anti-aircraft guns—quad .50-calibers and duel 40mms—attached from Company B, 50th Antiaircraft Artillery (Automatic Weapons) Battalion.

Things went like clockwork. Schmuck's main attack jumped off at 1000. Barrow clambered up the hogback ridge that led to the summit of Hill 1081; Noren advanced

A mixed group of Marines and soldiers struggle up an ice-covered slope somewhere south of Koto-ri. The weather and the terrain were at least as much of an enemy as the Chinese. Marines, disdainful of the Army's performance east of the reservoir, learned in the march-out from Hagaru-ri that soldiers, properly led, were not much different from themselves.

Photo by Cpl Peter W. McDonald, National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A5389





Sketch by Sgt Ralph Schofield, USMCR

Going downhill was easier for the most part than going up, but wherever it was the march was single file of Marines, or at best a double file. Even stripped down to essentials, the average Marine carried 35 to 40 pounds of weapons, ammunition, rations, and sleeping bag. Anything more, such as toilet articles, shelter half, or poncho, was a luxury.

along the wooded western slope of the hill. Noren met scattered resistance, was stopped momentarily by two enemy machine guns, which he then took out with

a tidy schoolbook solution—engaging the enemy with his own machine guns and 60mm mortars while a platoon worked around in a right hook. He then ran into a

bunker complex, took it after a savage fight, and found a kettle of rice cooking in the largest bunker. Schmuck moved his headquarters forward and set up his command post in the bunker only to find it louse-ridden. The day cost Noren three killed and six wounded.

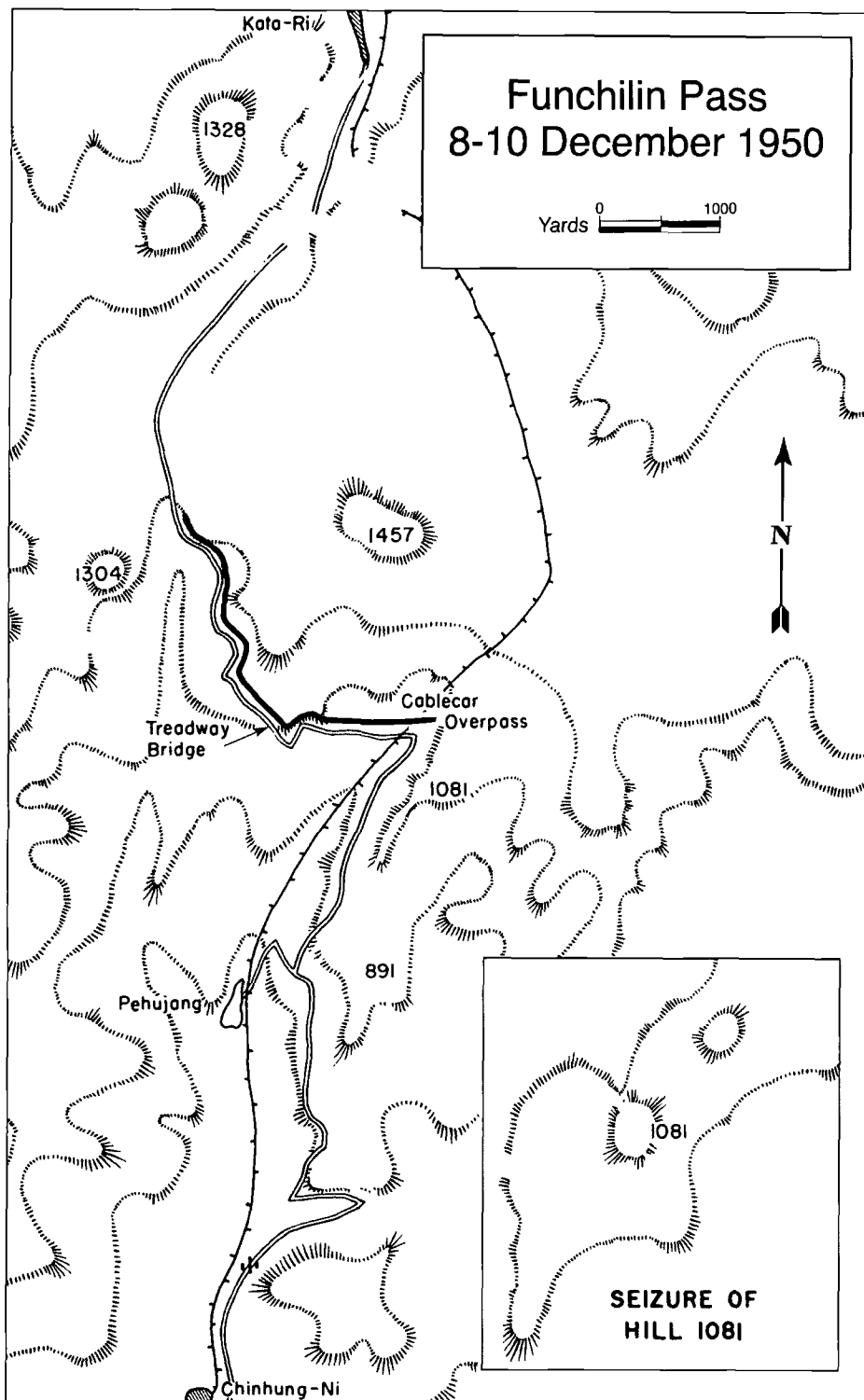
Barrow had gone up the ridge against no enemy whatsoever, impeded only by the icy ridgeline, so narrow that he had to march in a dangerous single file. Through a break in the snowstorm, Barrow got a glimpse of a strongly bunkered Chinese position on a knob between his company and the crest of the hill. He elected to do a double envelopment, sending his 2d Platoon around to the left and his 1st Platoon around to the right. He went himself with the 3d Platoon up the center in a frontal attack. It all came together in a smashing assault. Barrow's

