

A black and white photograph showing a group of U.S. Marines in a trench. They are operating a mortar, with one soldier in the foreground aiming it. A bright flash of light is visible at the end of the mortar's barrel, indicating it has just been fired. The soldiers are wearing helmets and combat uniforms. The background shows a steep, rocky hillside.

OUTPOST WAR

U.S. Marines from the Nevada Battles to the Armistice

by Bernard C. Nalty

Marines in the Korean War Commemorative Series



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When 1953 began, the Jamestown Line had become, in the words of Marine Corporal Robert Hall who fought there, “a messy, rambling series of ditches five to seven feet deep” that linked a succession of bunkers constructed of sandbags and timber and used for shelter or fighting. The trenches wandered erratically to prevent Chinese attackers who penetrated the perimeter from delivering deadly enfilade fire along lengthy, straight segments. As for the bunkers themselves, since “piles of trash, ration cans, scrap paper, and protruding stove pipes” revealed their location, the enemy “must have known where every bunker was.”

A bunker, therefore, could easily become a death trap. As a result, the Marines had learned to dig and man fighting holes outside the bunkers. Hall described such a hole as “simply a niche in the forward wall of the trench, usually covered with planks and a few sandbags.” Within the hole, a crude shelf held hand grenades

ON THE COVER: *Spotting targets of opportunity, a Marine crew fires its 75mm recoilless rifle directly against enemy bunkers.* National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A170206

AT LEFT: *A Marine packs his gear before leaving Korea following the signing of the armistice in July 1953.* National Archives Photo (USN) 80-G-626452



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A167141

By the end of 1952, the 1st Marine Division defended a static main line of resistance and its outposts, fighting from trenches, covered holes, and bunkers like these manned by Company E, 2d Battalions, 7th Marines.

and a sound-powered telephone linked the hole to the company command post. Along with the fighting holes, Hall and his fellow Marines dug “rabbit holes,” emergency shelters near the bottom of the trench wall that provided “protection from the stray Chinese mortar round that sometimes dropped into the trench.”

Some bunkers contained firing ports for .30-caliber or .50-caliber machine guns and accommodations for the crews. Chicken wire strung across the firing ports prevented Chinese assault troops from throwing grenades inside, but fire from the machine guns soon tore away the wire, which could be replaced only at night when darkness provided conceal-

ment from Chinese observers.

Other bunkers served as living quarters for five to 10 Marines and might also provide a brief respite for those standing watch in the rain or cold. Because of the emphasis on fighting holes, the living bunkers that Hall remembered had no firing apertures and sometimes a curtain of blanket wool or canvas instead of a door. Candles, shielded so they would not attract Chinese fire, provided light, and kerosene or oil stoves, vented through the roof, supplied heat. The more elaborate living bunkers to the rear of the main line of resistance had electric lights, the power produced by gasoline generators.

By night, during the early



months of 1953, a cold wind usually blew from the north, sometimes bringing with it the sound of Chinese loudspeakers broadcasting English-language appeals to surrender, interspersed with country music. The enemy's propaganda tended to reflect Communist ideology, urging members of the United Nations forces to escape their capitalist masters. The

Chinese, however, also tried to take advantage of the fact that the combatants in Korea were discussing a ceasefire even as they fought. Since the summer of 1951, truce talks had taken place at Kaesong and later at Panmunjom, with the United Nations delegation traveling to the site of the talks through a carefully marked demilitarized corridor. When the talks

seemed to be making progress, the Chinese used a more subtle approach, trying to persuade members of the United Nations forces not to risk their lives in a war that had almost ended.

Despite cold-weather clothing and insulated boots, the chill of the winter night could numb the senses. As a result, a Marine usually stood nighttime watch in a fighting hole for 30 to 45 minutes before warming himself in a nearby bunker. On some nights, Corporal Hall recalled, an outgoing salvo or ripple of 4.5-inch rockets might swish overhead to explode on some distant hill. "All through the night," he said, "there were sporadic shots, grenades going off, artillery fire"—as outposts came under attack, ambushes were triggered, and patrols drew fire—and "at first light a ripple of random shots would greet the new day," as visibility improved revealing targets previously hidden by darkness.

From time to time, Marines manning the Jamestown Line got a brief respite from the danger, tension, and discomfort. "One of the most pleasurable things" in moving off the line, said Corporal Hall, "was to walk back to battalion for a hot meal and a shower." A Marine just come from the battlefield could sit down to the kind of meal he might have been served at a mess hall in the United States, eat at his own pace instead of the tempo set by the mess sergeant, have a hot shower in tents modified for that purpose, and exchange a filthy uniform for a clean one. A laundered utility jacket, formerly worn by a staff sergeant whose chevrons remained in place, might be issued to a corporal like Hall. After a trip to the shower, he said, "you could never be sure about a person's rank unless you knew him."



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A170084

Inside view of one of the cramped sleeping caves, which sheltered two to four Marines, on Outpost Carson (Hill 27). A majority of the outpost's strength stood watch and worked on fortifications at night, while a small security team was on duty during the day.

Marines on the battle line, who could not be reached with food prepared at field kitchens and brought forward in insulated containers, relied on C-rations easily transported in cardboard boxes and quickly prepared. The C-ration featured canned foods like sausage patties in gravy, corned beef hash, or beans and frankfurters that could be heated over a Sterno flame, along with candy, a cookie, crackers, instant coffee, cigarettes, canned fruit, toilet paper, and an ingenious can opener. Although the object of many a joke, C-rations were "quite remarkable" in the opinion of one Marine. "Everything was used," he said, "even the oiled cardboard box into which a person could relieve himself."

Marines of Company B, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, enjoy hot chow on the reverse slope of the main line of resistance. These field mess areas, where Marines got at least one hot meal a day, were set up 50 to 100 yards from the frontlines.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A170997



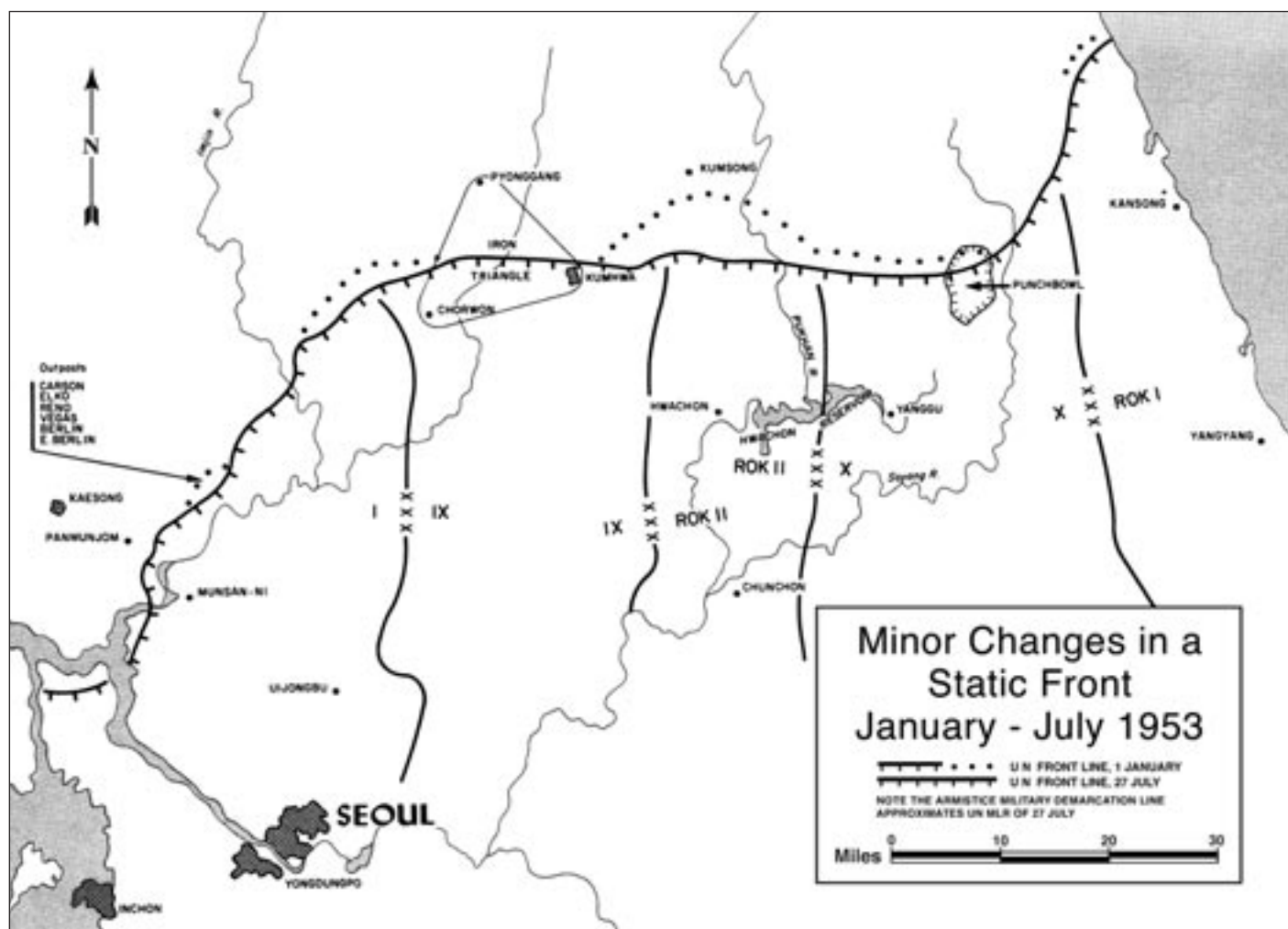


National Archives Photo (USA) 111-SC428270

In February 1953, LtGen Maxwell D. Taylor, USA, left, who led the 101st Airborne Division at Normandy during World War II, replaced Gen James A. Van Fleet, USA, center, in command of the U.S. Eighth Army. Standing to the right is Gen Mark W. Clark, USA, commander of United Nations forces.

Refinements in Position Warfare

Experience on the Jamestown Line in 1952 inspired innovations in static warfare, although not all were immediately applicable to the battlefield. The concept of a main line of resistance and its protecting line of combat outposts persisted into 1953, but the ideal placement and construction of trenches and bunkers changed. Chinese mortar and artillery fire demonstrated that trenches had to be deeper, fighting holes better protected, and bunkers stronger. Moreover, the military crest of a hill or ridgeline—the position on the forward slope with the longest fields of observation and fire—need not be the best location for the defenses protecting vital terrain. The topographic crest—the



spine of a ridge or top of a hill—might be a better site for the main line of resistance, provided that fighting positions, readily accessible from the main trench, were located a short distance down the forward slope. Formerly, machine guns tended to fire directly into draws that the Chinese might follow to attack an outpost or a portion of the main line of resistance; now the machine gun crews, protected as necessary by riflemen, would dig in near the tips of fingers of high ground extending outward from the main line or its outposts and place interlocking bands of fire across the front. Moreover, units in reserve immediately behind the main line of resistance could move through trenches on the topo-

graphical crest without crossing the skyline and risking direct fire from flat trajectory weapons.

Those Marines who could shift from the military crest to the topographical crest would enjoy certain advantages. Plunging fire, directed by mortars or howitzers against trenches on the topographic crest, proved difficult for the Chinese to register or adjust, since observers could not see the explosion of shells that fell beyond Marine positions. In contrast, when firing against the military crest, the enemy could spot shells that detonated both beyond and short of the target and adjust his fire accordingly.

Another defensive innovation proved as effective as it was simple.

A fire team from Company I, 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, sets out on a daylight reconnaissance patrol to one of outposts in front of the main line of resistance. Aggressive patrolling and improvement of the secondary defenses of the Wyoming and Kansas Lines occupied much of the reduced wintertime schedule.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A168856



Instead of two aprons of barbed wire separated by about one yard, the Marines adopted the so-called Canadian system, which featured random strands of wire connecting the parallel aprons in the void between them. Artillery or mortar fire, which might rip apart the old aprons, merely churned and tangled the wire between the aprons, thus making the barrier harder to penetrate.

These changes could easily be incorporated in the fall-back positions, the Wyoming and Kansas Lines, to the rear of the main line of resistance. Major changes to the Jamestown Line itself and its combat outposts proved all but impossible when in contact with an aggressive enemy able to make deadly use of artillery and mortars. The frontline Marines could rarely do more than put out the additional wire, dig deeper, and add timbers and sandbags to the existing defenses.

Daylight Raids

Besides strengthening the defenses, especially of the Wyoming and Kansas Lines, Marines of the division's reserve regiment continued to undergo training while patrolling the rear area. On the Jamestown Line and its outposts, the lull that settled in after the fight for the Hook ended when one of the regiments on the main line of resistance, the 5th Marines, raided Hills 31 and 31A in the Ungok hill mass. Because the Chinese had fortified this high ground so strongly, the Marines made elaborate preparations, planning feints to divert attention from the main thrust, bringing in pilots from the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing to visit observation posts and become familiar with the battlefield, arranging for air strikes and artillery concentrations, recon-



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A169911

Marine fliers batter Hill 67 with high explosives and napalm on 3 February in support of the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines' two-reinforced-platoon-raid on the Chinese-held Ungok hill mass to destroy fortifications, inflict casualties, and take prisoners. The air strikes were designed to divert enemy attention from the final objective area.

noitering routes of attack and withdrawal, and clearing mines from them. The complex operation, named Clambake, required a half-dozen rehearsals, the last on 1 February. Unlike Operation Wake-up in November 1952, which had sought to take prisoners and gather intelligence on the Chinese defenses, planners designed Clambake primarily to kill the enemy and destroy his bunkers and trenches.

The raid began at first light on 3 February, when three platoons of tanks roared toward the enemy-held high ground—Hill 104, Kumgok, and Red Hill—a short distance west of the real objective, Ungok. While the armored vehicles cut loose with 90mm guns and flamethrowers, the 1st

Battalion, 11th Marines, added to the realism of the feint by shelling the apparent objective.

Taking advantage of the diversion, two reinforced platoons from Company A, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines—armed with bangalore torpedoes to breach barbed wire and flamethrowers, satchel charges, and 3.5-inch rocket launchers to destroy heavier fortifications—stormed Hills 31 and 31A. The tanks taking part in the diversion protected the left flank of the attacking Marines by crossing a frozen paddy to open fire on the trenchline connecting Ungok with the hills to the west. The Chinese blazed away at the Marine tanks that either protected the flank from beyond the rice paddy or accompanied the assault force and

succeeded in destroying a flame-throwing M-4 Sherman tank. Supported by air, armor, and artillery, the Marine raiding party prevailed. Clambake captured no prisoners but accomplished its main purpose by collapsing bunkers, trenches, and caves, and killing perhaps 390 Chinese before the attackers withdrew. Marine casualties totaled 14 killed and 91 wounded.

Operation Clambake demonstrated anew the value of planning and rehearsal, the ability of flame-throwing tanks to discourage Chinese tank-killer teams armed with shoulder-fired rocket launchers, and the importance of coordinating air, artillery, and armor in support of an infantry assault. Colonel Lewis W. Walt, commander



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A169719

After being examined at the company aid station, a Marine of Company A, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, who was wounded during the battalion's daylight raid on Ungok is put onto a helicopter for evacuation to a hospital ship for further treatment.

Officers of the 5th Marines assemble for a photograph during a lull in the fighting. Pictured in the front row, from left, are: LtCol Oscar F. Peatross, LtCol Jonas M. Platt, Col Lewis W. Walt, LtCol Edwin B. Wheeler, LtCol Robert J. Oddy, and LtCol James H. Finch. Second row, Maj Harry L. Sherwood,

Maj Robert L. Willis, Capt Ralph L. Walz, Maj Jack M. Daly, Maj Ross T. Dwyer, Jr., Maj Robert H. Twisdale, Capt Richard G. Gilmore, and Maj William C. Doty. Third row, Capt James R. Schoen, Capt Dean W. Lindley, Capt James E. Hendry, and Capt Arthur J. Davidson.

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A170216



The Marine Division and Its Weapons

Between 1 January 1953 and the end of the fighting in July, the strength of Marine Corps ground forces hovered between 25,000 and 28,000, fluctuating as casualties occurred, tours of duty or enlistments expired, and replacements arrived. In terms of organization, the 1st Marine Division adhered to a triangular concept, with three organic infantry regiments—the 1st, 5th, and 7th Marines—an artillery regiment, the 11th Marines, and a variety of other combat and support elements under control of the division or its components. The combat elements employed tanks, mortars, and other weapons; the support units provided such specialized activity as transportation, by truck or amphibian tractor, communications, engineering, reconnaissance, and cargo handling.

On the Jamestown Line, a fourth regiment served with the 1st Marine Division, the 1st Korean Marine Regiment, which had been organized, trained, and equipped with the assistance and advice of U. S. Marines. The Korean Marine regiment, with a maximum strength in 1953 of 4,400, had been attached to the 1st Marine Division in time for the Inchon invasion of September 1950, but after the Chosin Reservoir fighting, the Korean Marines passed under the control of the Republic of Korea's Army. During 1951, however, the Korean Marine regiment was again attached to the 1st Marine Division and, along with the 5th Battalion that joined in 1952, remained a part of the American division for the rest of the war. The Korean Marines assigned to the division had their own organic artillery and armor. The 2d Korean Marine Regiment provided troops to man the islands off the east and west coasts.

The basic infantry weapons of the 1st Marine Division

had seen action in World War II. Riflemen still used the semi-automatic M1 or, if trained as snipers, the bolt-action M1903 with a telescopic sight. Although designed for World War I, the Browning Automatic Rifle still increased the firepower of the Marines. Officers, or those enlisted men assigned to crew-served weapons like mortars or machine guns, carried the .45-caliber pistol or the lightweight .30-caliber carbine, which came in both automatic and semi-automatic versions.

The standard crew-served infantry weapons had also helped fight World War II. The 60mm, 81mm, and 4.2-inch mortars were at best modifications of older weapons, as were the machine guns, whether heavy .50-caliber weapons, water-cooled .30-caliber guns, or lightweight, air-cooled .30-caliber types. The 3.5-inch rocket launcher, however, had replaced the 2.36-inch Bazooka of World War II, which had failed to effectively penetrate the armor of the Soviet-built tanks used by the North Koreans and Chinese.

Artillery and armor relied heavily on designs used in World War II or intended for that conflict. The 11th Marines, aided by a battery of 4.5-inch rockets on multiple launchers, provided the division's organic fire support with three battalions of 105mm howitzers and one battalion of 155mm howitzers. A battalion of tanks added to the mobile firepower of the division with weapons ranging from rebuilt M-4 Shermans from World War II, some of them mounting a flamethrower as well as a 105mm gun, to new M-46 Pershings with a 90mm gun.

In short, the 1st Marine Division was using the weapons of World War II to fight the kind of trench warfare characteristic of World War I.

majority of enemy installations were relatively undamaged," perhaps because the Chinese bunkers were so solidly built.

Although the raids that culminated in Operation Charlie were the most ambitious attacks during February, Chinese troops and the American and South Korean Marines conducted many smaller probes. On the night of 12-13 February, for example, a Chinese platoon, supported by mortars and artillery, tested the defenses of Outpost Hedy on Hill 124. Two nights later, hostile troops stalked a patrol from the 7th Marines that

was attempting to set up an ambush and forced it to turn back. On 19 February, artillery and mortar fire frustrated a Chinese attack on Combat Outpost 33, manned by South Korean Marines.