Fresh snow fell during the march from Koto-ri to the top of Funchilin Pass. When the column on the road halted, as it frequently did, the Marines tended to bunch up, making

themselves inviting targets for Chinese mortar and machine gun fire. March discipline had to be enforced by tough corporals and sergeants more than by orders from the top.

Photo by Sgt Frank C. Kerr, National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A5358





Funchilin Pass 8-10 December 1950

Yards 0 1000

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SEIZURE OF
HILL 1081

Marines counted more than 60 Chinese dead. They themselves lost 10 killed, 11 wounded. The snow ended and the night was clear. At midnight a Chinese platoon bravely but foolishly tried to evict Barrow's Marines and lost 18 killed. To Barrow's left, all was quiet in front of Noren's position.

To their north, Litzenberg's 7th

Marines had come out of Koto-ri on schedule on the morning of 8 December. Counting the Army provisional battalion he had four battalions. Two were to clear each side of the road. One was to advance along the MSR, to be followed by the regimental train and the reserve battalion. Major Morris had been assigned to take Hill

1328 on the right of the road with his 3d Battalion. Going was slow. By mid-morning Litzenberg grew impatient and urged him to commit his reserve company. Morris snapped back: "All three companies are up there—50 men from George Company, 50 men from How, 30 men from Item. That's it." Shortly after noon, Litzenberg committed his regimental reserve, Lawrence's 2d Battalion, to come to the assistance of Morris. By nightfall the two battalions had joined but not much more was accomplished.

Left of the road, the provisional Army battalion, under Major Jones, had jumped off on time and, with the help of two Marine tanks, had moved along against light resistance. In two jumps Jones reached Hill 1457 where his soldiers dug in for the night. Their position was raked by Chinese automatic fire, and in a brief nasty action 12 enemy were killed at a cost of one soldier killed, four wounded.

Litzenberg's executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Dowsett, had been shot through the ankle the day before. Litzenberg moved Raymond Davis up to executive officer to replace him and gave the 1st Battalion, still his strongest battalion, to Major Sawyer, whose wound had proved superficial. Sawyer's initial mission was to move a mile down the road and wait for the 3d Battalion to come up on his right flank. The 1st Battalion now had it own fight.

Sawyer's lead platoon came under fire from Hill 1304. Baker Company continued to move against the high ground just left of the road while Able and Charlie Companies moved more deeply to the right against the hill. Baker Company was caught in a cross-fire; the company commander, Lieutenant Kurcaba, was killed, two of his platoon leaders were



Photo by Sgt Frank C. Kerr, National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A5357

A section of two 81mm mortars set up in the snow to give fire support for a rifle company in the attack. These high-angle medium mortars, with a shell almost as lethal as a 105mm howitzer round, were considered to be the infantry battalion commander's own "artillery." Mortars were particularly effective in the defense of a perimeter.

wounded. First Lieutenant William W. "Woody" Taylor took over command of the company and had his objective by nightfall. Able and Charlie Companies meanwhile had taken Hill 1304 without much trouble. Sawyer divided his battalion into two perimeters for the night. Vehicular movement along the MSR was halted.

It had been nearly noon on 8 December before Murray's 5th Marines, following behind the 7th Marines, moved out of Koto-ri. Stevens' 1st Battalion was in the lead. Stevens sent out his Baker and Charlie Companies to take Hill 1457. Charlie Company joined up unexpectedly with the Army's provisional battalion and the soldiers and Marines had the Chinese off the high ground by mid-afternoon. Baker and Charlie Companies, combined with the Army troops, formed a perimeter for the night. Able Company had its own perimeter closer to the MSR. Murray moved 41 Commando, in reserve, up behind the 1st Battalion.

Meanwhile, the 2d and 3d

Battalions of Puller's 1st Marines held Koto-ri itself. For the defenders the problem was not the scattered small arms fire of the Chinese, but the flood of civilian refugees coming down the road from the north. They could not be admitted into the perimeter because of the probability that the Chinese had infiltrated them.

Task Force Dog included these self-propelled 155mm howitzers shown in firing position covering Funchilin Pass on 10 December near Chinhung-ni. Marine 155mm howitzers at this time were still tractor-drawn and some were lost coming out of Yudam-ni. At a greater distance an Army tank can be glimpsed.

Photo by TSgt James W. Helms, Jr., Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A156320



During the bitterly cold night, two babies were born with the help of Navy doctors and corpsmen. In all their misery these thousands of civilians had to wait outside the lines until Koto-ri was vacated. They then followed behind the Marines, as best they could, until the presumed safety of Hamhung-Hungnam might be reached.

During the day Smith, always conscious of his dead, attended a funeral at Koto-ri. What had been an artillery command post, scraped more deeply into the frozen ground by a bulldozer, became a mass grave. A total of 117 bodies, mostly Marines but some soldiers and Royal Marines, were lowered into the hole. A Protestant and a Catholic chaplain officiated. The bulldozer covered the bodies with a mound of dirt.

Sergeant Robert Gault, head of the Graves Registration Section of the 7th Marines, remembered the funeral this way:

We had a chaplain of each faith, and the fellows had made a big hole and laid the fellows out in rows the best



Photo by Cpl James Lyle, National Archives Photo (USA) 111-SC354456

A squad-sized Army patrol, led by Sgt Grant J. Miller, from the 3d Infantry Division's Task Force Dog, moves up from Chinhung-ni into Funchilin Pass on 9 December. The tank at the side of the road appears to be a Soviet-built T-34 knocked out a month earlier by the 7th Marines.

we could and put ponchos over them. As soon as each chaplain had said his little bit for the fellows, we would cover them up and close them in. Everyone was given—I think under the circumstances—a very fine burial. It wasn't like the one back at Inchon and Hungnam. It wasn't like the one where we had crosses for the boys painted white and all the preliminaries: flowers that we could get for them—we'd go out and pick them. It wasn't like that, no. It was one where we were just out in a field, but it was one with more true heart.