The Marines, whether American or South Korean, exerted pressure of their own. On the night of 13-14 February, two platoons of South Korean Marines had successfully raided Hill 240, on the west bank of the Sachon River roughly three miles upstream from its conflux with the Imjin. On the morning of the 22d, the 5th Marines raided Hill 35A, some 1,300 yards southwest

of the Ungok hill mass, using flamethrowers to deadly effect. On the following night, a reinforced platoon from the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, supported by four M-46 tanks set out to raid Hill Yoke, southwest of Bunker Hill. Shortly after midnight, however, as the raiding party regrouped for the final assault, the Chinese struck from ambush. Another reinforced platoon went to the aid of the first, and the enemy broke off the action; but not before the raid on Hill Yoke had to be called off, even though the Marines accounted for perhaps five times their own



1stMarDiv Historical Diary Photo Supplement, Feb53

Three Marines from Company F, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, who participated in the raid on Hill 15 (Detroit), display captured enemy weapons and material. The raid was launched during early daylight hours with a smoke screen in an attempt to gain surprise.

During February and March, as night fighting intensified, Tank Battalion, fire their 90mm guns to harass the Chinese Marine M-46 Patton tanks assigned to Company D, 1st and disrupt their movement.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A169267



losses of five killed and 22 wounded.

The succession of raids and ambushes continued into March. In a restaging of Operation Clambake, Company B, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, attacked Hill 31A of the Ungok massif on the 19th. Once again, air strikes, and artillery preparations shattered the pre-dawn calm and forced the defenders to move to positions on the reverse slope until the attacking Marines withdrew. On the same morning, however, the enemy hit Outposts Esther and Hedy and tried unsuccessfully to crack the Jamestown defenses to the rear of Hedy, failing despite a lavish expenditure of mortar and artillery shells.

Improvements in Logistics

During the first three months of 1953, the supply of howitzer



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A170050

Cargo handling personnel prepare to hook a load of ammunition to a Sikorsky HRS-2 helicopter of Marine transport squadron 161 during Operation Haylift II, the five-day experiment to resupply two frontline regiments carried out in late February.

ammunition increased, and the restrictions on artillery support, in effect during the autumn, ceased. The availability of hand grenades also improved, but 81mm mortar shells remained in short supply.

Even as the ammunition shortage eased, the Marines had to impose restrictions on the use of gasoline and diesel fuel. In January 1953, consumption of gasoline declined by 17 percent from the previous

month, and diesel fuel by seven percent. Stocks were rapidly replenished, however, so that in February consumption returned to normal.

Refinements in equipment also appeared. A thermal boot worn during the Korean winter of 1952-1953 afforded better protection against cold and dampness than the footgear it replaced, but the leather combat boot wore out all

too quickly. Redesigned body armor began arriving in November 1952. The new model protected the groin as well as the upper body, greatly improving morale as it reduced casualties still further.

Experiments continued in the use of helicopters as flying pack mules to deliver supplies over broken terrain. In February 1953, Lieutenant Colonel John F. Carey's Marine Helicopter Transport Squadron 161 (HMR-161) carried out Operation Haylift II, resupplying two front-line regiments, the 5th and 7th Marines. This operation, lasting from 23 through 27 February, proved more demanding than Haylift I, conducted in September 1952, which had resupplied only one regiment. On the first day of Haylift II, Carey's squadron had to divert helicopters from the 7th Marines to rush ammunition to the other regiment, and on the final morning fog disrupted the schedule of flights. Nevertheless, Haylift II delivered 1.6 million pounds of cargo; five times the total of the earlier operation.

Fighting Intensifies

When the winter of 1952-1953 ended, the deployment of the 1st Marine Division remained essentially unchanged, although the unit on the right was now the U.S. Army's 2d Infantry Division rather than the British 1st Commonwealth Division. The American Marine regiments held the right of the line—the 5th and 1st Marines occupying the Jamestown positions and the 7th Marines currently in reserve. Beyond the Panmunjom corridor, South Korean Marines defended the portion that extended to the north bank of the Han River. On the south bank of the Han, the division's amphibian tractor battalion and the Kimpo Provisional

Air Support for the Division

Marine Corps aviation continued to play a critical role on the battlefield. Indeed, its value had increased as the Fifth Air Force, which exercised operational control over land-based Marine airmen, shifted emphasis to targets on or near the frontlines and away from industries, transportation links, and command and control facilities, all of them already heavily bombed. Taking advantage of this change, Major General Vernon E. Megee, who in January 1953 replaced Major General Clayton C. Jerome in command of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, persuaded Major General Glenn O. Barcus, commander of the Fifth Air Force, to abandon the practice of dealing directly with Marine aircraft groups or even squadrons and work through the wing headquarters. To facilitate planning within the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, Megee revitalized and enlarged his G-3 section, which, he conceded, had become "somewhat rusty." General Megee also replaced the lone Marine Corps liaison officer at the Joint Operations Center with an element drawn from of the wing's G-3 section that could deal more efficiently with requests for air support.

Barcus endorsed Megee's plan to expand the role of wing headquarters, but the Air Force general retained control over close air support, even though it was a Marine Corps specialty. Policy established jointly by the Army and Air Force, to which the Navy assented, required that the Joint Operations Center, which now had a greater Marine presence, approve requests for this kind of mission. In waging the air war, the Joint Operations Center, paid stricter attention to requests for close air support, tending to screen carefully these urgent strikes while assigning Megee's headquarters greater responsibility for interdiction, armed reconnaissance, and other missions, by day or by night, that had been planned in advance against targets 3,000 yards or

more beyond the main line of resistance.

The cautious attitude toward close air support reflected the potential danger to friendly troops inherent in the kind of operations routinely flown by the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing. Indeed, with a mere 14.5 percent of the available tactical aircraft, Marine airmen had undertaken between 30 and 40 percent of all the close air support missions flown for the United Nations forces between January and October 1952. These attacks, some of them within 100 yards of United Nations troops, could accidentally cause friendly casualties. The battlefield itself—a succession of similar hills and ridges, separated by draws and intermittent streams, with few obvious landmarks except for major reservoirs or rivers—contributed to the possibility of error. During the first nine months of 1952, Marine pilots figured in 18 of 63 incidents in which air strikes killed or wounded friendly troops.

News reports appearing in the United States during February 1953 focused on the involvement of Marine airmen in 28.5 percent of the recent accident attacks that killed or wounded friendly troops. Ignoring the dangerous nature of these strikes, which included almost all the targets within 100 yards of friendly forces, the press accused the Marines of carelessness, a charge that had no merit. Given the difficulty in pinpointing targets on the Korean battlefield, effective close air support involved danger to the troops on the ground, especially those manning outposts that were surrounded or under simultaneous attack from various directions. General Megee, when evaluating a January 1953 strafing run by Marine jets that killed one Marine and wounded another, concluded that the incident "resulted from the inescapable operational hazard incident to laying on a real close strike." The same judgment applied to the other similar accidents.

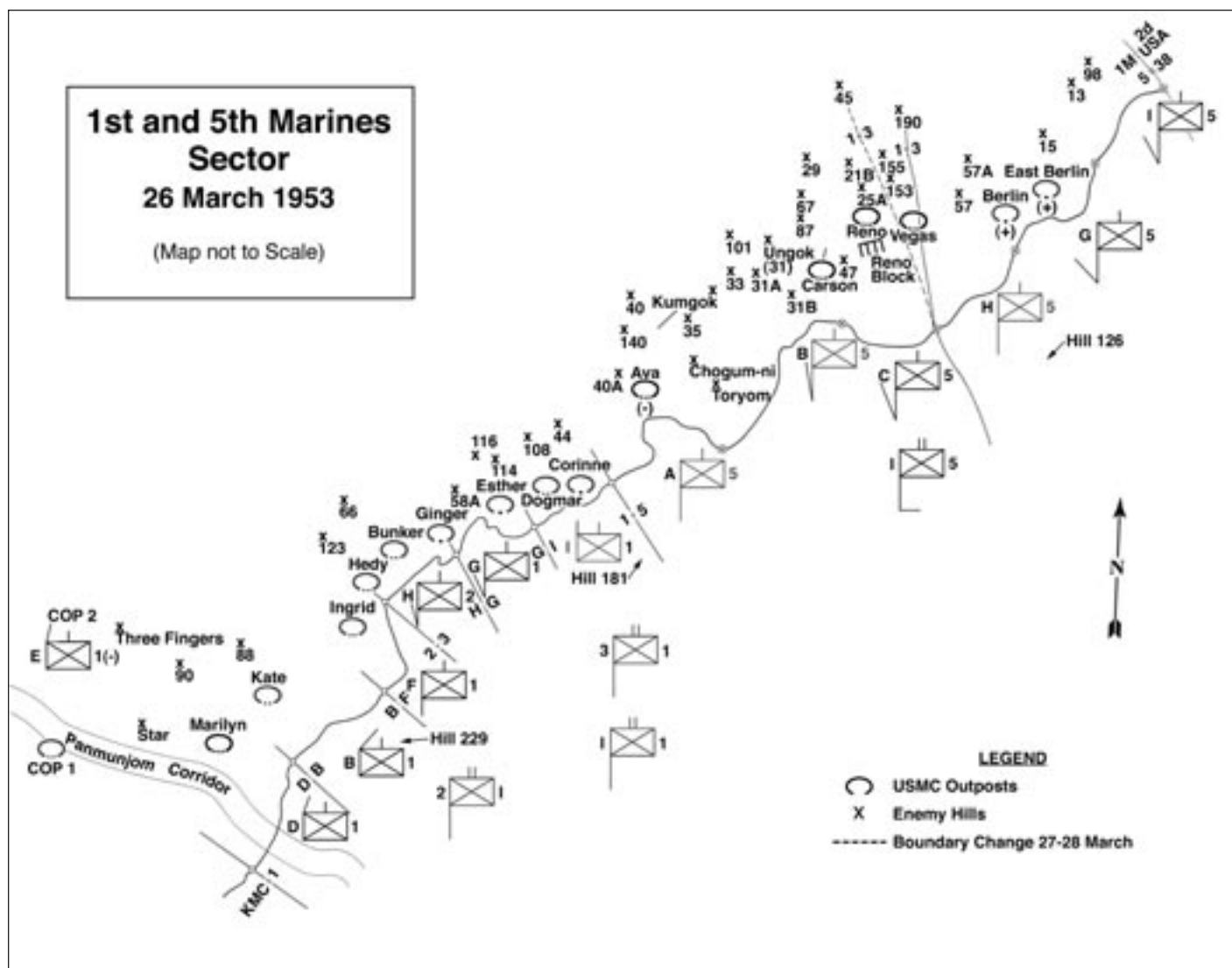
Regiment, the latter an improvised "United Nations" force using armored amphibian tractors as artillery, manned the defenses in addition to controlling civilians within the regimental sector and regulating river traffic.

Except on the far left of the division's line, where the Han River provided a natural barrier, a series of combat outposts contributed to the security of the main line of resistance. From right to left, the principal outposts were East Berlin, Berlin, Vegas, Reno,

Carson, and Ava, all manned at the end of March by the 5th Marines. The 1st Marines maintained Corrine, Dagmar, Esther, Ginger, Bunker Hill, Hedy, Ingrid, Kate, and Marilyn. Beyond the Panmunjom corridor, the South Korean Marines held, from right to left, Outposts 39, 33, 31, and 51.

As it had during the winter now ending, the 11th Marines provided artillery support for the infantry regiments manning the Jamestown Line and its outposts, using the firepower of three battalions of

105mm howitzers, a battalion of 155mm howitzers, and a battery of multiple 4.5-inch rocket launchers. One battalion of 105mm howitzers supported the 5th Marines and another the 1st Marines. The third such battalion provided general support of the division and stood ready to reinforce the fires of the battalion supporting the 5th Marines, which held a critical sector. Both the 155mm howitzers and the rocket launchers rendered general support for the division. The South Korean Marines depended primar-



ily on a battalion of 75mm guns, attached to the 11th Marines. U.S. Army artillery battalions, assigned to I Corps, could reinforce the fires of the 11th Marines anywhere along the line with 155mm howitzers and 8-inch howitzers. To protect the bridges across the Imjin River to the rear of the Jamestown Line against possible aerial attack, the Marines deployed a provisional antiaircraft artillery platoon armed with automatic weapons.

The 1st Marine Division's tank battalion continued to support the defenses of the Jamestown Line, mainly with M-46 tanks mounting 90mm guns, though the older M-4s armed with a 105mm howitzer and a flamethrower were available.

The battalion assigned one tank company to support each of the line regiments and designated a third as a forward reserve to reinforce the main line of resistance or spearhead counterattacks. The fourth company became the rear reserve, undergoing unit training and conducting maintenance for the entire battalion.

The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, now participating more directly in planning air strikes, supported the division with an array of piston-engine and jet types, fixed-wing models and helicopters. Besides conducting strikes, the wing placed its helicopters and light observation planes at the disposal of the division. Helicopters evacu-

ated the wounded and delivered supplies, while the light planes flew reconnaissance and liaison missions, directed air strikes and adjusted artillery fire.

The coming of spring brought rain and warmer temperatures that melted snow, thawed frozen rivers, and caused flooding. Roads became all but impassible, and trenches turned into streams of mud. Water-soaked aging sandbags, which rotted and split, undermined timbers already weakened by sustained Chinese shelling. In March, noncommissioned officers from the division's engineer battalion inspected the Jamestown Line and evaluated the condition of the defenses, deter-



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A169051

After loading the 155mm howitzer, artillerymen of the 4th Battalion, 11th Marines, make a final check on the sights. The gunner stands by with lanyard in hand, waiting for the command to fire.

mining which bunkers and fighting holes had to be repaired or rebuilt. Marine infantrymen did the actual work under the supervision of the engineers, using materials man-handled into position by the Korean Service Corps. At the out-

posts or on those portions of the main line of resistance under enemy observation, the work had to be done at night.

Warmer weather heralded the appearance of a beer ration—two cans per day for each Marine not

engaged in actual fighting. Although the beer issued to Marines had a lesser alcohol content than that sold to civilians in the United States, it was welcome indeed. Those who drank made friends with those who did not, and a brisk trade in beer ensued.

Spring also brought the certainty that, as soon as weather permitted, the Chinese would renew their attacks on the Jamestown Line and its outposts, duplicating the intensity of the fight for the Hook (now a responsibility of the 2d Infantry Division) that had raged in October 1952. The enemy's capture of key terrain could yield political advantage as well as immediate tactical gain. Chinese success might force the Marines back to the Wyoming or Kansas Lines, both of them fall-back positions, or even open the way to Seoul. Smaller gains could combine to exert pressure on the United Nations to accept a truce and, if the ceasefire should fail, leave the Chinese in a stronger

A Marine 4.5-inch rocket crew launches a fire mission against Communist positions. The launcher could discharge 24 rounds in rapid succession. Two helicopters from

Marine Helicopter Transport Squadron 161 wait in the background to airlift the crew and their rocket launcher to the rear or a new position.

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A346664





1stMarDiv Historical Diary Photo Supplement, Mar53
Each spring, protracted periods of rain and the seasonal thaw turn the earth into a quagmire, impeding movement even in trenches. Although road conditions became a serious problem, frontline units were kept supplied.

position to renew the fighting.

Certain of the Marine combat outposts had already demonstrated their importance, among them Bunker Hill, the site of deadly fighting during 1952. The list of critical outposts also included Reno, Carson, and Vegas, northeast of the Ungok hills, a massif that had been the objective of a number of Marine raids during the winter. The importance of the three outposts named for cities in Nevada, which the 5th Marines manned, derived from their proximity to a potential invasion route leading toward Seoul, a road that passed between Carson and the Ungok hills. In addition, control of the three outposts provided observation of the Chinese main line of resistance and certain areas immediately beyond, while screening

portions of the Jamestown Line and some its rear areas from enemy observers.

Forty or fifty Marines, with two Navy hospital corpsmen, manned each of the combat outposts. The Marines, often drawn from various

squads in different platoons, formed composite units with numbers and firepower comparable to a reinforced platoon. In addition to their rifles, Browning automatic rifles, carbines, and pistols, the defenders usually were reinforced

The Korean Service Corps

The government of the Republic of Korea drafted men already rejected for service in the army and assigned them to a labor force, the Korean Service Corps, organized into companies, battalions, and regiments that carried supplies, food, ammunition, and building materials to combat units and performed other necessary logistics duties. Although the service troops wore a uniform, they were not issued weapons. On the Jamestown Line, a Korean Service Corps regiment, usually numbering more than 5,000 men, supported the components of the 1st Marine Division. Besides forming human pack trains, these Korean laborers helped evacuate the wounded, buried enemy dead, and retrieved weapons abandoned on the battlefield.

After the Marines moved onto the Jamestown Line in the spring of 1952, some 500 members of the Korean Service Corps helped cut timbers for the construction of bunkers along the frontline and for the two fall-back positions, the Wyoming and Kansas Lines. By July, the Koreans had helped cut and shape some 35,000 lengths of timber. Once the bunkers were completed, the Korean Service Corps carried new timbers, sandbags, barbed wire, and other materials to strengthen them and repair battle damage, along with food and ammunition. When manhandling cargo, each Korean laborer was expected to carry 50 pounds a distance of 10 miles, a burden affixed to an A-frame on the porter's back. Over long distances or rugged terrain, the laborers might adopt a relay system, dividing the journey into manageable segments.

Two members of the Korean Service Corps work under the supervision of an explosive ordnance disposal Marine and taught how to remove explosives from bombs and artillery shells. Once the explosives were removed, the cases were disposed of.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A169560





National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A170193

Members of the 1st Squad, 1st Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, wait to be briefed on a night combat patrol involving the setting of an ambush. Since early March, the 1st Battalion had conducted nearly a dozen such patrols to test the enemy in the Carson-Reno-Vegas area.

with two portable flamethrowers and as many as five light machine guns. One or more forward observers adjusted the fire of 60mm and 81mm mortars in defense of each outpost.