There was more snow during the night, but Saturday, 9 December, dawned bright, clear, and cold. South of Funchilin Pass, Noren moved his Baker Company to the next high ground to his front and Barrow had his Able Company test-fire their weapons before beginning the assault of Hill 1081. Barrow then attacked in a column of platoons behind a thunderous preparation by close air, artillery, and mortars. Even so

his lead platoon, under First Lieutenant William A. McClelland, was hard hit as it moved forward by rushes, stopping about 200 yards from the crest. Under cover of air strikes by four Corsairs and his own 60mm mortars, Barrow moved his 2d and 3d Platoons forward and by mid-afternoon his Marines had the hill. The two-day battle cost Barrow almost exactly half his company. He had started up the hill with 223 Marines; he was now down to 111 effectives. But 530 enemy dead were counted and the Marines held the high ground commanding Funchilin Pass.

On the MSR that Saturday, moving south from Koto-ri, the 7th Marines resumed its attack. The rest of Hill 1304 was taken. Captain John Morris with his Company C and a platoon from Company B moved down the road and secured the bridge site. The rest of Company B, following behind, overran an enemy position garrisoned by 50 Chinese so frozen by the cold that they surrendered without resistance.

The old war horse, General Shepherd, arrived from Hawaii the day before on what was his fifth trip

to Korea, this time as "Representative of Commander Naval Force, Far East, on matters relating to the Marine Corps and for consultation and advice in connection with the contemplated amphibious operations now being planned." Shepherd may have thought he had more authority than he really had. In his 1967 oral history he said:

When reports came back that the cold weather had set in and they weren't able to make the Yalu River and things began falling apart, Admiral Radford sent me to Korea—I think [the orders] came from the Chief of Naval Operations on the recommendation of Admiral Joy—that [I] was to take charge of the evacuation of the Marines from Hungnam.

More accurately, the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Forrest P. Sherman, had probably been prompted by back-channel messages to Admiral Radford to send Shepherd to the Far East "for the purpose of advising and assisting Commander Naval Forces, Far East [Admiral Joy], with particular emphasis on Marine Corps matters."

Shepherd did recognize that there could be a conflict of command because of Almond's actual command of X Corps. On arriving in Tokyo on 6 December he met with General MacArthur and noted "General MacArthur was unqualified in his admiration and praise for the effective contribution which Marines had made throughout the whole of the Korea fighting. His general demeanor [however] was not one of optimism."

After more conferences and meetings in Tokyo, Shepherd left on 8 December for Hungnam and on



Photo by Sgt Frank C. Kerr, Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A5370
Litzenberg's 7th Marines led the way out of Koto-ri at dawn on 8 December. Murray's 5th Marines followed the 7th Marines and in turn was followed by two battalions of Puller's 1st Marines. Infantry units, moving from hilltop to hilltop on both sides of the road covered the movement of the division trains. Some called the maneuver "hop-scotch," others called it "skinning-the-cat."

arrival went immediately to the *Mount McKinley*. Here on the next day he attended a meeting on out-loading and naval support also attended by Admirals Joy, Struble, and Doyle, and General Harris. A press conference followed. Shepherd praised the operations of the X Corps and said that he

was there to assist General Almond. He was anxious to get up to the reservoir to see things for himself. He made the trip in a TBM, landing at Koto-ri after circling Hagaru-ri. He then met with Smith for an hour or more. Smith told him that all casualties would be out by the end of the day.

As the march went on, cold-benumbed Chinese soldiers surrendered in increasing numbers. This group, probably the remnants of a platoon or perhaps a company, surrendered to Company C, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, south of Koto-ri on 9 December.

Photo by Sgt Frank C. Kerr, National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A5377



Shepherd announced that he intended to march out with the division. Smith dug in his heels and said absolutely not.

Shepherd returned to the airstrip. A number of war correspondents, among them "Maggie" Higgins, Keyes Beach, and the photographer David Douglas Duncan, had wangled their way to Koto-ri. While Shepherd's plane was warming up, Colonel Puller arrived leading Higgins by the hand. Puller said: "General Smith says take this woman out of his hair and see that she goes out on your plane." Shepherd turned to Higgins, whom he had met at Inchon, saying, "Maggie, it's too bad. I wanted to march down too." The plane completed its loading of wounded and taxied to the end of the strip. It was dusk and as the plane took off Shepherd could see machine gun tracer bullets reaching up at the underside of

Two Chinese, anxious to surrender, get a quick pat-down search for weapons by members of Company C, 7th Marines, but there was no fight left in them. Once given a cigarette and perhaps a chocolate bar by their captors, they would follow along uncomplainingly into eventual captivity.