The three outposts of Carson, Reno, and Vegas differed from one another according to their location, the terrain to be defended, and the threat they faced. Combat Outpost Carson, on the left, guarded a largely barren hilltop where a cave provided living quarters for the Marines, who manned an oval perimeter protected by barbed wire and including bunkers, tunnels, and a main trench with fighting holes. Except for the slope nearest the Jamestown Line, where a deeper entrenchment was being dug, the main trench on Carson averaged five feet deep by two feet wide. Most of the 28 fighting holes had excellent fields of fire, though the overhead cover on some of them had reduced the opening for observation and firing. During darkness, two listening posts covered the likeliest avenues of enemy attack, from the Ungok

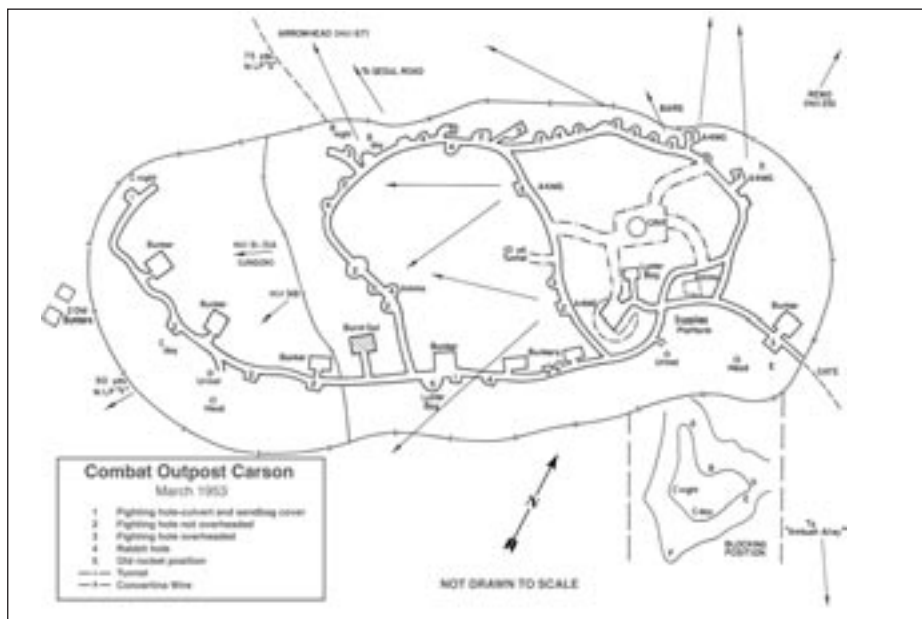
hills to the west and Hill 67 to the north.

Reno, in the center, was the most vulnerable of the three. It not only lay closest to Chinese lines, but also occupied a ridge that forced the defenders into a perimeter vaguely resembling the wishbone of a turkey, open end to the north. As at Carson, a cave served as living quarters and might also become a last-ditch redoubt. A tunnel provided access to the cave from the main trench, which varied from five to seven feet deep, but one Marine, Corporal James D. Prewitt, confessed that he hated to go through the entrance. As a boy, he explained: "I had helped dig my brother out of a collapsed play tunnel, and I was left with a real horror of such things."

Two Marines at Outpost Reno make their hourly call to the company command post. Located more than 1,600 yards from the main line of resistance, the outpost was customarily manned by 40 to 43 Marines.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A170020





empty cans into nearby gullies. At night, when the tin cans clattered, the source of the noise might be Chinese moving close to attack behind a sudden barrage or merely rats scavenging for food. Members of the Korean Service Corps kept Reno supplied and performed the unpleasant task, as after the fighting in October 1952, of burying the Chinese dead, a task repeated whenever artillery fire disinterred the corpses. Marines from Reno accompanied the Korean burial details to protect them against ambush and also to keep them at their grisly work. Enemy snipers, as well as mortar

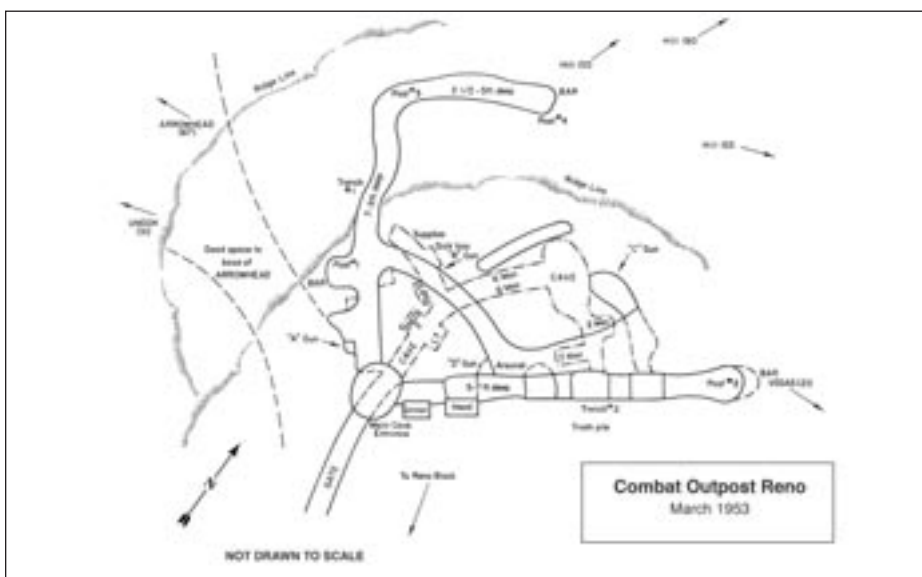
The Marines at Reno built no bunkers, relying exclusively on fighting holes in the trenches and, as a last resort, the cave itself. Outpost Reno had limited fields of fire in the direction of enemy-held Hill 67, also called Arrowhead Hill, but Outpost Carson, on the left, provided fire support in this area. As a result, the approach that seemed to pose the greatest danger to Reno's defenders followed a ridge extending generally southward from Hill 150.

Like the Marines defending the other outposts, those at Reno relied on C-rations and tossed the



and artillery crews, posed a continuing threat, forcing the Marines to remain under cover during daylight, insofar as possible. Indeed, a sniper alerted by the reflection from a forward observer's field glasses, fatally wounded the Marine with a single shot. Because of the danger, tension, and discomfort, the Marines at Reno normally stayed only for a week before being relieved.

To the south of Reno lay Reno Block, an L-shaped trench with a small bunker at the end of the shorter leg and a machine gun position at the point where the





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A170011

The trenchline on Outpost Reno; to the left of the "L" where the trench changes direction lies Reno Block, the site of savage fighting on the night of 26-27 March 1953.

legs joined. At night a reinforced squad manned the blocking position, which served as a listening post, helped screen the movement of supplies and reinforcements, and provided a rallying point for relief columns ambushed by Chinese patrols. Perched on a hilltop, Reno Block afforded excellent visibility, but conversely it could easily be seen from Chinese lines. Consequently, as a Marine who served there recalled: "We would light a cigarette under cover of a coat or blanket, then when we took a drag it was with both hands cupped to hide the glow," which could draw sniper fire. Marines manning Reno's east-west trench could fire in support of the blocking position, as could the garrison at Carson.

To the right of Reno loomed Combat Outpost Vegas, which attained a height of 175 meters and, as the tallest of the three, afforded the best fields of observation. Barbed wire and a well-constructed trench encircled the egg-shaped perimeter on Vegas, with its one warming and two living bunkers. Although the fields of fire on Vegas were less than ideal, handicapped in places by a

steeply pitched slope too irregular for grazing fire and also by the small firing apertures in some of the covered fighting holes, weapons there could support Reno with long-range fire. By day, Vegas proved a magnet for sniper fire and harassment by mortars and artillery, forcing the Marines to remain under cover. A tour of duty at Vegas usually lasted three days for infantry and no more than five for artillery forward observers.

Attack on Carson, Reno, and Vegas

Although the 5th Marines had been active during March—raiding Hill 31A in the Ungok hill mass and patrolling by night, especially in the vicinity of Carson, Reno, and Vegas—the Chinese tended to avoid combat. The lull ended abruptly at 1900 on 26 March, when the Chinese shattered the springtime evening with fire from small arms, machine guns, mortars, and artillery. Almost every Chinese weapon within range raked the left and center of the sector manned by the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines.

Combat Outposts Carson, Reno,

and Vegas, each manned by a composite platoon from the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, underwent a savage bombardment. An estimated 1,200 60mm and 82mm mortar rounds exploded on Carson within roughly 20 minutes, and the shelling continued at the rate of about one round every 40 seconds until 2200. The Chinese gunners also directed counterbattery fire at the howitzer positions of the 11th Marines, sought to interdict movement behind the main line of resistance, and tried to sever the telephone lines and routes of movement between the battalion and the threatened outposts.

The bombardment of Carson, Reno, and Vegas formed one part of a general shelling of outposts all along the Jamestown Line. To the right of the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, the Chinese lashed out at Berlin and East Berlin, manned by Marines of the regiment's 3d Battalion. To the left of the 5th Marines, artillery fire and sometimes infantry threatened the outposts of the 1st Marines, like Hedy, Bunker Hill, Esther, and Dagmar. Chinese troops also seemed to be positioning themselves to attack in the sector of the Korean Marines.

On the night of 26 March, the general bombardment fell most heavily on Carson, Reno, and Vegas, and just 10 minutes after the shells began exploding there, some 3,500 soldiers from the *358th Regiment, 120th Division*, of the Chinese *46th Army* began converging on the three outposts. Taking advantage of the shelling, two platoons advanced from the Ungok hills to attack Carson, while one Chinese company stormed Reno and another Vegas. Yet another company—this one from Arrowhead Hill and nearby Hill 29—crossed the road to Seoul to attack Reno from the northwest.



5th Marines Historical Diary Photo Supplement, Mar53

Marines on Vegas huddle in the command post bunker as Chinese mortars and artillery pound the outpost. While Marine artillery responded with protective boxing and variable-time fires on the outpost and routes of approach, defending infantry called down 60mm and 81mm mortar barrages.

Meanwhile, Chinese troops from Hill 190 outflanked Reno on its left to hit the outpost from the rear, and others advanced from the high ground north of Vegas to storm the outpost head-on.

The fight for Carson, a part of the enemy's main effort, pitted Chinese numbers, perhaps 20 attackers for every defender, against a determined garrison that could be readily reinforced from the main line of resistance. In the first 35 minutes, the attackers penetrated the outer trenches at Carson, but the Marines fought the Chinese to a standstill in a fierce hand-to-hand struggle. Moving their wounded to the shelter of the centrally located cave, the defenders continued to fire from their fighting holes along the main trench. As squads from Companies C and D of Lieutenant Colonel Jonas M. Platt's 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, were moving out to reinforce Carson, the Chinese relaxed the pressure on that outpost, shift-

ing their attention to Reno and Vegas. The attack began to ebb at about 2135, but mortars and artillery continued to pound the Marines on Carson. The violent though brief assault, followed by sustained shelling, took a psychological as well as physical toll among Carson's surviving defenders. For example, the outpost commander, First Lieutenant Jack F. Ingalls, who survived unwounded, seemed to have aged 10 years, according to a sergeant who knew him.

Reno, where the terrain precluded the establishment of a tight perimeter, proved harder to defend than Carson and, because it was farther from the main line of resistance, more difficult to reinforce. As at Carson, the Chinese gained a hold on the outer works, but at Reno they capitalized on this early success and forced the Marines to fall back to the cave that anchored the position. At 2030, Outpost Reno reported by

radio that the enemy controlled everything outside the cave, which was collapsing under the sustained shelling. According to the message, death, wounds, and the lack of oxygen inside the cave left only seven Marines able to fight.

Supporting weapons did their best to save the doomed outpost. Aided by flares from an aircraft and illuminating rounds, machine gunners on the main line of resistance and rocket batteries just to the rear fired into the Chinese swarming over Reno, while variable-time artillery shells burst overhead, showering the attackers with deadly fragments. Two Marine M-46 tanks, on the Jamestown Line just behind Reno, joined in with their 90mm guns. Radio contact with the Marines fighting at the outpost faded, and then failed entirely—never to be restored.

Chinese forces also seemed on the verge of victory at Outpost Vegas. The intensity of the bombardment and overwhelming numbers forced the Marines from their least defensible positions. A breakdown in communication hampered efforts to reinforce Vegas, as Chinese artillery fire tore up telephone wires leading from the outposts to the battalion command post. Radio had to replace wire.

While the defenders of Vegas were undergoing attack, the 5th Marines sought to reinforce Outpost Reno, with the 1st Battalion assuming operational control of those elements of the 2d Battalion involved in the effort. At 2015, advance elements of a platoon from Company F, 2d Battalion, set out from the main line of resistance, fought their way out of an ambush near Hill 47, but were pinned down short of Reno Block, which had yet to be manned that night and had been occupied by the Chinese. The reinforced 3d Platoon, Company

A Platoon at Reno Block

The 3d Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion—reinforced by an attached machine gun section—manned a portion of the Jamestown Line on the night of 26 March 1953. The men of the platoon, led by Second Lieutenant Warren C. Ruthazer, were standing the usual nighttime alert when they heard Chinese artillery exploding along the combat outpost line. Soon the bombardment began battering the main line of resistance, and Ruthazer summoned his noncommissioned officers to the command post where he told them that a Chinese attack on Outpost Reno had driven the defenders into the cave there and might soon overwhelm them.

Each night, a reinforced rifle squad, occupied Reno Block, a listening post about 100 yards closer to the main line of resistance than Reno itself. On this evening, however, the Chinese bombardment prevented the squad from moving out. As a result, the garrison intended for Reno Block, a reinforced squad from the 1st Platoon of Company C, joined forces with Lieutenant Ruthazer's 3d Platoon.

Shortly after 2000, the reinforced 3d Platoon, and its additional squad, received orders to drive the Chinese from Outpost Reno and bring back the surviving Marines. The men of the rescue force carried shovels and entrenching tools to free Marines trapped in the cave or in collapsed trenches, along with grenades for close-in fighting. Ruthazer's platoon started along a trail that extended some 1,800 yards, served Reno Block, and terminated at Reno. The Marines had to remain close to the trail because of minefields on both flanks, thus becoming more vulnerable to ambush. They avoided bunching up, dropped to the ground when necessary to escape enemy fire, and then jumped to their feet, rushing forward until again forced to hug the muddy earth. One of the many mortar shells that exploded along the trail burst close enough to Sergeant William H. Janzen, the platoon guide, to pelt him with dirt, and another landed directly in front of Private First Class Bobby G. Hatcher as he sprawled for cover alongside the trail, but the round failed to explode. During this ordeal, as he later recalled, Sergeant Janzen kept his sanity, although his face "was buried in the dirt and mud," by concentrating on repeating the Lord's Prayer.

To reach Reno Block, the force had to climb the steep hill on which the trench and bunker lay. The Marines had rigged a strong rope alongside the trail to help the heavily laden troops pull themselves upward. Chinese mortar and artillery fire had cut the rope, however, and the platoon had to claw its way up the slope. Atop the hill, the men entered a trench so shallow that at times the Marines had to crawl toward the blocking position.

The Chinese concentrated on the head of the relief column instead of trying to encircle it. Sergeant Janzen



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 13964

At a December 1953 battalion review, MajGen Randolph McC. Pate, commander of the 1st Marine Division, presents the Navy Cross, the nation's second highest award for military valor, to Hospital Corpsman Paul N. Polley.

believed that this decision enabled the platoon to cling to the segment of trench, making it the anchor of a ragged perimeter. The arrival of Captain Ralph L. Walz and two platoons from his Company F, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, tipped the balance in favor of the Marines, at least momentarily. The captain quickly mounted a bayonet charge, described by Janzen as "magnificent, heroic, and ghastly," that overwhelmed the Chinese at Reno Block.

Two corpsmen with Ruthazer's platoon, Hospitalman Third Class Paul N. Polley and Hospitalman Francis C. Hammond, struggled to care for the increasing number of casualties at Reno Block. Temporarily blinded by dirt thrown in his face by an exploding shell, Polley continued as best he could to tend to the wounded by sense of touch. Hammond, though already wounded, voluntarily remained behind with Captain Walz's Marines when the platoon from Company C received orders to withdraw. Hammond, killed when a mortar shell exploded near him, was awarded a posthumous Medal of Honor; Polley lived to receive the Navy Cross.

Casualty evacuation teams began arriving shortly after the 3d Platoon received orders to disengage. The survivors able to move about on their own had gathered at the base of the hill, when someone reported seeing a machine gunner, Private First Class Mario Lombardi, half-buried in a collapsed trench. A final search located Lombardi, whose legs had been broken, and his comrades brought him back. Of the 40 Marines in the reinforced 3d Platoon, fewer than 10 returned unscathed to the main line of resistance.

C, 1st Battalion—led by Second Lieutenant Warren C. Ruthazer—started toward Reno at 2030, together with the squad that had been assigned to Reno Block but had not yet deployed, and reached the enemy-held blocking position despite twice coming under long-range fire and twice being ambushed. Two platoons of Company F, 2d Battalion, followed in the wake of Ruthazer's men, leaving the Jamestown Line at 2227 and advancing toward Reno Block until stopped by fire from the Chinese holding the blocking position. Here these latest reinforcements, under Captain Ralph L. Walz, the commander of Company F, found Ruthazer's Marines, the

elements of Company F dispatched earlier, and a platoon from Company D sent to reinforce Outpost Vegas but stopped near Reno Block by Chinese fire. Captain Walz took command of the group and launched an attack that drove the enemy from the blocking position.

The cobbled-together force of Marines clinging to Reno Block, now commanded by Captain Ralph L. Walz of Company F, tried gallantly but unsuccessfully to reach the composite force from the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, that manned Outpost Reno when the battle began. Chinese attacks on the blocking position continued without respite, forcing the

Marines to beat back three separate assaults by midnight and denying them an opportunity to mount a strong attack of their own. While the fighting raged at Reno Block, the Chinese marshaled reinforcements of their own behind Hills 31 and 31D. Fire from Marine artillery and from tanks on the main line of resistance scattered one such group as it massed to join in attacking Reno, but the Chinese prevailed, killing or capturing all the defenders. The survivors consisted of just five Marines—among them the outpost commander, Second Lieutenant Rufus A. Seymour of Company C, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines—and a Navy corpsman. They became

Marines of the 4.2-inch mortar company, 5th Marines, unload ammunition in support of the assault to retake Outpost Vegas. Because of the heavy incoming fire, trucks

were unable to get to the company's mortar positions, so the Marines had to haul the ammunition up by carts.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A170437



prisoners of war and were ultimately repatriated.

The Chinese capture of Reno freed one of the companies that had helped subdue that outpost. The enemy assigned it the mission of delivering a coup de grace to Reno Block, but Marine artillery and tanks firing from the main line of resistance caught the Chinese as they moved south and frustrated the plan. The blocking position remained in Marine hands, at least temporarily.

During the struggle for Reno and Reno Block, Outpost Vegas continued to hold out, but almost from the time the Chinese attacked, contact with Vegas proved uncertain. To facilitate the restoration of reliable communications by wire, and if necessary with runners, Colonel Walt, the commander of the 5th Marines, shifted operational control of the Marines on Vegas, and those attempting to reinforce them, from the 2d Battalion to the 3d Battalion. Shortly before midnight, contact with Vegas ended. All the Marines there were either killed or captured; the dead included the officer in charge, First Lieutenant Kenneth E. Taft, Jr.

Initial Counterattacks End

At midnight, after some five hours of fighting, the Chinese controlled Vegas and Reno, although Carson remained under Marine control. The Marines trying to break through to Vegas or Reno had thus far got no farther than Reno Block, but they kept trying. At 0144, Captain Walz, in command of Company F and in charge of the composite force at the blocking position, reported that he had only the equivalent of one reinforced platoon to break through to Reno. Within an hour, Walz had launched three attacks, each one stopped by



National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A170429

A Marine gives a wounded buddy a drink while others prepare him for evacuation. During the initial attempts to regain control of Outposts Reno and Vegas, both Marine and enemy casualties were heavy; an estimated 600 Chinese had been wounded or killed while Marine losses were placed at more than 150.

fire from mortars and small arms. For now the outpost would remain in Chinese hands. The attempts to reach Outpost Reno on the night and early morning of 26-27 March resulted in severe Marine casualties that Colonel Walt later estimated as being "as high as 35 percent, with many dead."

On the early morning of 27 March, while the attempts to fight through to Outpost Reno were ending in frustration, two platoons organized from Companies D, 2d Battalion, and C, 1st Battalion, of the 5th Marines advanced toward Vegas. They worked their way as close as 400 yards to the entrance to the outpost's trenches before a fresh Chinese assault stopped them. This setback forced the 1st Marine Division to commit a part of its reserve.

The 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Alexander G. Cereghino and functioning as part of the division

reserve, placed its Company F under the operational control of the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, for this new effort to reach Vegas. The platoon leading the way advanced to within 200 yards of the outpost, but could only confirm that the enemy had already seized it. Beginning at about 0300, the Marines who had made this early morning attempt to break through to Vegas withdrew to the main line of resistance, arriving there at 0417. Earlier on the night of the 26th, Colonel Walt had given his 3d Battalion operational control over the attempts to save Vegas; now he ratified the decision by shifting the boundary between the 1st and 3d Battalions some 250 yards to the west.

The eight-hour fight at Vegas and on its approaches cost the Chinese an estimated 600 casualties, four times the total of Marines killed or wounded. Unremitting Chinese mortar and artillery fire

claimed most of the Marine victims. A platoon from Company F, 2d Battalion, joined Company C, as did a provisional unit assembled from the 1st Battalion's Headquarters and Service Company. Rather than taking part in an attempt to regain Vegas, these latest reinforcements helped evacuate those Marines wounded in the earlier fighting.

Marines wounded in the vicinity of Outpost Vegas followed one of two routes to a collection point behind the position held by Company H, 3d Battalion, 5th Marines. From here, casualties went either directly to the 3d Battalion aid station or to a camp of the Korean Service Corps enroute to the aid station of the 1st Battalion. The most severely wounded traveled by helicopter directly to a hospital ship, *Haven* (AH 12) or *Consolation* (AH 15), in Inchon Harbor. The others received further treatment from the division's medical battalion before being transferred to better-equipped facilities in the rear.

Chinese Diversionary Attacks

On the night of 26 March, the Chinese diverted attention from Carson, Reno, and Vegas by jabbing at Berlin and East Berlin in the sector of Lieutenant Colonel Robert J. Oddy's 3d Battalion, 5th Marines. Berlin occupied a rounded hilltop roughly the same height as the main line of resistance; a 400-yard ridge linked the two. Supplies or reinforcements bound for Berlin, unlike those destined for Vegas or Reno, were screened by the hill from direct enemy observation. Taking advantage of the concealment, carrying parties of the Korean Service Corps shuttled supplies to the entrance to the outpost. The porters were not allowed to enter the trenches,

however, to avoid confusion that might prove advantageous to the enemy.

One reinforced squad from Company G held Berlin, and another East Berlin. Both garrisons beat back the Chinese with the help of barrages that boxed-in the outposts and variable-time fire that rained fragments on the enemy's routes of approach. By midnight, a second squad had reinforced each of the outposts.

The Chinese also probed the outposts held by the 1st Marines on the left of Colonel Walt's regiment. The enemy bombarded four outposts—Hedy, Bunker Hill, Esther, and Dagmar—and tested the defenses of all of them. Only at Combat Outpost Dagmar did the attackers break through the wire. The 27 Marines defending the outpost held their own against an approximately equal number of Chinese. Some 300 rounds of mortar and artillery fire helped the defenders, commanded by Second

Lieutenant Benjamin H. Murray of Company I, 3d Battalion, to contain the penetration until help arrived. Before midnight on 26 March, Second Lieutenant John J. Peeler, the executive officer of Company I, led a counterattack from the main line of resistance that regained control over all of Outpost Dagmar. The clashes at Dagmar and the other outposts—Hedy, Bunker Hill, and Esther—killed perhaps 10 Chinese and wounded 17 at the cost of four Marines killed and 16 wounded. A feeble jab at Outpost Kate proved an annoyance rather than a threat, and Chinese troops massing in front of the Korean Marines did not attack at this time. Marine artillery again demonstrated its importance during the outpost actions on the night of 26-27 March. The 11th Marines fired more than 10,000 105mm and 155mm rounds at targets from East Berlin and Berlin westward to Outpost Hedy. The bombardment of Vegas and Reno, the outposts

A Marine mans the main trenchline on the forward sloop of Outpost Dagmar. The outpost was the site of a two-squad Chinese diversionary assault with automatic weapons and satchel charges that was beaten back with help from Marines on the main line of resistance.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A169923





National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A317670
A graduate of Stanford University and veteran of the British Commando Program, LtCol Alexander D. Cereghino spent most of World War II in command of the 1st Provisional Battalion stationed in Northern Ireland. Following a three-year stint at Headquarters Marine Corps, he was given command of 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, in Korea.

the Chinese had seized, continued into the morning of the 27th in preparation for a more powerful counterattack.

Marine Counterattack of 27 March

Preparations for a major counterattack went ahead on the ground and in the air. At 0345 on the 27th, Lieutenant Colonel Cereghino's 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, an element of the division reserve, came under the operational control of Colonel Walt's 5th Marines. Cereghino's unit had already moved into an assembly area behind the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, and Company F had taken part in an unsuccessful attempt to break through to Outpost Vegas.

By the time the Marines abandoned the early attempts to fight their way through to Vegas and

Reno, observation planes from Marine Observation Squadron 6 (VMO-6) began flying missions to direct friendly artillery fire against Chinese batteries. Aerial observers called down some 60 fire missions against targets that included mortars, artillery, and self-propelled guns. During the morning darkness, Douglas F3D-2 Skyknight night fighters conducted radar bombing against Chinese gunners and troop concentrations. As dawn approached, the time chosen for an attempt to recapture Vegas and Reno, air strikes intensified. Grumman F9F Panther jets of Marine Fighter Squadron 115 (VMF-115) arrived overhead at 0650 to help neutralize the Chinese defenders of the two captured outposts. A breakdown of communications forced a postponement, however; H-Hour for the assault on Reno and Vegas slipped until 0900, but persistent problems of coordination caused further delay. Airmen took advantage of the additional time; with two-dozen Marine fighter-bombers joining Air Force jets in delivering strikes.

Marine tanks—which the division commander, Major General Edwin A. Pollock, had ordered to join the rocket battery, mortars, and artillery regiment in supporting the counterattack—made their contribution to the preliminary fires. Company A of the division's tank battalion spotted two groups of Chinese carrying logs for the construction of bunkers on the site of Outpost Reno. The tank company wiped out one group with 90mm fire, but the other presumably reached its destination.

Before the attack finally began, Major General Pollock agreed to a change of plan. Vegas would be the sole objective; while attacking there the Marines would neutralize Reno with fire. Smoke shells

bursting on Hills 57A and 90 blinded the Chinese observers there and marked the launching of the attack, which got under way shortly after 1100. Artillery, mortars, tanks, and aircraft hammered Vegas, Reno, and the enemy's firing batteries, including some located by Marine airmen earlier in the day.

As bombs, shells, and rockets exploded on Vegas and the other targets, Company D, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines—an element of Colonel Walt's regimental reserve—advanced from the main line of resistance. The assault company, commanded by Captain John B. Melvin, launched its attack at 1120 but immediately came under fire from Chinese mortars and artillery. Within an hour, the company's first platoon had been reduced to just nine able-bodied Marines, but Melvin's survivors slogged forward through flooded rice paddies and up a rain-soaked slope. Marine casualties and enemy reinforcements slowed Company D, as the men worked their way from one depression or rocky outcropping to another until the counterattack stalled some 200 yards short of the objective. Chinese fire raked the slope where the assault had bogged down, but Marine jet fighters and piston-powered attack planes joined the 11th Marines and the 1st Tank Battalion in trying to silence the hostile weapons.

Shells from Chinese 122mm artillery and 120mm mortars churned the slopes of Vegas; making the detonations from 60mm mortar rounds seem like mere fire-crackers. Captain Melvin recalled that the enemy fire "was so intense at times that you couldn't move forward or backward.... You could only hope that the next round wouldn't be on target." Despite the deadly barrage, a handful of

Marines succeeded in entering the outer trench and making a brief lodgment there.

To sustain the counterattack, two forces set out shortly after 1200 from the lines of Company H, 3d Battalion, 5th Marines. Captain Floyd G. Hudson led the way with a provisional unit made up from the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines. Captain Herbert M. Lorence commanded the second, Company F of the same battalion. These reinforcements reached the slope where Melvin's Marines were undergoing their ordeal but could advance no farther. As a result, Company F, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines—available from what had been the division reserve—set out at 1530 under Captain Ralph F. Estey to lend its weight to the counterattack on Outpost Vegas.

Captain Estey's company reached the fire-swept slope lead-

ing to the enemy-held outpost and relieved the surviving elements of Melvin's Company D, 5th Marines, which returned to the main line of resistance. While 90mm guns from Captain Clyde W. Hunter's Company A, 1st Tank Battalion, fired from the main line of resistance against a Chinese strongpoint on the crest of Vegas, Marine aircraft maintained a smoke screen that blinded enemy observers. Estey combined his men with those of Company E of the 5th Marines, and formed the equivalent of three platoons. After a savage fight lasting about an hour and a half, the counterattack succeeded by 2000 in overrunning the trenches nearest the Marine main line of resistance. The Chinese who held the rest of Vegas contained the breakthrough short of the summit and forced the Marines to fall back to the base of the hill and dig in. Fire from sup-

porting weapons in the rear, and also from the site of Outpost Reno, helped the enemy prevail.

Pressure on the Marine foothold continued throughout the night. By midnight, Captain Estey's men had beaten off three attacks and clung firmly to the position at the base of Vegas. Marine night fighters and attack planes made nine radar-controlled strikes between darkness on the 27th and 0115 the next morning, dropping some 24 tons of bombs on enemy positions and supply lines. The bombardment of Estey's perimeter gradually abated, as Chinese gunners shifted their fire from the base of Vegas to the main line of resistance.

During the counterattack on Chinese-held Outpost Vegas, Hospitalman Third Class William R. Charette—attached to Company F, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines—

Grumman F9F Panther jets taxi into position for takeoff against enemy concentrations. During the Marine counterattack on Outpost Vegas, Panther jets from Marine

Fighter Squadrons 115 and 311 not only attacked Chinese trenches, bunkers, and mortar emplacements, but also bombed enemy resupply points.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A346720



repeatedly risked his life to care for the wounded. While Charette was giving first aid to a Marine, a Chinese grenade landed next to them. Charette pounced on the grenade; his armored vest saved him from serious injury, but the force of the explosion tore away his helmet and his medical kit. Since he could not waste time searching for the kit, he used his clothing to improvise bandages. When he was tending to another wounded Marine, whose armored vest had been blown off by the concussion from an explosion, Charette removed his own vest and placed it over the wounded man. Without either a helmet or an armored vest, he stayed with his platoon throughout the fighting. According to one of the Marines who fought there, the corpsman "was everywhere seemingly at the same time, performing inexhaustibly." In recognition of his bravery and devotion to duty, Charette received the Medal of Honor. Of the corpsmen whose service in Korea earned them the nation's highest award for valor, he alone survived to wear it.

The Marines counterattacking Vegas had seized a strong foothold at the base of the hill where the outpost stood, but the summit and the shell-battered complex of trenches and bunkers remained in Chinese hands. Preparations for another assault up the hill began at 0335 on 28 March when the 105mm and 155mm howitzers of the 11th Marines fired the first of more than 2,300 rounds directed at Chinese weapons positions and assembly areas, as well as the defenses of the summit itself.

After half an hour's bombardment, the men of Captain Estey's Company F, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, who had entered the fight at mid-afternoon the previous day, worked their way to within

grenade range of the Chinese before being driven back by fire from small arms and mortars. While the company regrouped, Marine aircraft joined in battering the enemy. After sunrise, Marine fliers laid a smoke screen to conceal air strikes from Chinese antiaircraft gunners on Hill 67, north of Outpost Carson. During the early morning, Marine aircraft conducted four powerful strikes, the first of a series that lasted throughout the day.

The second infantry assault of the morning, launched at 0600, failed to recapture Vegas, ending when Captain Estey's Marines took cover from enemy fire about 375 yards south of the crest. After further air strikes, Estey's Company F attacked once again and by 1015 penetrated to within 15 yards of the trenches, where it engaged in a firefight that lasted 22 minutes and deprived the assault of its momentum.

When this latest counterattack stalled in front of a machine gun firing from the base of a rock formation, Sergeant Daniel P. Matthews, a squad leader in Company F, saw that the weapon had pinned down a wounded Marine and the corpsman trying to bring him to safety. The sergeant crawled to the formation, scrambled onto the rocks, opened fire with his rifle, and charged the gun. Although wounded almost immediately, Matthews killed two members of the gun crew and silenced the weapon. His bold action enabled the corpsman to save the wounded Marine, but Matthews died of his wounds before members of his squad could reach him. His heroism earned a posthumous Medal of Honor.

Shortly after the one-man assault by Sergeant Matthews, Captain Lorence's Company E, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, passed

through Company F, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines. Captain Estey's company, reduced to just 43 able-bodied men after a half-dozen attempts to recapture Vegas, fell back to regroup at the base of the hill.

While the relief of Estey's company was taking place, aircraft, mortars, and artillery continued to scourge not only outpost Vegas, but also Chinese supply routes, enemy-held Outpost Reno, nearby Hill 25A, and other high ground from which hostile gunners could fire in support of their comrades dug in on Vegas. Taking advantage of the savage bombardment—during a 23-minute period, aerial bombs fell at the rate of more than a ton per minute—the 1st Platoon of Captain Lorence's company launched its assault at 1301. Led by Staff Sergeant John J. Williams, who had taken over when Second Lieutenant Edgar R. Franz was wounded, the platoon killed or drove off the Chinese defending the former site of Outpost Vegas. The platoon took only one prisoner, the second the Marines had captured during the day.

As soon as Captain Lorence's Marines regained the ruins of Outpost Vegas, the Chinese counterattacked, but fire from tanks dug in on the main line of resistance and artillery helped break up the assault. Although the Marines controlled Vegas itself, a few Chinese stubbornly held out at the very summit of the hill. The work of preparing to meet the next counterattack went ahead under the command of Major Benjamin G. Lee, who had earned the Silver Star and Purple Heart as a non-commissioned officer at Guadalcanal during World War II. Although Lee, operations officer of the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, took command, the resupply of Vegas became the responsibility of the



1stMarDiv Historical Diary Photo Supplement, Mar53

Although Vegas was retaken, Marines still had to keep low when moving around the ruined outpost. Daylight hours were relatively quiet with only an occasional burst of machine gun or sniper fire, while night witnessed renewed Chinese attempts to overrun the outpost.

regiment's 3d Battalion. To defend the newly recaptured outpost, Lee at first could muster only 66 Marines, eight of them members of Company F, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, who had not fallen back to the base of the hill with the unit's other survivors, and the rest from Captain Lorence's Company E, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines. Fortunately, Captain Thomas P. Connolly's Company E, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, reached the hill with an additional 150 men and prepared to take over from Lorence's Marines and spearhead a final attack.

Further Action on Outpost Vegas

The Chinese held the initiative, however, and at 1955 on 28 March, as darkness enveloped Vegas, they counterattacked. The preparatory fires included the usual artillery and mortar barrages supplemented by 3.5-inch rockets fired from the Chinese equivalent of the

American Bazooka antitank weapon. An enemy battalion advanced from captured Outpost Reno, but fell back after coming under deadly fire from Army and Marine artillery and the 1st Marine Division's 4.5-inch rocket battery.

Outpost Carson came under fire at about the same time from mortars and automatic weapons. Chinese patrols probed the approaches to the outpost, but the garrison, supported by weapons on the main line of resistance, drove off the enemy. The attack, if one was planned, did not take place.

At 2130, Major Lee radioed from Vegas to report that a second Chinese assault was imminent, and within an hour the enemy struck. Box-me-in fires helped Lee's Marines cling to their position, but the Chinese struck again, launching the night's third attack about an hour before midnight. At least 200 Chinese soldiers tried to over-

whelm Lee's perimeter but succeeded only in forcing the Marines to yield some non-critical ground. While aircraft dropped flares, howitzer batteries of the 11th Marines duelled with Chinese gunners, firing more than 6,000 rounds by midnight. The attack continued until 0130 on the morning of 29 March, when another savage bombardment by the division's artillery and the fire of Captain Connolly's Company E, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, forced the enemy to relax his pressure. The bulk of the Chinese assault force, totaling two battalions during the fight, withdrew behind a curtain of fire from weapons emplaced on Reno.

As Connolly's Company E, 7th Marines, and Lorence's Company E, 5th Marines, prepared to eliminate the Chinese die-hards still clinging to the crest of the hill, artillery and 4.5-inch rockets kept on pounding the enemy. More than 4,000 rounds neutralized Reno while others tore into the Chinese-held portion of Vegas. A final Marine assault secured the summit of Vegas at 0450.

Chinese mortar and artillery fire directed at the Marines continued after the recapture of Vegas. Shortly after 0500 a 120mm mortar shell killed both Major Lee and Captain Walz, the commander of Company F, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, who had led the charge at Reno Block. Also killed in this flurry of shelling was First Lieutenant John S. Gray, a forward observer from the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines.

Major Joseph S. Buntin, the executive officer of the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, which was responsible for rebuilding the outpost, now took command. Replacements, including corpsmen, arrived that morning, along with weapons, tools, construction

supplies, and laborers from the Korean Service Corps. By noon, work was underway on trenches, fighting holes, and bunkers, screened as necessary by smoke missions fired by the 11th Marines, but the muddy, shell-churned earth complicated the efforts of the Marines and the Korean labor troops helping them. As daylight faded, rain and light snow added to the discomfort of the men on the ground and forced the aerial observers, who had been directing the maintenance of smoke screens and other artillery missions, to return to their airstrips.

The Chinese had not yet abandoned their designs on Vegas. At 1805 on 29 March, they advanced from assembly areas in the vicinity of Reno and Hill 153 and hit Vegas on both flanks. This attack triggered the most violent single barrage of the battle for Vegas, as more than 6,400 shells from five artillery battalions, plus two rounds from each launching tube in

the division's 4.5-inch rocket battery, exploded among the attacking troops. Army 8-inch howitzers and 4.2-inch mortars also helped break up the assault.

After a brief flurry of activity at about 2045, perhaps an attempt to retrieve men wounded in the earlier attack, the Chinese mounted another major effort early in the morning of 30 March, again striking from Reno and Hill 153. This latest attempt to isolate Outpost Vegas and destroy it also collapsed under an avalanche of artillery and mortar shells.

Sunrise brought clearing skies, enabling Marine AU Corsairs to disrupt Chinese attempts to regroup for further assaults. Throughout the day, Marine airmen attacked troops, fortifications, and firing batteries on Reno and other hills that menaced Vegas. On Vegas, the Marines "were like rabbits digging in," said Corporal George Demars of Company F, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, who added

By daybreak on 31 March, the men on Vegas could relax in the partially reconstructed trench works. The five-day siege involving more than 4,000 ground and air Marines was the bloodiest action Marines on the Western Front had yet engaged in.