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A5378





Photo by Cpl Peter W. McDonald, National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A5379

First step in evacuation of casualties, alive or dead, during the march-out was to get them down to the road by stretcher. Here four Marines, without helmets or packs, carry a stretcher down from the high ground somewhere south of Koto-ri on 9 December. Fresh snow had fallen the previous night.

the plane. Leaning over to Higgins, the irrepressible Shepherd said to her, "If we get hit, we will die in each other's arms."

From Koto-ri to Chinhung-ni

The column of division vehicles, protected on both sides by the Marine infantry in the hills, crawled along the road south of Koto-ri at a snail's pace and with frequent stops. The Marines, who watched the crawling column from their perches in the hills, wondered profanely why the vehicles had to be piled high with tent frames, wooden doors, and other luxuries of life.

Partridge had held back the Army's Brockway trucks, with their precious cargo of bridge sections, in Koto-ri until first light on 9 December when he considered the MSR secure enough for him to move them forward. He then joined Sawyer's 1st Battalion at the head of the column. Everything worked at the bridge site like a practiced jigsaw puzzle. Army and Marine engineers rebuilt the abutments with sandbags and timbers.

A Brockway truck laid the steel treadways and plywood deck panels. At noon, Almond flew overhead in his "Blue Goose" to see for himself that things were going

Frozen corpses are unloaded from a truck at Koto-ri where they will be buried in a mass grave. A 155mm howitzer can be seen in the background. The dead, 117 of them, mostly U.S. Marines but some soldiers and Royal Marines, were interred in a hole originally bull-dozed into the ground to serve as an artillery fire direction center.

Photo by Sgt Frank C. Kerr, National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A5366



well. Installation was done in three hours and at 1530 Partridge drove his jeep back to the top of the pass to tell Lieutenant Colonel Banks that he could bring Division Train No. 1 down the defile. The first vehicles began to cross the bridge at about 1800. Sawyer's Marines kept the enemy at a distance and captured 60 prisoners in the process. All night long vehicles passed over the bridge.

At 0245 on Sunday morning, 10 December, the head of the column reached Chinhung-ni. Colonel Snedeker, the division's deputy chief of staff, had positioned himself there to direct the further movement of the vehicle serials. The 7th Marines followed Division Train No. 1 down the pass. Up on the plateau Ridge's 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, had come out of Koto-ri and relieved the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, on Hill 1328 where it had a fight with



National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A402841

LtGen Shepherd, right, Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, arrived on 8 December on his fifth trip to Korea. Although not in the operational chain-of-command, he had arrived to oversee the evacuation of the Marines. RAdm Doyle, left, and MajGen Harris, center, greet Shepherd. All three look glum.

about 350 resurgent Chinese. At 1030, General Smith closed his command post at Koto-ri and flew to his rear command post at Hungnam.

Puller brought out the remainder of RCT-1 from Koto-ri on the afternoon of the 10th. Milne's tanks, including the tank company from the 31st Infantry, followed behind the elements of RCT-1 on the road. Ridge's 3d Battalion was already deployed on the high ground on both sides of the MSR south of Koto-ri. The plan was for Sutter's 2d Battalion to relieve Stevens' 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, on Hill 1457.

As the last Americans left Koto-ri, the Army's 92d Field Artillery, firing from Chinhung-ni, shelled the town with its long-range 155mm guns. There was confusion at the tail of the column as Korean refugees pressed close. The tankers fired warning shots to make them stay back. Panic developed as the rumor spread that the Marines were shooting the re-

fugees. The tanks passed on down the road, protected on both sides at first by Ridge's Marines in the hills. But Sutter, having begun his climb up Hill 1457 and finding it a long way off and with no enemy in sight, asked Puller's permission, which he received, to return to the road.