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A170454



National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A365894

For "outstanding services performed in the line of his professional services," Maj Joseph S. Buntin would later receive the Bronze Star Medal from MajGen Randolph McC. Pate. The award was presented in December 1953.

that the replacements "jumped right in," as members of hastily organized squads worked together, even though "they didn't know half the people on the fire teams." In the afternoon, Company G, 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, relieved Captain Connolly's Company E, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, and Major George E. Kelly, operations officer of the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, replaced Major Buntin.

At about 1100 on the morning of 30 March, five Chinese soldiers approached Outpost Vegas, giving the impression they intended to surrender. Instead they threw grenades and cut loose with sub-machine guns in a suicidal gesture of defiance. Marine infantrymen returned the fire, killing three of the intruders outright. Another died of his wounds, and the survivor was taken prisoner.

During the night, Army searchlights provided illumination for Marine artillery, including the half-track-mounted .50-caliber machine guns of the 1st Provisional



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A170436

Members of the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, take time out after returning from the fierce five-day battle for Outpost Vegas to eat chow and take a well-deserve breather. With a touch of sarcasm, they called the disputed crest of Vegas "the highest damn beachhead in Korea."

Antiaircraft Artillery Battery (Automatic Weapons), which took a hand in the fighting on the ground. Marine aircrews directed by Marine Corps radar made seven

strikes against Chinese positions on the night of the 31st, and aircraft, mortars, and artillery continued to harass the enemy on the following day, as the 5th Marines and 1st

Marines continued to relieve the garrisons at their combat outposts.

To prevent the enemy from exploiting his conquest of Outpost Reno, the Marines strengthened Vegas after its recapture, manning it with a company rather than a platoon. The 1st Marine Division also established a new outpost, Elko (named like Reno, Vegas, and Carson for a city in Nevada). Elko stood on Hill 47, southeast of Carson and 765 yards north of the main line of resistance. During the unsuccessful attempt to break through to the Reno garrison, Chinese troops had used Hill 47 to ambush the rescue forces. Marine possession of the hill improved the security of Carson, Vegas, and the main line of resistance.

Outpost Vegas: Summing Up

The five-day battle that ended with the recapture and successful defense of Outpost Vegas cost the

Standing together at I Corps headquarters in early April are, from left, BGen John K. Waters, Chief of Staff, I Corps, MajGen Bak Lim Hang, Commanding General, 1st Republic of Korea Division, MajGen M. A. R. West, Commanding General, 1st Commonwealth Division, MajGen Edwin A. Pollock, Commanding General, 1st Marine Division, LtGen Paul W. Kendall, departing com-

manding general, I Corps, MajGen Bruce C. Clarke, newly appointed commanding general, I Corps, MajGen James C. Fry, Commanding General, 2d Infantry Division, MajGen Arthur G. Trudeau, Commanding General, 7th U.S. Infantry Division, and Col Pak Ki Sung, Commander, 101st Korean Service Corps.

National Archives Photo (USA) 111-SC429583



1st Marine Division 1,015 casualties or some 63 percent of those suffered by the division, including the Korean Marine regiment, during the entire month of March 1953. Chinese losses were estimated to be 2,221, of whom 536 had been actually counted. Whatever the exact toll, the Marines had crippled the *358th Regiment* of the Chinese army, which faced the task of rebuilding before it could again take the offensive.

During the loss and recapture of Vegas, the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing flew 218 missions in support of the combat outpost line, most of them to help hold positions manned by the 5th Marines. This total represented some 63 percent of the 346 close air support missions flown by the wing during March. Despite rain and snow that sometimes restricted visibility, Marine aircraft dropped some 426 tons of bombs in support of Marines on the ground, provided battlefield illumination, and laid smoke screens. In addition, helicopters evacuated the critically wounded.

Although Marine tanks not only fired some 9,000 rounds from the main line of resistance but also illuminated some targets using their shuttered searchlights, artillery proved the deadliest weapon in support of the infantry. Between 27 and 31 March, the 11th Marines, the 1st Marine Division's rocket battery, and the Army artillery and heavy mortar units reinforcing their fires, delivered almost 105,000 rounds against targets in the vicinity of Vegas, Carson, and Reno. The heaviest artillery action took place during the 24 hours ending at 1600, 29 March, when four Marine howitzer battalions fired 33,041 rounds and two Army battalions another 2,768.

The recapture of Outpost Vegas and the related fighting earned

congratulations from the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., who praised the "stubborn and heroic defense of Vegas, Reno, and Carson Hills coupled with the superb offensive spirit which characterized the several counterattacks." The sustained and deadly action earned a respite for the 5th Marines, which on 4 and 5 April moved into division reserve, replaced by the 7th Marines after 68 days on line. Meanwhile, on 28 March the Chinese high command, perhaps motivated to some extent by the failure to hold Vegas and crack the Jamestown Line, advised Army General Mark W. Clark, the United Nations commander, of its willingness to discuss an exchange of sick and wounded prisoners of war.

Shuffling Marine Regiments

After the battles for Reno, Carson, and Vegas, the 5th Marines went into division reserve. Shortly afterward, on 14 April, Colonel Harvey C. Tschirgi took command of the regiment, replacing Colonel Lewis Walt, who was reassigned to the division staff. The 7th Marines, under Colonel Glenn C. Funk after he took over from Colonel Loren E. Haffner on 27 March, replaced the 5th Marines on 4-5 April, moving from division reserve to man the portion of the Jamestown Line formerly held by Colonel Walt's regiment. The 1st Marines, commanded by Colonel Hewitt D. Adams from 1 November 1952 until Colonel Wallace M. Nelson took over on May 1, remained in place, holding the segment of the line between the 7th Marines and the Korean Marine regiment. After truce talks resumed at Panmunjom, the 1st Marines under Colonel Adams provided a force of 245 men and five armored vehicles

that stood by to rescue the United Nations negotiators if the other side should spring a trap.

As the division reserve, the 5th Marines assumed responsibility for maintaining the fallback positions behind the main line of resistance. One of these, the Kansas Line, had suffered severe structural damage from torrential rains and the spring thaw. Its restoration required the full-time efforts of the regiment's 3d Battalion, which had to cancel its scheduled training. The 2d Battalion, however, participated in a landing exercise at Tokchok-to, an island southwest of Inchon, but high winds and rolling seas cut short the training. While the 5th Marines was in reserve, its staff participated—together with staff officers of the 1st Marines, the Commonwealth Division, and U.S. Army and South Korean forces—in a command post exercise staged by I Corps.

Meanwhile, the Chinese tested the 7th Marines. On 9 April, after mortars and artillery battered the regiment with some 2,000 rounds, the Chinese launched an attack on Carson, followed by a series of probes of that outpost and nearby Elko. At 0345 on the morning of the 9th, some 300 Chinese, advancing in two waves, hit Outpost Carson. After an hour, some of the assault troops reached the trenchline and for another hour exchanged fire at point-blank range with the defenders. A platoon set out at 0530 to reinforce Carson but got no farther than Elko, the newly established outpost some 400 yards southeast of Carson, before fire from mortars and small arms stopped the unit until 90mm tank guns and Marine mortars broke up the ambush. Howitzers and rocket launchers joined in, battering the approaches to Carson until the Chinese fell back.

To strengthen Carson's defenses,

Little Switch

During December 1952, when the truce talks at Panmunjom seemed to have reached a dead end, General Mark W. Clark—who in May of that year had replaced another Army officer, General Matthew B. Ridgway, in command of the United Nations forces—took note of a suggestion by the International League of Red Cross Societies that the combatants in Korea exchange sick and wounded prisoners of war. On 22 February 1953, Clark formally proposed an immediate exchange, but, as he expected, the Chinese and North Koreans did not respond. On 5 March, however, the death of Joseph Stalin deprived the Soviet Union of a forceful dictator and the People's Republic of China of a strong ally.

In this time of transition, as Georgei Malenkov emerged from the shadows to become Stalin's successor, at least temporarily, the Chinese leadership began thinking of Clark's proposal as an anchor to windward in a gale

of uncertainty. Indeed, if Malenkov or some other ruler proved less supportive than Stalin, the limited exchange of prisoners might enable China to revive the truce talks and perhaps bring to an end a long and thus far inconclusive war. On 28 March, while the fight for Vegas and the other outposts still raged, General Clark received not only a formal Chinese acceptance of the proposal to exchange prisoners, but also an offer to resume serious armistice negotiations at Panmunjom.

On 6 April, representatives of the two sides began talks at Panmunjom that resulted in an agreement for the exchange, Operation Little Switch, scheduled to begin on the 20th. To prepare for the transfer, 100 Marines from the 1st Engineer Battalion and the 1st Shore Party Battalion built the so-called Freedom Village at Munsan-ni, a tent city complete with roads, a helicopter pad, and facilities for emergency medical treatment, administration, and press coverage.

Frontline Marines watch a U.S. Army ambulance convoy bringing the first freed United Nations prisoners from Panmunjom to Freedom Village. Following the long

one-and-a-half hour trip, each Marine prisoner received a medical check and a new utility cap with its Marine Corps emblem.

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A170964





National Archives Photo (USN) 80-G-480686

Marine Pvt Alberto Pizzaro-Baez talks with MajGen Edwin A. Pollock at Freedom Village following his release. Pvt Pizzaro-Baez was among the 15 Marines and three Navy Corpsmen who had been captured from the 1st Marine Division.

When the exchange began on 20 April, Major General Edwin A. Pollack, the division commander, stood by to greet the Marines among the 149 Americans released

through 26 April when Little Switch ended. The first Marine welcomed by Major General Pollack, and by the other dignitaries that included General Clark, was Private Alberto Pizzaro-Baez of Company H, 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, wounded in the leg and captured at Outpost Frisco in October 1952. During his imprisonment, the leg became gangrenous and had to be amputated. The men of the 1st Marine Division returned in Operation Little Switch totaled 15 Marines and three Navy hospital corpsmen. Two of the Marines, Corporal Jimmie E. Lacy and Private First Class George F. Hart, and one of the corpsmen, Hospitalman Thomas "Doc" Waddill, had been wounded and captured when the Chinese overran Outpost Reno on the night of 26 March. The Communist forces released 684 sick and wounded captives from 11 nations, more than half of them South Koreans, in return for 6,670 North Koreans and Chinese. The disparity in numbers may have reflected the desire of the Americans to rid themselves of dedicated and disciplined Communists among the prisoners like those who had seized a prison compound at the island of Koje-do and briefly held the commander hostage. Little Switch did not address, let alone resolve, the question of the forced repatriation of prisoners unwilling to return when a truce finally went into effect.

Company E, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, moved there from regimental reserve, more than making good the day's losses of 14 killed and 64 wounded. The Marines counted 60 Chinese killed in the fighting on the early morning of 9 April. Another 160 may have been killed or wounded, which would have brought the morning's casualties to more than half the Chinese assault force that triggered the action.

During the first day's fighting on the ground, Marine aircraft appeared overhead after 0715, attacking visually or with the help of ground-based Marine radar. By mid-afternoon, fighter-bombers had dropped more than 67 tons of bombs on Chinese positions north of Carson. Radar-directed strikes took place after dark, and visual strikes resumed after daylight on 10 April.

As aerial action intensified, activity on the ground slowed. On

the night of the 9th, three Chinese platoons, possibly searching for the day's casualties, advanced as

far as the ruins of a bunker just 50 yards from Outpost Carson. The Chinese activity attracted fire that

Not every veteran of the 1st Marine Division was a human being. The pack horse "Reckless," shown here with her handler, took her name from the recoil-less (or rec-less) rifle, like the one next to her, for which she carried ammunition. The horse returned to Camp Pendleton, California, with the division in 1955.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A171729





National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A170606

Marine Cpl Dennis W. Burkner, using a Browning automatic rifle, fires at enemy positions in front of Company I, 3d Battalion, 7th Marines' place on the main line of resistance. Cpl Burkner wears one of the 24,000 armored vests issued the division by 1953.

definitely killed 15, may have killed 15 more, and wounded between seven and 27. Shortly before midnight, some 70 Chinese advanced from the Ungok hills and attacked Carson, only to lose perhaps 20 additional men to Marine mortars, tank guns, and machine guns. A couple of Chinese squads probed Outpost Elko on the night of the 11th, but for the most part, the enemy now contented himself with trying to exploit the renewal of truce talks by showering the Jamestown Line with propaganda leaflets warning the Marines against risking their lives because a ceasefire was at hand. The Chinese reinforced the printed message with loudspeaker broadcasts, and on one occasion they dropped leaflets from an airplane to supplement those scattered from special mortar shells.

Into I Corps Reserve

On 5 May, the Army's 25th Infantry Division, commanded by Major General Samuel T. Williams,

and its attached Turkish brigade replaced the 1st Marine Division on what had been called the Jamestown Line. The practice of naming each separate segment of the line, like Jamestown, ended on 28 April, after which the entire

The first contingent of the 3d Turkish Battalion begins the relief of the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines. On 5 May, the U. S. Army's 25th Infantry Division, to which the Turkish troops were attached, took over from the 1st Marine Division, which went into corps reserve.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A171351



front, from coast to coast, was known collectively as the main line of resistance. At the same time, the Eighth U.S. Army in Korea became simply the Eighth U.S. Army.

While the bulk of the Marine division moved 15 miles eastward over muddy roads to occupy the three cantonment areas that comprised Camp Casey, named in memory of U.S. Army Major Hugh B. Casey, the 11th Marines and the division's rocket battery remained attached to I Corps Artillery, in position to provide general support and fire counterbattery missions as necessary. The artillery battalion of the Korean Marines moved into position to reinforce the fires of I Corps Artillery. The Marine 1st Tank Battalion came under the control of the 25th Infantry Division; two companies supported the Turkish brigade, which had no armor of its own, another was assigned to the Army division's 35th Infantry, and the fourth served as a reserve. The Korean Marine tank company

Women Marines

The role of women in the Marine Corps during the Korean War was the result of a checkered series of events in the preceding years. When World War II ended, there were 820 officers and 17,640 enlisted members of the Marine Corps Women's Reserve. They had served to "free a Marine to fight," as the recruiting slogan proclaimed.

In one tumultuous year of peacetime demobilization, the number of women reservists plummeted to a total of 298 in August 1946. Simultaneously, there was skepticism at the highest levels in Headquarters Marine Corps as to whether there should be any women reservists on active duty, or, in fact, any women at all in a peacetime Marine Corps. With other branches of the Armed Services retaining women, the Marine Corps finally agreed to a minimum step, it would enlist former women reservists in its Reserve and authorize their formation into Volunteer Training Units (January 1947).

The decisive breakthrough occurred on 12 June 1948 with the passage of the Women's Armed Services Integration Act. This led to women in the Organized Reserve and, for the first time, in the Regular Marine Corps. They were now confirmed as a permanent part of a peacetime Corps, with authorization to seek 100 officers, 10 warrant officers, and 1,000 enlisted women during the next two years.

To take charge of this rebirth, a superb leader was essential. There would be endless problems and details in organizing this latest expansion, as well as a crucial need for a firm but diplomatic style at Headquarters Marine Corps. The right person emerged—Katherine A. Towle. She had been a captain in 1943 and had returned to a college campus in 1946. General Clifton B. Cates, Commandant of the Marine Corps, asked her to return to active duty and take charge. On 18 October 1948, she was sworn in as Director of Women Marines with the rank of colonel. It was she who would lead Women Marines throughout the Korean War. Progress came quickly after that—commissioning of women as regulars, with their title changed from women reservists to Women Marines.

The year 1949 saw a variety of activities, which, unknowingly, prepared women reservists and Women Marines for the wartime demands which would erupt the following year. Enlisted training began at Parris Island, South Carolina. Drawing on the Volunteer Training Units, Organized Women's Reserve platoons were activated, with 13 functioning by February 1950. At Quantico a Woman Officer Candidate Course and a Woman Officer Training Class were instituted, and 86, later reduced to 27, appropriate military occupational specialties were targeted as potential for women. By March 1950, there were 28 Regular Women Marine officers, 496 regular enlisted, 18 women reserve officers, and 41



Marine Corps Historical Center Photo Collection

The first post-World War II Women Marines arrived at Quantico, Virginia, in 1950 and were assigned to the Administrative Section of the Landing Force Development Center. Although limited to a minute number of occupational fields, Women Marines numbered more than 2,700 by mid-1953.

women reserve enlisted on active duty.

A bombshell exploded on 25 June 1950 when South Korea unexpectedly was invaded. Now the trials and tribulations that Marine women had experienced in the past years would bear fruit in a time of crisis. With the brutal strength reductions that had been forced upon it in the preceding years, the Marine Corps suddenly needed all the personnel—hopefully trained—that it could scrape together. And here were the women! Their potential went far beyond those on active duty and out into a reservoir of civilians who would soon be joining up.

The Marine Corps immediately called up its 13 women reserve platoons, with 287 enlisted veterans going straight to active duty and 298 non-veterans being sent to Parris Island. This mobilization was characterized by President Harry S. Truman's 19 July call up of all Reserves for active duty, including the Marine Corps' Organized Reserve and Volunteer Reserve.

For women, the Marine Corps had strict standards: an age limit of 18 to 31 (with 20 as the minimum for a regular); single with no dependents; and a high school diploma or its equivalent. Within a year, the eager response had brought the total number of women in the Corps to 2,065.

The flow of recruits led to a battalion of women at Parris Island and a similar company at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and the air base at El Toro, California, by October 1950. There they worked five days, spent a half-

day on instruction in military subjects, and finished off after their evening meal with close order drill. It was not surprising that the vast majority of their assignments were clerical and administrative, given the culture of the 1940s and 1950s, when many civilians, and not a few Marines, believed that a woman's place was in the home. This also was evidenced when family and friends would often try to dissuade young women from enlisting. And then there were some Marines who made life difficult for the women who did join up.

This narrow limitation of assignments for women resulted in their being untrained for billets that needed them, as well as strange anomalies such as a woman private first class filling a master sergeant's billet.

Colonel Towle, alert as always, wrote a pithy memorandum to the powers at Headquarters Marine Corps in January 1951. She stated unequivocally that Marine Corps policies for women were "unrealistic and short-sighted, as well as uneconomical." Thus, there was an urgent need, she continued for a "systematic, long-range training [plan]."

As the number of women grew, so did the range of their activities. At their assigned bases, they organized athletic teams and had a variety of off-duty interests. There was also a modest expansion of duties, with some women now in billets for motor transport, recruiting, photography, air traffic control, public affairs, and base newspapers. A few even made it to duty in Italy and Germany.

With the increase in active duty billets, women reservists with minor-age children were released while, at the same time, applications for active duty rose.

In January 1952, women reserve platoons were reestablished and by the end of the year totaled 14. In addition to basic military subjects, they received individualized training in one of five occupational specialties: administration, supply, classification, disbursing, and communications. Besides regular "drill nights" these women reservists had a two-week summer training period.