Ridge pulled his companies off Hill 1304 and the high ground on the opposite side of the MSR at about 2100. Ridge's battalion was the last major unit to descend the pass, following behind Jones' provisional battalion of soldiers and the detachment of the 185th Engineers. Harry Milne's tanks were behind Ridge with no infantry protection except the lightweight division Reconnaissance Company mounted in jeeps. It was now about midnight.

By then both division trains, all of RCT-7, and most of the 11th Marines had reached Chinhung-ni. The 5th Marines followed the 7th Marines. Beyond Chinhung-ni, guerrillas were reported to be

active in the vicinity of Sudong, but the division trains and both the 5th and 7th Marines passed through without interference. Some time after midnight when the vehicles of RCT-1 reached the town sudden swarms of Chinese came out of the houses of the village with burp guns and grenades. Truck drivers and casualties, both Army and Marine, fought a wild, shapeless action. Lieutenant Colonel John U. D. Page, an Army artillery officer, took charge, was killed, and received a posthumous Medal of Honor. Lieutenant Colonel Waldon C. Winston, an Army motor transport officer, took his place. It was dawn before the place was cleaned up. RCT-1 lost nine trucks and a personnel carrier; 8 men killed and 21 wounded.

Meanwhile, Milne's tanks, some 40 of them, descending the narrow, icy-slick road of Funchilin Pass had run into trouble. About a mile short of the Treadway bridge the brakes of the ninth tank from the end of the column froze up. The tanks to its front clanked on, but the immobile ninth tank blocked the eight tanks to the rear. Close behind came the refugees. Left guarding the nine tanks was First Lieutenant Ernest C. Hargett's 28-man reconnaissance platoon. Five Chinese soldiers emerged from the mass of refugees and one, in English, called upon Hargett to surrender. Hargett, covered by a BAR-man, approached the five Chinese cautiously. The English-speaking one stepped aside and the four others produced burp guns and grenades. A grenade wounded Hargett. His BAR-man, Corporal George A. J. Amyotte, cut the five Chinese down, but more Chinese materialized on the road and the steep slope of the hill. Hargett backed away with his platoon. The last tank in the column was lost to the



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A5376

The Chinese had blown a critical bridge halfway down Funchilin Pass where water flowed downward from Changjin Reservoir and passed through four giant pipes called "penstocks." As early as 4 December, MajGen Smith knew that this 24-foot gap would have to be bridged if his vehicles were to reach Hungnam.

Marines from Litzenberg's regiment, along with some attached soldiers, on 9 December reached the blown bridge in Funchilin Pass, which, unless replaced,

would stop any further southward movement of wheeled or tracked vehicles. Plans were already afoot to bridge the gap with a Treadway bridge to be airdropped in sections at Koto-ri.

Photo by Sgt Frank C. Kerr, Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A5375



Chinese. Meanwhile, the crew of the tank that blocked the road had succeeded in freeing the frozen brakes and was ready to proceed. But the crews of the remaining seven tanks had departed, leaving the hatches of their tanks open. A member of Hargett's platoon, who had never driven a tank, managed to bring out one tank. The night's adventure cost Hargett two men killed and 12 wounded.

Engineers were waiting at the Treadway bridge, ready to blow it up. They thought the two tanks and Hargett's platoon were the last to come by. They blew the bridge, but one Marine had been left behind. Private First Class Robert D. DeMott from Hargett's platoon had been blown off the road by a Chinese explosive charge. Regaining consciousness, he got back on the road and joined the refugees.



Photo by Sgt William R. Keating, Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A5408

By evening on 9 December the Treadway bridge was in place and men and vehicles could move unimpeded down the MSR through Funchilin Pass. From here on enemy resis-

tance was limited to small-scale firefights and ambushes. The most sizable resistance would come near Sudong.

The wind that blew from Manchuria and beyond, "down over the Yalu and the mountains all around. . . down into the gorges with their frozen streams and naked rocks. . . down along the ice-capped road—now shrieking and wild—that

wind," said noted photographer David Douglas Duncan, "was like nothing ever known by the trapped Marines, yet they had to march through it."