In spite of these expanded roles for women in the Corps, billets for officers were still limited to 10 occupational specialties in April 1952. Nevertheless, by May, there

were Women Marine companies at Cherry Point, Camp Pendleton, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, Norfolk, San Diego, and Quantico, with Kaneohe Bay added in 1953.

The year 1953 saw the establishment at Camp Lejeune of a Staff Noncommissioned Officer Leadership School for women. Military occupational specialties available to officers were expanded in March. Three more women reserve platoons had been formed by April.

There was a change of command on 1 May 1953. Colonel Towle had reached the statutory age limit of 55 for colonels, and she had to retire. She had been a superb leader, and a Letter of Commendation from the Commandant and an award of a Legion of Merit medal recognized her achievements.

Her successor as Director of Women Marines was Lieutenant Colonel Julia E. Hamblet. She was a graduate of the first training class for women officers in 1943, and was only 37 years old when, after a wide variety of active duty, she was promoted to colonel in her new assignment.

When she took office, the Korean War was winding down. June 1953 saw a total of 160 women officers and 2,502 enlisted. Then, on 27 July, the war was over.

As one author summed up these years:

The Korean War era witnessed a brief, temporary surge of interest in WMs [Women Marines] on the Corps' part, but it did not result in major, long-term changes in either the women's standing within the Corps or in the duties they were assigned. In the wake of the war their numbers began to decrease, the sense of urgency that surrounded their redux subsided, and WM-related issues were shelved indefinitely. The ambivalence the Corps felt about women in the ranks never really disappeared, even when the war was on the WMs were sorely needed.

Besides these institutional evaluations, there was another vital factor to record, the impact that duty in the Corps had on these women. Their later comments were nearly unanimous: "The best years of my life."

—Captain John C. Chapin, USMCR (Ret)

remained in its former sector, although now under control of I Corps.

The tanks on the main line of resistance occupied fixed positions, functioning mostly as artillery; they shifted as necessary to alternate sites to prevent Chinese gunners from zeroing in on them. The Army division provided armored personnel carriers to haul

food, water, fuel, and ammunition to the tanks. The presence of Marine armor at the front provided a bonus in addition to firepower, for when Chinese artillery ripped up telephone wires leading to the rear, the tank radios ensured reliable communications.

While in reserve, the 1st Marine Division added depth to the I Corps positions by standing ready

to counterattack after occupying any of the back-up lines—like the former Wyoming and Kansas—behind the four divisions manning the main line of resistance: the 25th Infantry Division; the Commonwealth Division; the 1st Republic of Korea Division; and the 7th Infantry Division. In addition, the Marines made improvements to Camp Casey, repaired the



Department of Defense (USMC) A171330

Marines of Company H, 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, set up their tents after moving from the frontlines into corps reserve in the central area of the Casey complex. Although the division had been on line for more than 20 months, there was a reluctance to turn over positions.

back-up positions, especially the former Kansas Line which had been severely damaged by rains and the spring thaw, and embarked on a program of instruction that emphasized night combat and began with the individual and small unit. The larger-unit exercises included the use of helicopters in conjunction with a rifle company, proceeded to regimental landing exercises, and culminated in a field exercise. All of this training, which had to be somewhat curtailed, was to take place before the division returned to the main line of resistance in early July.

Although the spring weather that had damaged the old Kansas Line also turned roads to rivers of mud, the division completed its move to Camp Casey and launched the programs of training and rebuilding. The 5th Marines, the reserve regiment when the division moved off line, under-

went a week of training for an amphibious exercise held at Yongjong-ni, on the west coast near Kunsan. Dense fog forced cancellation of a planned rehearsal that might have highlighted the impact of a shallow beach gradient that grounded landing craft far from shore and complicated the landing of vehicles.

While Colonel Tschirgi's regiment was carrying out this exercise, other elements of the division took part in a combined command post exercise and firing exercise designed to help the division prepare for an Eighth Army exercise, then scheduled for the end of May but later canceled. The 7th Marines landed at the Yongjong-ni training area on 5 June, employing a 144-foot pontoon bridge, supplied by the Army, to speed the movement of vehicles over the shallow-sloping beach. However, the possible need for amphibious

Members of the 81mm mortar platoon, Weapons Company, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, receive refresher instruction on the parts and nomenclature of the 81mm mortar during the eight-week reserve period. Lectures such as this were kept to a minimum with at least 50 percent of the tactical training conducted at night.

Department of Defense (USMC) A171518



A New Commanding General

On 15 June 1953, Major General Randolph McC. Pate took command of the 1st Marine Division, replacing Major General Edwin A. Pollack, who became director of the Marine Corps Educational Center, Quantico, Virginia. A native of South Carolina who spent his boyhood in Virginia, General Pate's military career began in 1918, the final year of World War I, when he enlisted in the Army, serving long enough to qualify for the Victory Medal though he did not fight in France. After graduating from the Virginia Military Institute in June 1921, he accepted in September of that year a commission as a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps Reserve. He received a regular commission in May 1922, afterward carrying out a variety of assignments in the Dominican Republic and China, as well as at posts in the continental United States and Hawaii.

During World War II, General Pate served as supply officer on the staff of the 1st Marine Division at Guadalcanal, where he was wounded, and held other wartime staff positions. After Japan's surrender, he became Director of Reserve at Marine Corps headquarters, served on the Navy's General Board, and held the assignment of Chief of Staff, Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia. While at Marine Corps Schools, he achieved promotion to brigadier general in 1949 and during the following year took over as Director, Marine Corps Educational Center at Quantico.

After an assignment with the Office of Joint Chiefs of Staff as the Joint Staff's Director for Logistics, General Pate returned to Marine Corps headquarters and in August 1952 was promoted to major general, while serving his second tour directing the Marine Corps Reserve. In September of that year, he assumed command of the 2d Marine Division at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. After taking over the 1st Marine Division in June 1953, he commanded the unit for the remainder of the Korean fighting, finally turning the division over to Major General Robert H. Pepper in May 1954.

Upon leaving Korea, General Pate became Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps and Chief of Staff, advancing to the rank of lieutenant general. On 1 January 1956, he received a fourth star and became Commandant of the Marine Corps, succeeding General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr. General Pate served as Commandant for four years, during which the Marine



National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A172239
MajGen Randolph McC. Pate, left, relieves MajGen Edwin A. Pollock in command of the 1st Marine Division. The departing Pollock was presented the Distinguished Service Medal for his "outstanding success in the defense of Carson, Vegas, and Elko."

Corps moved away from the trenches and bunkers and reestablished itself as a highly mobile amphibious force in readiness. Following four years as Commandant, he retired in December 1959 with the rank of general.

Following a brief illness, General Pate died in 1961 and was interred with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery. Pate's military colleagues described him as: "A man of deep sincerity and untiring integrity, who is thoughtful and considerate of others—a true gentleman of the old school."

shipping to repatriate prisoners of war in the event of a truce caused the cancellation of a landing exercise scheduled for the 1st Marines between 14 and 23 June.

Marine aircraft participated in the training program conducted

while the division formed the I Corps reserve. Fighter-bombers covered the landing exercises, for example, and helicopters of HMR-161 landed at Camp Casey for a practice redeployment of two sections of 4.5-inch rocket launchers

from the division's rocket battery, along with infantry from the 5th Marines.

The principal mission of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, although it took part in the training program, remained the support of United



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A169791

While the division was in corps reserve in May and June, the 1st 4.5-inch Rocket Battery supported units manning the main line of resistance, as it had in March when the Marines were fighting to hold Reno, Vegas, and Carson.

Nations ground forces by day and by night. The crews of Marine night fighters, Grumman F7F Tigercats and Douglas F3D Skyknights, learned to take deadly advantage of beams from searchlights along the main line of resistance that illuminated terrain features held by the Chinese, bathing in light those on the near slope and creating an artificial horizon for air strikes against those on the shadowed slope farther from United Nations lines. Artillery, firing time-on-target or variable-time concentrations, blanketed known Chinese antiaircraft batteries within 2,500 yards of a target. At first, this kind of bombardment, usually lasting about

three minutes, effectively silenced the hostile gunners, but with repetition the technique declined in effectiveness, serving to alert the Chinese that an air strike was imminent. Besides providing close air support for the ground forces, Marine night fighters escorted Air Force B-29s on missions against North Korea and flew long-range interdiction.

On the Main Line of Resistance

While infantry, service, and some support elements of the 1st Marine Division repaired the positions that added depth to the I Corps front and underwent training to the rear, the Chinese exerted

renewed pressure on the portion of the main line of resistance that the Marines had formerly held. The enemy struck first at the outposts now held by the Turkish brigade—Berlin and East Berlin, Carson, Elko, and Vegas. Shortly before 0200 on 15 May, advancing behind deadly mortar and artillery fire, one Chinese battalion attacked Berlin and East Berlin, while another hit the Carson-Elko-Vegas complex. The Turks held their ground, thanks in part to accurate fire from Marine tanks on the main line of resistance, which may have inflicted 300 casualties, and from the 11th Marines and the rocket battery, which fired some 5,500 105mm and 155mm howitzer

Events at Panmunjom

The fighting along the combat outpost line, which caused the commanding general of I Corps to shift the 1st Marines into position for a possible counterattack, coincided with resolution of the lingering issue of forced repatriation. By the end of May 1953, the United States was insisting that there be no forced repatriation, as had happened in Europe after World War II when American troops handed over refugees and prisoners of war to Soviet authorities, the representatives of a wartime ally. The alliance that defeated Hitler's Germany soon collapsed, and the Soviet Union emerged as America's principal antagonist in a Cold War that burst into flame in Korea. China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, at first indifferent to the issue, had come to insist on forced repatriation upon realizing how many of their captured soldiers might prefer to remain in South Korea.

In short, both sides faced possible embarrassment. American acceptance of involuntary repatriation would seem a repetition of the transfers of both captives and civilians to Soviet control in the aftermath of World War

II. Widespread refusals to return to China or North Korea would shatter the image of a Communist paradise and lend substance to Western propaganda.

On 25 May, Lieutenant General William K. Harrison of the Army, the senior American delegate at the Panmunjom negotiations, persuaded the Communist side to agree to a closed session. The absence of press coverage, Harrison believed, would prevent posturing designed to influence world opinion and instead focus the attention of the delegates on progress toward a settlement. At this meeting, Harrison declared that there could be no forced repatriation and then offered compromises to make this principle palatable to the Chinese and North Koreans.

The United Nations forces would neither force captured Communist troops to return to their homeland nor simply release them. Harrison proposed instead that soldiers who refused repatriation be turned over, as the Communist delegates desired, to a Neutral Nations Repatriation Committee with representatives of five so-called neutral states—Switzerland and Sweden, with ide-

After a high wind blew down the tents in August 1952, the Communist built a more substantial wooden structure for the armistice meetings at Panmunjom. The white tent on

the left is the Communist delegates' tent, while the two dark ones on the right are the United Nations delegates' tent and press tent.

National Archives Photo (USN) 80-G-482368



ological ties to the West; Poland and Czechoslovakia, Soviet satellites at the time; and India, which followed an often erratic political course determined largely by its own self-interest. To minimize friction among the neutral nations—Poland and Czechoslovakia against Sweden and Switzerland—Indian troops would assume custody of all newly released prisoners seeking asylum.

The Communist side, troubled by the prospect of mass defections, insisted on an opportunity to persuade its soldiers who refused repatriation to change their minds and return. The United Nations, however, feared that persuasion would give way to coercion, and, as a result, Harrison's compromise specifically forbade the threat or use of force and limited the time allotted for reindoctrination to 90 days. Those prisoners who persist-

ed in refusing repatriation would then be turned over to the control of the United Nations General Assembly.

The Communist negotiators demanded certain changes. They called for an additional 30 days for re-education and the elimination of the United Nations General Assembly from the repatriation process, since the international organization, as a belligerent, could not serve as a disinterested guardian of the rights of Chinese or North Korean prisoners. On 4 June, however, the Communist parties accepted the principle of voluntary repatriation, although without formally endorsing it, in return for the additional 30 days of persuasion and the substitution of India's Red Cross organization for the General Assembly as custodian of those prisoners who refused to return to their homelands.

shells and 4.5-inch rockets during four hours of fighting. In addition, the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing flew 21 strikes against Chinese positions threatening the Turkish troops.

Neither the successful Turkish resistance nor the continuing talks at Panmunjom—where negotiators were addressing both the issue of repatriation and South Korean concerns that a truce could place their country at a fatal disadvantage—dissuaded the Chinese from intensifying their offensive. On 25 May, despite signs of real progress in the truce talks, Chinese gunners resumed pounding the Turkish brigade, and three days later, the enemy launched a series of attacks along much of the combat outpost line held by I Corps. At 1800 on 28 May, the enemy's *120th Division* launched simultaneous attacks against Combat Outpost 2, to the east of the Panmunjom Corridor, on Carson, Elko, and Reno, Berlin and East Berlin, and against the Hook and its two outposts, Ronson and Warsaw, these last three held by the British 1st Commonwealth Division.

The major thrusts by the Chinese division sent a battalion, advancing behind a mortar and artillery barrage, against Outposts Carson and Elko, while another battalion took advantage of a

smoke screen to storm Vegas, and a third menaced Berlin and East Berlin. At the same time, still other Chinese troops attacked Combat Outpost 2, on the left of the 25th Infantry Division's sector, and the Hook, along with Outposts Ronson and Warsaw, on the right of the I Corps line.

The 11th Marines, commanded by Colonel James E. Mills—who had taken over from Colonel Harry N. Shea on 22 February 1953—fired some 9,500 rounds during the night of 28 May, and Marine aircraft flew eight strikes against Chinese artillery positions. The Marine division's 4.5-inch rocket battery, now firing from the vicinity of the Hook, supported the Commonwealth Division. Marine tanks, dug-in along the main line of resistance, provided deadly fire from prepared positions, especially in the sector of the Turkish brigade.

The deluge of shells and rockets from Marine weapons helped the 35th Infantry Regiment hold Combat Outpost 2 and the Commonwealth Division to maintain its grip on the Hook, Warsaw, and Ronson. The Chinese, however, succeeded in capturing Carson, although Turkish troops clung stubbornly to Elko and Vegas. The threat to Berlin and East Berlin

abated swiftly, suggesting that the enemy launched the probe to divert attention from the adjacent Carson-Elko-Vegas complex.

Marine air, artillery, and armor continued to support I Corps as the fighting entered a second day. Attack planes and fighter-bombers hit Chinese troops, artillery positions, and supply points by day and night. Additional tanks moved into prepared positions on the main line of resistance until 33 of them supported the Turkish brigade. After Chinese counterbattery fire silenced six Turkish howitzers, the 2d Battalion, 11th Marines, took over the direct-fire mission. By dusk on 29 May, the total rounds fired by Marine howitzers and rocket launchers in defense of the outposts exceeded 40,000.

This intense fire, and the tenacity of the Turkish soldiers who suffered 150 killed and 245 wounded, could not save the Carson-Elko-Vegas complex. By mid-day, Lieutenant General Bruce C. Clarke, the corps commander, and General Williams, in command of the 25th Infantry Division, decided to withdraw from these outposts at least temporarily. Carson had fallen to the Chinese on the previous day, and fewer than 40 survivors continued to resist on Vegas. Since



National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A172204

On 29 May, Col Wallace M. Nelson's 1st Marines move up on foot in full gear to set up a hasty blocking position on the Kansas Line in case of a breakthrough by Communist forces during their attack on 25th Infantry Division outposts.

Elko could not survive if the enemy held both Vegas and Carson, the Turkish troops withdrew to the main line of resistance. By the time the withdrawal took place, the attacking Chinese had lost perhaps 3,000 men but showed no signs of breaking off the action.

In the meantime, General Clarke had ordered the 1st Marines to prepare for a possible counterattack. The regiment's infantry battalions and antitank and heavy mortar companies moved into position just south of the refurbished defenses of the old Kansas Line. In addition, the 1st Marine Division's reconnaissance company came under control of the 25th Infantry Division, replacing a company of that division's 14th Infantry in reserve along the east bank of the Imjin River.

The projected counterattack never occurred. Torrential rains on 30 May frustrated any ambitions the enemy may have had for trying to crack the main line of resis-

tance. Moreover, a truce agreement that seemed on the verge of acceptance dissuaded the United Nations Command from making the obviously costly effort to recapture Carson, Vegas, and Elko.

The Truce in Jeopardy

After the bitter fighting on the outpost line at the end of May, a lull ensued on the I Corps front. The Chinese, however, did not abandon their attempt to improve their military position before a truce should go into effect and lunged instead at the South Korean II Corps, opposite the enemy-held town of Kumsong, attacking on 10 June and in six days of fighting forcing the defenders to pull back some 4,000 yards. A second blow drove the South Korean 20th Division back from the northern rim of the Punchbowl. By the time the fighting died down after 18 June, the South Koreans had suffered some 7,300 casualties, perhaps 600 more than the Chinese

attackers. The enemy, moreover, had pushed the South Koreans back as far as 4,000 yards on segments of the frontlines totaling about 15,000 yards in width. The offensive of mid-June proved the most successful Chinese thrust since April and May 1951 when the enemy penetrated as deeply as 30 miles at some points along the United Nations line.

Even as the negotiators at Panmunjom were resolving the outstanding issues concerning the repatriation of prisoners, Syngman Rhee, the president of the Republic of Korea, became increasingly concerned about the impact of a ceasefire on the survival of his nation. His dream of one Korea unified under the government at Seoul was rapidly vanishing. He had little direct leverage on the Chinese government; his only hope—a slim one, indeed—was somehow to prod his war-weary American ally into turning its back on the Panmunjom negotiations and exerting renewed pressure on the battlefield. To achieve this unlikely end, President Rhee threatened to pull South Korean forces out of the United Nations Command. The threat, however unrealistic, brought a formal American offer to build up the South Korean armed forces and restore the nation's shattered economy, provided that the Seoul government accepted the settlement that was taking shape. Despite his weak bargaining position, the South Korean president ignored the offer and demanded the removal of Chinese forces from the Korean peninsula, along with a formal military alliance with the United States, the recently offered program of military and economic aid, and the stationing of American air and naval forces in South Korea.

When progress continued

The Offshore Islands

American Marines continued to provide essential help in defending the islands off the east and west coasts of the Korean peninsula that were garrisoned by their South Korean counterparts. The two defensive organizations, formerly the East Coast and West Coast Island Defense Commands, were redesignated task units effective 1 January 1953. The 2d Korean Marine Corps Regiment furnished the troops that manned these outposts under the direction of U.S. Marines.