Photo by David Douglas Duncan





Marines march along a particularly precipitous portion of the road winding down through Funchilin Pass on 9 December. The day before had seen the launching of an exquisitely timed maneuver—the exit of the 5th and 7th

Photo by Sgt Frank C. Kerr, Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A5372
Marines from Koto-ri and the simultaneous advance of the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, from Chinhung-ni to take the high ground controlling the pass.

He heard the detonation that blew the bridge, but figured that he could make his way on foot through the gatehouse above the penstocks. This he did as did many of the following refugees.

Coming down Funchilin Pass on 10 December, the Marine column was intermixed with many Korean refugees fleeing the Chinese. Numbers were such as to interfere with military traffic. Behind them, Yudam-ni, Hagaru-ri, and Koto-ri were left as deserted ghost towns.

Photo by Sgt William R. Keating, National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A5407

Warm Welcome at Hungnam

Donald Schmuck, from his position on Hill 1081, watched the lights of the tanks descending the pass and at 0300 gave orders for Barrow's Company A to begin its withdrawal. At 1300 on 11 December the last units of the division passed through Chinhung-ni. By 1730 they had gone through Majon-dong and by 2100 most had reached their Hamhung-Hungnam assembly areas. They found a tent camp waiting for them. Lieutenant Colonel Erwin F. Wann, Jr.'s 1st Amphibian Tractor





National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A5901

LtCol John H. Partridge, whose engineers performed miracles, particularly in scraping out the airstrip at Hagaru-ri and installing the airdropped Treadway bridge in Funchilin Pass, received a second Bronze Star from MajGen Smith at Masan in early January 1951.

Battalion had done much of the preparation for their arrival. Chow lines were open for the continuous serving of hot meals. Wann, 31 and Naval Academy 1940, had been an amphibian tractor officer at Bougainville, Guam, and Iwo Jima. The weather seemed almost balmy after the unrelieved sub-zero temperatures of the plateau. Milne's tanks continued on to the LST staging area, arriving just before midnight. From 8 through 11 December, the division had lost 75 men dead, 16 missing, and 256 wounded, for a total of 347 casualties.

As late as Saturday, 9 December, General Smith believed that the 1st Marine Division, once concentrated, would be given a defensive sector to the south and southwest of Hungnam. A day earlier his deputy chief of staff, Colonel Snedeker, who was running his rear headquarters, issued tentative orders for Puller's RCT-1 to

organize defensively at Chigyong, with Murray's RCT-5 and Litzenberg's RCT-7 preparing to defend Yonpo airfield.

But on that Saturday, Almond received his formal orders from MacArthur to redeploy X Corps to South Korea and Smith learned that his division would be loading out immediately on arrival. At this point Almond regarded the 1st Marine Division as only marginally combat effective. He considered the 7th Infantry Division, except for its loss of almost a complete regimental combat team, to be in better condition. In best condition, in his opinion, was the 3d Infantry Division, which he visited almost daily.

Almond therefore decided that once the 1st Marine Division passed through the Hamhung-Hungnam perimeter defense it would be relieved from active combat and evacuated. Second priority for evacuation would be

given the 7th Infantry Division. Last out would be the 3d Infantry Division.

The Hungnam-Hamhung defensive perimeter, as neatly drawn on the situation maps in Almond's headquarters, consisted of a main line of resistance (MLR) about 20 miles long arcing in a semicircle from north of Hungnam around to include Yonpo. In front of the MLR was a lightly held outpost line of resistance. The northernmost sector, beginning at the coastline, was given to Major General Kim Pak Il's ROK I Corps, which, having arrived uneventfully from Songjin, began moving into line on 8 December. The lift-off from Songjin by LSTs, merchant ships, and the attack transport USS *Noble* (APA 218) had been completed in three days. Counterclockwise, next in line on the perimeter, came Barr's 7th Infantry Division with two sound regiments, followed by Soule's 3d Infantry Division. The southern anchor of the perimeter was held by the 1st Korean Marine Corps Regiment, which had the mission of defend-

LtCol Harry T. Milne, commanding officer of the 1st Tank Battalion, in a post-war photograph. Tanks were vital to the Marine breakout, but their record was marred by poor performance with Task Force Drysdale and, later, in Funchilin Pass.

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A552011