Two battalions of South Korean Marines manned the West Coast Island Defense Task Unit, while the U.S. Marine Corps contributed some 17 officers and 100 enlisted men. The western task unit manned outposts on six islands in close proximity to the 38th Parallel, which had separated prewar South Korea from the Communist North. These islands, from north to south, were Sok-to, Cho-do, Paengyong-do, Taechong-do, Yongpyong-do, and Tokchok-to. An earlier attempt to occupy tiny Ho-do had ended in failure when the Chinese overwhelmed the garrison. The six surviving outposts served as bases for artillery, intelligence collection, the direction of guerrilla operations in North Korea, and training. At some of the



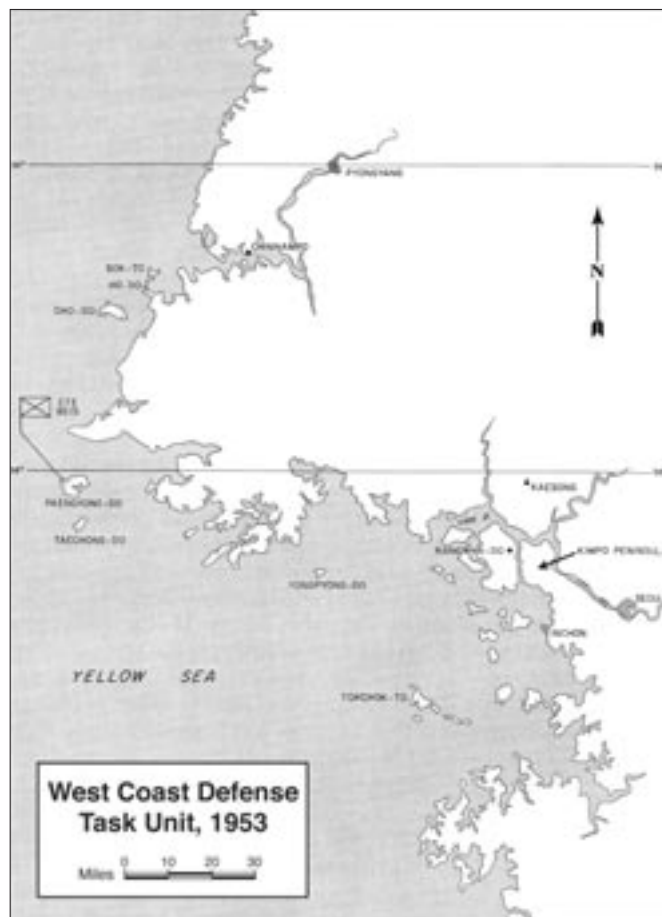
National Archives Photo (USN) 80-G-480993

Two members of the 1st Air and Naval Gunfire Liaison Company spot and correct gunfire laid down against Communist troops by the Dutch frigate Johann Maurits van Nassau.

outposts, the South Koreans used their old-model radios to call down fire from artillery or naval guns against hostile batteries on the mainland. American Marines directed all this activity, although the language barrier hampered their role in training.

Late in 1952, Communist artillery batteries on the peninsula opened fire more frequently against United Nations warships as well as the western island outposts. For counterbattery missions from Cho-do, two 90mm guns supporting a force of South Korean guerrillas were shifted there from the island of Kanghwa-do at the mouth of the Han River. Enemy light aircraft contributed to the increased pressure on the islands, conducting nuisance raids against Cho-do, bombed as recently as October 1952, Sok-to, and Paengyong-do.

Besides using the two artillery pieces available at Cho-do, the guerrillas provided valuable information on enemy activity. The South Koreans reported an increasing number of Chinese junks offshore and identified major military units on the peninsula itself. As the threat of an assault against one or more of the western islands intensified, counterbattery fire from the outposts kept pace, only diminishing when the threat ebbed.

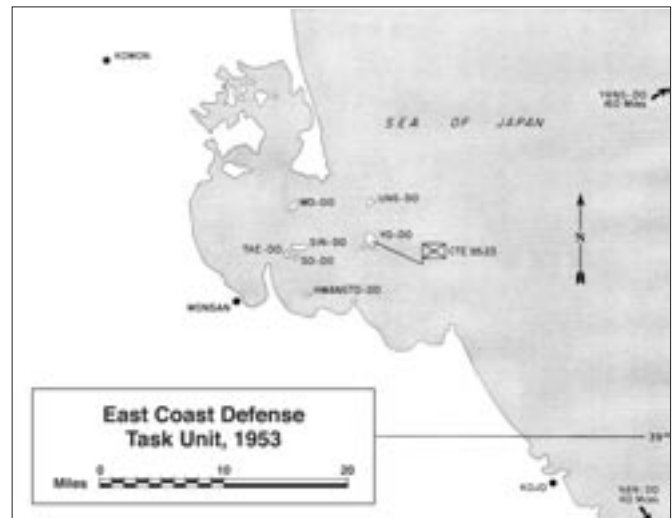


From time to time, American or British pilots, low on fuel or flying damaged aircraft, landed on the beach at Paengyong-do. Unfortunately, obtaining the needed fuel or aircraft parts proved difficult because of tangled and unresponsive lines of supply. Logistics difficulties also posed a threat to the large number of refugees that had found asylum during 1952 on the islands protected by the western task unit. As winter approached, concern mounted that they could not be fed by air or sea and would not survive the cold, but two supply-laden tank landing ships arrived before the seasonal storms began and eased the crisis.

By the spring of 1953, improving prospects for a ceasefire generally along the 38th Parallel raised doubts about the future control of two west-coast islands, Cho-do and Sok-to, which lay north of the demarcation line. Colonel Harry N. Shea, the task unit commander and his successor, Colonel Alexander B. Swenceski, carried out Operation Pandora, a plan for the evacuation of both islands. Artillery on Sok-to and Cho-do—each of which now had its own pair of 90mm guns—pounded enemy batteries along the coast, and warships joined in, including the battleship *New Jersey* (BB 62) with its 16-inch guns. Despite the avalanche of American firepower, the enemy stuck to his guns, firing some 1,800 rounds in June alone. By the end of June, Operation Pandora began the successful withdrawal first of the guerrillas and their families and then of the two island garrisons.

Whereas only two of the islands manned by the western task unit were located north of the 38th Parallel, the most important of those garrisoned by the East Coast Island Defense Unit—Tae-do, So-do, Sin-do, Mod-do, Ung-do, Hwangto-do, and Yo-do—lay just off the North Korean port of Wonsan, more than 100 miles north of the demarcation between the two Koreas. The unit also bore responsibility for two other potentially vulnerable outposts: Yang-do, off the town of Songjin, 150 miles northeast of Wonsan; and Nan-do, near the North Korean town of Kojo, some 40 miles south of Wonsan. A total of 1,270 South Korean Marines, 35 U.S. Marines, and 15 American sailors manned the defense unit. The individual garrisons varied from 300 at Yo-do, the largest of the island outposts and the site of unit headquarters and an airstrip, to the compact naval-gunfire spotting teams on the smallest of the islets off Wonsan.

Like the western islands, those off the east coast—especially the ones nearest Wonsan—endured frequent shelling from batteries on the peninsula. Because Wonsan had been a major port, the ability of the United Nations forces to blockade it served as an affront to the Chinese and North Koreans, as well as a disruption of their coastal supply line. Besides hammering the offshore outposts, hostile gunners fired upon United Nations warships, as they had off the opposite coast. At Wonsan, however, the enemy employed a more efficient fire-control tech-



nique than in the west. When United Nations gun crews on the eastern islands, or warships nearby, fired counterbattery missions against an enemy weapon, it fell silent and other artillery pieces took over the fire mission.

When winter gripped the east coast islands, temperatures dropped to 10 degrees below zero, Fahrenheit, and high winds disrupted the movement of supply ships. The Yo-do garrison, for example, survived on canned rations for a week, and for several days the defenders of Hwangto-do drank water from melted snow. When the weather improved, so did the determination of Chinese artillerymen, who fired more than 1,050 rounds against the island outposts in April 1953 and twice that number against blockading warships. In addition, United Nations sailors sighted 37 floating magnetic mines that month, although the devices caused no damage. This was the greatest number of sightings in any month since the previous summer, when mines sank the tug *Sarsi* (AT 111) off Hungnam and damaged the destroyer *Barton* (DD 722) off Wonsan.

As pressure mounted against the islands near Wonsan, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, increased the size of its contingents at these outposts by some 40 percent, adding nine Marine officers and 44 enlisted Marines and sailors. A new unit commander arrived in the spring of 1953. After a year in charge, Lieutenant Colonel Robert D. Heintz, Jr., entrusted the organization to Lieutenant Colonel Hoyt U. Bookhart, Jr.

Scarcely had this change of command taken place, when preparations began for a withdrawal from the eastern islands after the signing of an armistice. On 11 June, the unit began retrenching by removing South Korean villagers, along with guerrillas and their families, from Yang-do, the farthest north and least defensible of the outposts, and withdrawing noncombatants from Yo-do, the site of the unit headquarters. Withdrawal of the other east coast outposts awaited the signing of the armistice.

toward a truce that he considered disastrous, President Rhee sought to disrupt the negotiations. On 18 June, he ordered the release of some 27,000 Communist prisoners who had refused repatriation, hoping to undo what the negotiators had accomplished in resolving the issue of repatriation. His gambit failed. The People's Republic of China launched additional limited attacks, perhaps in retaliation, but the government in Peiping had grown too weary of the long and bloody war to mount an all-out offensive. Similarly, the United States remained determined to end the Korean fighting, regardless of Rhee's objections. As an American special diplomatic mission made clear, South Korea could expect no more than a security treaty with the United States and a combination of military and economic aid that would include the presence of American troops.

On 24 June, six days after President Rhee tried to sabotage the truce negotiations, Chinese troops attacked the sector held by the South Korean II Corps, focusing on the South Korean 9th Division, which blunted the thrust after the loss of an outpost. On the following day, the enemy hit the South Korean 1st Division, to the right of the Commonwealth Division dug in at the eastern boundary of the sector held by General Clarke's I Corps. Despite fierce resistance, the Chinese overwhelmed three outposts manned by the South Korean 1st Division. Efforts to regain the lost ground halted on the 29th when General Clarke ended a series of gallant but unsuccessful counterattacks, repeating the decision made a month earlier during the fighting for Outposts Carson and Vegas elsewhere on the I Corps front that the cost in lives would be prohibitive.

As it had during the battles of late May, 1st Marine Division's the 4.5-inch rocket battery deployed eastward at the end of June to support the hard-pressed South Koreans dug in to the right of the I Corps line. The battery shifted about 20 miles closer to the action and fired some 25 missions that helped prevent a Chinese breakthrough. So grave was the threat on the right that General Clarke alerted the 7th Marines to stand by to reinforce the South Korean 1st Division, even though Eighth Army policy forbade American units from serving under South Korean command. The crisis abated, however, and the alert of the Marine regiment was canceled within 24 hours. The 1st Regimental Combat Team (less one battalion) of the Korean Marine Corps took over from the 7th Marines and relieved bloodied elements of the South Korean 1st Division.

Marine aviation took part in the fighting during June. Between the

14th and the 17th, when the Chinese made their greatest gains since 1951, American aircraft flew 8,359 sorties, 1,156 of them by Marines. The air war again intensified when the Chinese renewed their attacks. On the last day of June, for example, Marine airmen flew 301 sorties, which included 28 percent of the day's close air support and 24 percent of the interdiction missions.

Marines Return to the Bunkers

The abandonment of the least defensible of the offshore outposts took place as President Rhee was attempting to wrest stronger guarantees of future aid from his American ally, and time was approaching for the return of the 1st Marine Division to the frontline. The release of some 27,000 captured North Korean or Chinese prisoners of war, who sought to remain in the Republic of Korea, and escape attempts by still oth-

A .50-caliber machine gun covers the field of fire across the Han River on the Kimp'o Peninsula. Marines firing the weapon were members of the 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion, which manned bunkers overlooking the river, and in mid-June had to deploy Company A to Ascom City to maintain order among the Chinese and North Korean prisoners.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A170806



ers, had an impact on the Marines in I Corps reserve. The 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion, for example, had to deploy one company to a prisoner of war compound at Ascom City to maintain order after escape attempts there.

By releasing the prisoners of war, the South Korean president caused a temporary suspension of the truce negotiations and persuaded the United States to agree formally to a mutual defense arrangement that maintained American forces in South Korea and provided economic and military aid. Since both the People's Republic of China and the United States were ready to end the fighting, the talks resumed at Panmunjom, where the delegations tried to obtain whatever advantage they could, although without sabotaging prospects for a ceasefire.

During the latter part of June, the 1st Marine Division completed its training and prepared to resume bunker warfare. The major elements that had been in reserve returned to the segment of the main line of resistance that the division formerly held, relieving the Army's 25th Infantry Division. By dawn 7 July, the 7th Marines took over on the right of the division's line and the 5th Marines on the left, while the 1st Marines formed the division reserve, protecting the bridges across the Imjin River and the Marine radar used to direct air strikes.

The tactical situation had changed for the worse since the Marines last occupied this sector. Chinese troops now controlled the three outposts—Carson, Vegas, and Elko—that blocked the best approach to Combat Outposts Berlin and East Berlin, now being taken over by the 7th Marines. As General Pate, the division's commander, immediately realized:

"The loss of Outpost Vegas...placed Berlin and East Berlin in very precarious positions and negated their being supported by ground fire except from the MLR."

The Chinese tried to take advantage of any confusion resulting from the relief of the Army division by General Pate's Marines. On the evening of 7 July, Chinese mortars opened fire upon Outposts Berlin and East Berlin and the nearby portion of the main line of resistance, the area that Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Cereghino's 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, was taking over from Turkish soldiers attached to the 25th Infantry Division. By midnight, assault troops from the Chinese *407th Regiment, 136th Division*, advanced from the vicinity of Hill 190, a frequently used staging area, then moved along the ridgeline broken by Carson, Reno, and Vegas—all of them now in enemy hands—and pounced on Berlin and East Berlin.

At Berlin, Turkish soldiers stayed in place for a time after the Marines arrived, and a patrol dispatched from Lieutenant Colonel Cereghino's battalion to set up an ambush got no farther than the outpost when the enemy struck. The remaining Turks and the newly arrived patrol reinforced the Marines manning Berlin. Higher headquarters soon lost contact with both Berlin and the other embattled outpost.

Because Berlin and East Berlin lay no more than 325 yards from the main line of resistance, their capture could provide the enemy with a springboard for an attack designed to shatter the main defenses. As a result, Cereghino organized a provisional platoon from members of his battalion headquarters and sent the unit to reinforce the main line of resistance. Elements of Companies H

and I, 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, came under Cereghino's operational control and prepared to counterattack if the enemy should break through.

Meanwhile, the mixed force of Marines and Turkish soldiers succeeded in clinging to Outpost Berlin. The Marines at East Berlin succumbed, however, to an overwhelming force that surged up a steep slope and seized the main trench despite stubborn resistance from the outpost itself and accurate fire from the main line of resistance and beyond. Supporting machine guns, mortars, and artillery—deadly though they were—could not save East Berlin.

A squad from Company F, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, unsuccessfully counterattacked Outpost East Berlin at 0415 on 8 July, dispensing with the usual artillery barrage in the hope of achieving surprise. A second force of Marines from Company F moved out at about 0440 to reinforce the squad already committed to attacking East Berlin. Chinese artillery caught the reinforcements in the open and wounded 15 Marines, but the attempted counterattack continued for another hour until the men of Company F received orders to fall back so the 11th Marines could fire a time-on-target concentration against the enemy-held outpost.

The Chinese who overran East Berlin had advanced by way of Reno and Vegas, where additional forces were now gathering to exploit this early success. The 1st 4.5-inch Rocket Battery hammered the assembly areas and also the Chinese attacking Berlin and consolidating their hold on East Berlin. Artillerymen of the 2d Battalion, 11th Marines, fired a time-on-target concentration that shattered an enemy company as it was organizing on captured

Outpost Vegas to continue the attack. During the early morning's fighting, all four battalions of the 11th Marines took part in the firing, along with the seven U.S. Army and Turkish artillery battalions still in the area until the relief of the 25th Infantry Division was completed. These weapons matched their Chinese counterparts almost round for round, and Army and Marine Corps tanks joined the rocket battery and artillery battalions in battering the Chinese.

Despite the savage fighting that erupted at Outposts Berlin and East Berlin on the night of 7-8 July, the Marines succeeded in taking over from the 25th Infantry Division and its Turkish component. The 5th Marines and 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, effected a smooth transition, but Lieutenant

Colonel Cereghino's 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, had to fight at Berlin and East Berlin. Not until 0630 did Cereghino obtain confirmation that East Berlin had fallen, and shortly afterward he learned that Berlin, some 300 yards west of the captured outpost, still survived. He promptly reinforced Berlin insofar as its compact size permitted, dispatching 18 additional Marines and roughly doubling the number of the outpost's American and Turkish defenders.

To recapture East Berlin would require a strong force of infantry supported by intense fire from mortars, tanks, and artillery. At 1000, taking advantage of an artillery and mortar barrage totaling perhaps 1,600 rounds, a reinforced platoon from Company G, 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, and another

from that battalion's Company H—both companies now under Cereghino's operational control—launched the counterattack. The platoon from Company H led the way but encountered an accurate Chinese mortar barrage that pinned the Marines against the barbed wire protecting the main line of resistance and in 15 minutes reduced the force to about 20 men able to fight.

The platoon from Company G advanced through the battered unit and pressed home the counterattack. Shells fired by tanks and artillery exploded immediately in front of the infantrymen, enabling the assault force to reach the main trench on East Berlin and use grenades and small arms fire to kill, capture, or drive off the Chinese. At 1233, the platoon from

Pilots of Marine Fighter Squadron 311, from left, Capt John A. Ritchie, Capt Lenhrew E. Lovette, 1stLt Marvin E. Day, go over their upcoming combat mission step by step. Each must know exactly what to do.

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A346707





National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A171052

Whether on the frontlines or in reserve Marines were paid monthly in Military Pay Certificates, a substitute for U.S. currency used to curb black market activities. With little to spend it on, most Marines saved their money or had allotments taken out.

Company I, reduced to fewer than two-dozen effectives, regained control of the outpost. Another platoon from the same company immediately moved forward to reinforce the survivors.

Throughout the fighting at Berlin and East Berlin, storms had disrupted the movement of supplies by sending the Imjin out of its banks and destroying a bridge. The bad weather also created mud that hampered movement on the battlefield and brought clouds that reduced visibility from the cockpits of supporting aircraft. At about noon on 8 July, however, four Marine F9Fs took advantage of ground-based Marine radar to attack targets a safe distance from East Berlin. Led by the commander

officer of Marine Fighter Squadron 311, Lieutenant Colonel Bernard McShane, the jets dropped five tons of bombs on bunkers and troop concentrations.

The recapture of East Berlin enabled the last of the Turkish troops to withdraw, in effect completing the relief of the 25th Infantry Division. The 11th Marines, commanded after 5 July by Colonel Manly L. Curry, resumed its normal mission of direct support of the 1st Marine Division, as did the 1st Tank Battalion. By 13 July, the company of amphibian tractors that had been guarding prisoners of war at Ascom City rejoined the battalion under the control of the division. The Reconnaissance Company, the Kimpo Provisional

Regiment, and the Korean Marine Corps regiment also returned to the division's control.

Once it returned to the main line of resistance, the 1st Marine Division again assumed operational control over VMO-6 and HMR-161. Cloud cover at first impeded the aerial observers from VMO-6, but they successfully directed four artillery fire missions on 8 July against targets behind enemy lines. On 10 July, Marine helicopters from HMR-161 delivered some 1,200 pounds of rations, water, and other cargo to Marine outposts.

Ten Days of Patrols

Regaining Outpost East Berlin on 8 July, which coincided with the resumption of truce negotiations at Panmunjom, did not end the Chinese pressure on the Marines. After dark on the 8th, Colonel Glenn C. Funk, who had assumed command of the 7th Marines on 27 March, moved a platoon from the regiment's 3d Battalion and four M-46 tanks into position to strengthen the main line of resistance. The tanks had just arrived at Hill 126, an outcropping just to the rear of the battle line, when the Marines heard the sound of trucks from beyond Chinese lines. From the hilltop, the M-46s directed 90mm fire against known Chinese positions, and the noise of truck motors ended. Chinese troops, who meanwhile had advanced from the assembly area on Vegas, probed Outpost Berlin and struck a stronger blow against East Berlin. Fighting raged for almost two hours before fire from mortars, artillery, and tanks forced the enemy to break off the action at about 0315 on the morning of 9 July.

After Lieutenant Colonel Cereghino's Marines ended this latest

threat to East Berlin, the Chinese remained content to jab at the division rather than try for a knockout. Entire days might pass during which Marine aerial or ground observers and patrols saw few, if any, signs of Chinese. The enemy seemed to be improving his tunnels and bunkers instead of venturing out of them to mount an attack. The Marines still underwent sporadic shelling, but the bombardments did not approach in ferocity those of 8 and 9 July.

Mines for a time proved deadlier than artillery and mortars, as on 12 July when these weapons killed four Marines and wounded eight. At least one minefield contained a new type of Russian-designed weapon that could be detonated by pressure or with a trip wire. Most of the fields employed mines familiar to the Marines, types that may have been newly planted or perhaps had lain dormant under the frozen ground and become deadly when the weather grew

warmer and the earth softer.

Although the enemy did not attack on the scale of 7-8 July, Chinese patrols repeatedly clashed all along the division's front with those sent out by the Marines. On the night of 12 July, for example, a 13-man patrol from the 5th Marines encountered a force of Chinese near Outpost Esther, and a combat patrol from the 7th Marines, looking for the enemy near Elko, engaged in an 18-minute firefight.

As the frequency of patrol actions increased, flooding again interfered with the supply effort. On the night of 14-15 July, the Imjin River reached a maximum depth of 26 feet. Only the solidly-built Freedom Bridge, carrying the road to Panmunjom across the swollen stream, could be used until the water subsided.

On the night of 16-17 July, patrols from the 5th Marines engaged in two firefights, suffering no casualties in the first, near

Outpost Hedy, while killing three Chinese and wounding one. The regiment's second patrol of the night ran into an ambush near Hill 90. The Chinese proved more aggressive than in recent days, pinning down the patrol and unleashing a flurry of mortar and artillery fire that wounded every member of a unit sent to help break the ambush. Another group of reinforcements succeeded, however, in reaching the embattled patrol. After two hours of fighting and several attempts to isolate and capture individual Marines, the Chinese withdrew, having suffered 22 killed and wounded. When seven Marines failed to return to the main line of resistance, a platoon from the 5th Marines searched the battle site and recovered six bodies.

The third firefight of the night erupted just after midnight in the sector of the 7th Marines, when a 30-man patrol from Company A, 1st Battalion, was ambushed after it passed through a gate in the barbed wire northwest of Outpost Ava. Between 40 and 50 Chinese, supported by mortars, opened fire with grenades and small arms. After a 15-minute exchange of fire in which as many as 18 Chinese may have been killed or wounded, the ambush party vanished into the darkness. As the Marines from Company A returned through the gate, a head count revealed four men missing. A recovery squad crossed and recrossed the area until dawn drew near but found only three bodies. One Marine from Company A remained missing; three had been killed and 21 wounded.

The actions near Outpost Elko and in front of the Ava gate lent credence to Chinese propaganda. Since the 1st Marine Division returned to the main line of resistance, Chinese loudspeakers had

The never tiring doctors and corpsmen treat the wounded. At the forward aid stations patients are examined and their wounds dressed; few are discharged and most prepared for further evacuation.

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A173337



gone beyond the usual appeals to surrender, on at least one occasion warning of the fatal consequences of going on nighttime patrols. This threat, however, probably reflected a Chinese policy of maintaining overall military pressure after the resumption of truce talks rather than a specific effort to demoralize the Marines.

Whatever the purpose of the enemy's propaganda, the Marine patrols continued. On the night after the ambush of Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, a combat patrol from the regiment's Company C advanced as far as the Ungok hills to silence a machine gun that had been harassing the main line of resistance and, after a successful 20-minute firefight, left a Marine Corps recruiting poster to mark the point of farthest advance. Meanwhile, the Korean Marines had four patrol contacts with the enemy, none lasting more than a few minutes.

The combat outposts like the Berlins, Esther, and Ava had become increasingly vulnerable. By mid-July, General Pate directed his staff to study the possibility of the 1st Marine Division's shifting from a linear defense—the continuous main line of resistance and the network of outlying combat outposts in front of it—to a system of mutually supporting defensive strongpoints that would result in greater depth and density. The Chinese attacks of 7 and 8 July on Berlin and East Berlin served as a catalyst for the study that General Pate launched. As the I Corps commander, General Clarke, later explained, these actions demonstrated that American minefields and barbed wire entanglements had channeled movement between the main line of resistance and the combat outpost lines into comparatively few routes that had become dangerously familiar to

the enemy. As a result, Chinese mortars and artillery could savage the troops using these well-worn tracks to reinforce an embattled outpost, withdraw from one that had been overwhelmed, or counterattack to regain a lost position. Indeed, General Maxwell D. Taylor, in command of the Eighth Army since February 1953, agreed that the enemy could, if he chose to pay the price in blood and effort, overrun any of the existing outposts, and endorsed the concept that General Pate's staff was studying. The change in tactics, however, had not yet gone into effect when the Chinese next attacked the Marine positions, but the new assault forced 7th Marines to adopt, in a modified form, the principles of depth and density that the division commander was suggesting.

When the enemy again attacked, a ceasefire seemed imminent. President Rhee agreed on 11 July to accept American assurances of future support and enter into a truce. By the 19th, the negotiators at Panmunjom seemed to have resolved the last of the major issues. On this very date, however, the Chinese struck.

The Fighting Intensifies

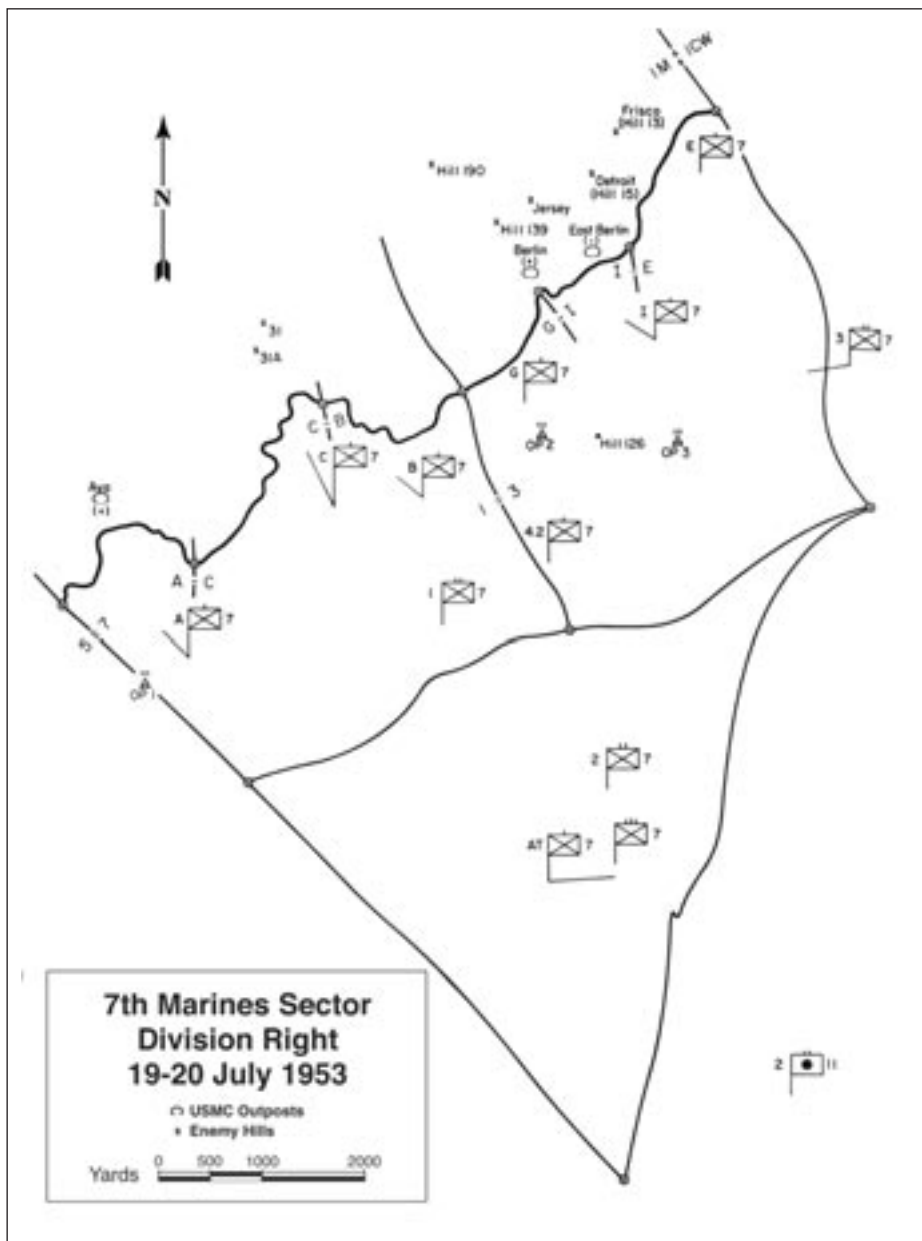
Heavy downpours hampered frontline combat and grounded the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing for a total of 12 days early in July. Rain fell on 22 days that month, but the wing nevertheless reported 2,668 combat sorties, more than half of them flown in close support all along the United Nations line. The airmen supported their fellow Marines on the ground with some 250 missions, four-fifths of them using ground-based radar by night or day.

The weather improved after mid-month, enabling aerial activity

to increase at a critical moment, for on the night of 19-20 July, the Chinese again assaulted Combat Outposts Berlin and East Berlin—now manned by the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, which had relieved Lieutenant Colonel Cereghino's 2d Battalion—and also menaced Outposts Dagmar and Ingrid, held by elements of the 5th Marines. The positions of the 5th Marines held firm, thanks in part to accurate fire from the 11th Marines, but Berlin and East Berlin were in peril almost from the outset.

After a savage bombardment of both Berlins and nearby segments of the main line of resistance, Chinese troops at 2230 on the night of the 19th stormed the ridgeline where the two outposts were located, attacking East Berlin first and Berlin immediately afterward. Company I, 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, commanded by First Lieutenant Kenneth E. Turner, garrisoned both outposts, posting 37 Marines at East Berlin and 44 at Berlin. Mortars, machine guns, howitzers, and 90mm tank guns blasted the advancing Chinese in support of Company I. Despite the firepower massed against him, the enemy overran both outposts within three hours.

A duel between American and Chinese gunners continued after the fall of the two Berlins. The enemy fired some 3,000 rounds while overwhelming the outposts and trying to neutralize the nearby main line of resistance and the artillery batteries behind it. One Turkish and two Army artillery battalions joined three battalions of the 11th Marines—two of 105mm and one of 155mm howitzers—in responding to the Chinese bombardment, battering the assault force, its supporting mortars and howitzers, and the assembly areas used by reinforcements in exploiting the early suc-



severe Marine casualties, there would be no counterattack to restore a position that seemed almost certain to be abandoned when a demilitarized zone took shape after the end of hostilities. Instead, air strikes and fire from tanks and artillery scourged the lost outposts to prevent Chinese from using them to mount an assault on the main defenses. Especially effective were attacks by Marine airmen against Berlin and East Berlin and bombardment by Army 8-inch and 240mm howitzers, adjusted by Marine aerial observers, which shattered bunkers and collapsed almost all the trenches on both enemy-held outposts.

Colonel Jones' 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, estimated that the deadly fighting on 19-20 July had killed perhaps 75 Chinese and wounded as many as 300, thus crippling an enemy battalion that had to be replaced by a fresh unit. The 7th Marines and attached units lost six killed, 118 wounded, and 56 missing, but 12 of the missing men survived as prisoners of war and returned in the general exchange when the fighting ended.

Once the enemy captured Berlin and East Berlin, the critical terrain feature on the right of the sector held by the 1st Marine Division became Hill 119, nicknamed Boulder City, the segment of the main line of resistance nearest the two lost outposts and therefore the likely objective of any deeper Chinese thrust. Company D, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, (attached to the regiment's 3d Battalion) held Boulder City itself. Company E of the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, (also attached to the 3d Battalion) joined Companies H and I of the 3d Battalion in defending the high ground extending from behind Boulder City—although within supporting distance—to Hill 111 at

cess. Barrage and counterbarrage continued into the morning of 20 July; at 0520, for example, Chinese shells were exploding at the rate of one per second on the main line of resistance immediately behind Outposts Berlin and East Berlin.

Meanwhile, at 0400 Lieutenant Colonel Paul M. Jones, in command of the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, alerted Companies D and E of the regiment's 2d Battalion, already under his operational control, to counterattack Berlin and East Berlin at 0730. Half an hour before the scheduled time, Jones

received word to cancel the counterattack. Rather than restore the outpost line, General Pate shifted elements of the division reserve, the 1st Marines, to strengthen the main line of resistance in the event the enemy should try to exploit his capture of the two Berlins.

While Colonel Wallace Nelson's 1st Marines reinforced the main line of resistance, air power and artillery tried to neutralize the outposts the Chinese had captured. Since a ceasefire seemed only days away and any attempt to regain the lost ground would result in

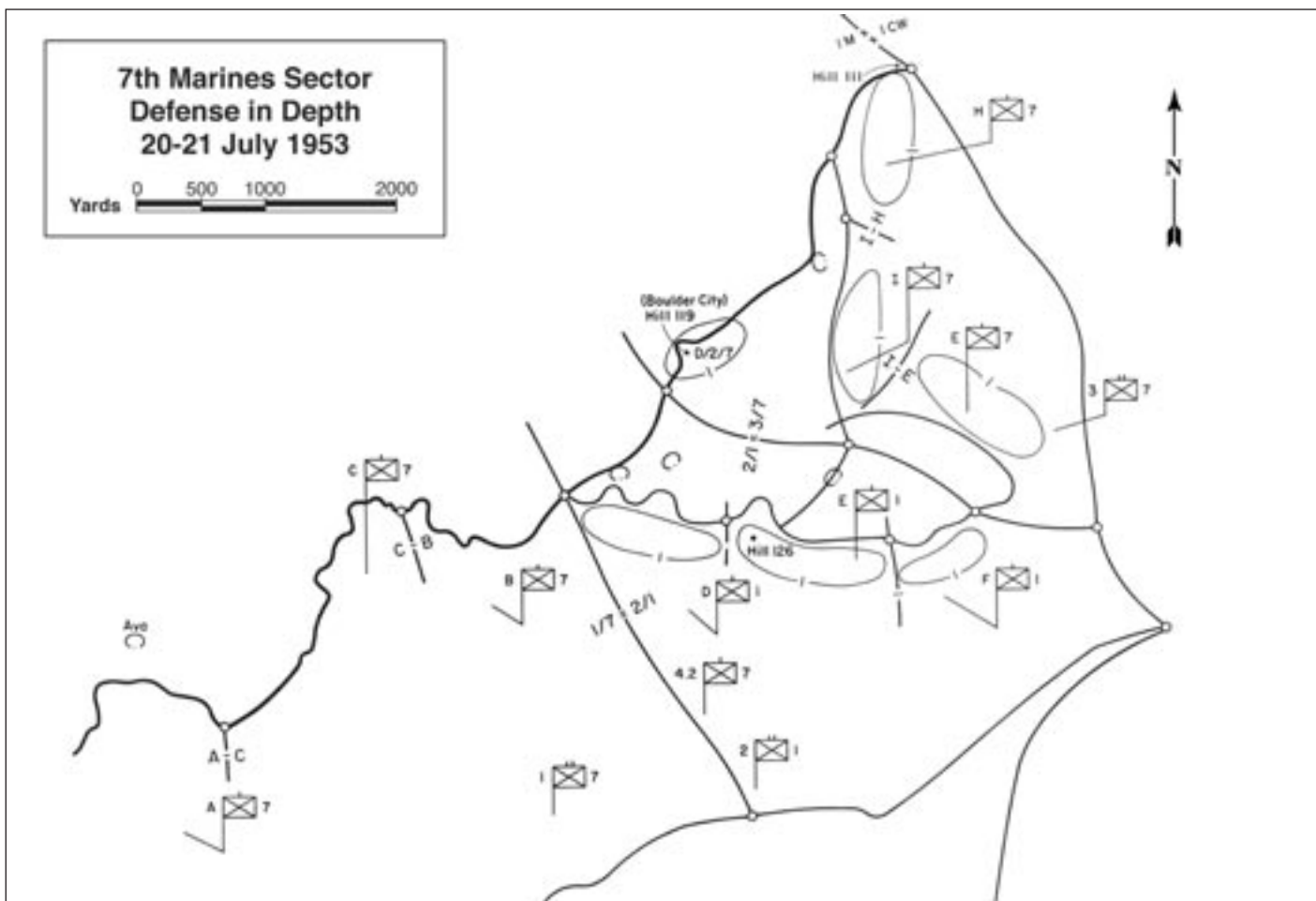


Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A173925

Marines of the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, board armored personnel carriers to be taken to the front. As a result of the critical tactical situation and number of casualties suffered during the Berlin operations, the battalion was positioned in the center of the regimental main line of resistance as the first step in the relief of the 7th Marines.

the boundary between the 1st Marine Division and the Commonwealth Division. The newly-arrived 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, under Lieutenant Colonel Frank A. Long, moved into position between the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, on its right and Lieutenant Colonel Harry A. Hadd's 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, on its left. The 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, served as regimental reserve.

The introduction of Lieutenant Colonel Long's battalion, which came under control of the 7th Marines, served as the first step in a planned relief of the 7th Marines by the 1st Marines. For now, the newly arrived battalion added further depth and density to the main line of resistance, organizing Hill 126 and the other commanding heights in its sector. In effect, three





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A173715

Men of the 1st Marines move toward the frontlines to reinforce other Marines fighting at Hill 119, known informally as Boulder City. Little did they know that they would see the last of the war's heavy fighting.

battalions, rather than the two previously defending the regimental area, formed a crescent of strong-points designed to contain and defeat any offensive launched from Berlin and East Berlin.

In the sector held by the 7th Marines, Outpost Ava, manned by a squad from Company A of the regiment's 1st Battalion, survived on the far left, near the boundary between the 7th and 5th Marines. Boulder City, formerly a component of a continuous main line of resistance, now functioned as an outpost of the reconstituted defenses. By 22 July, Company G, 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, had taken over Boulder City, from the

regiment's Company D, which reverted to the control of its parent battalion, the 2d, in reserve.

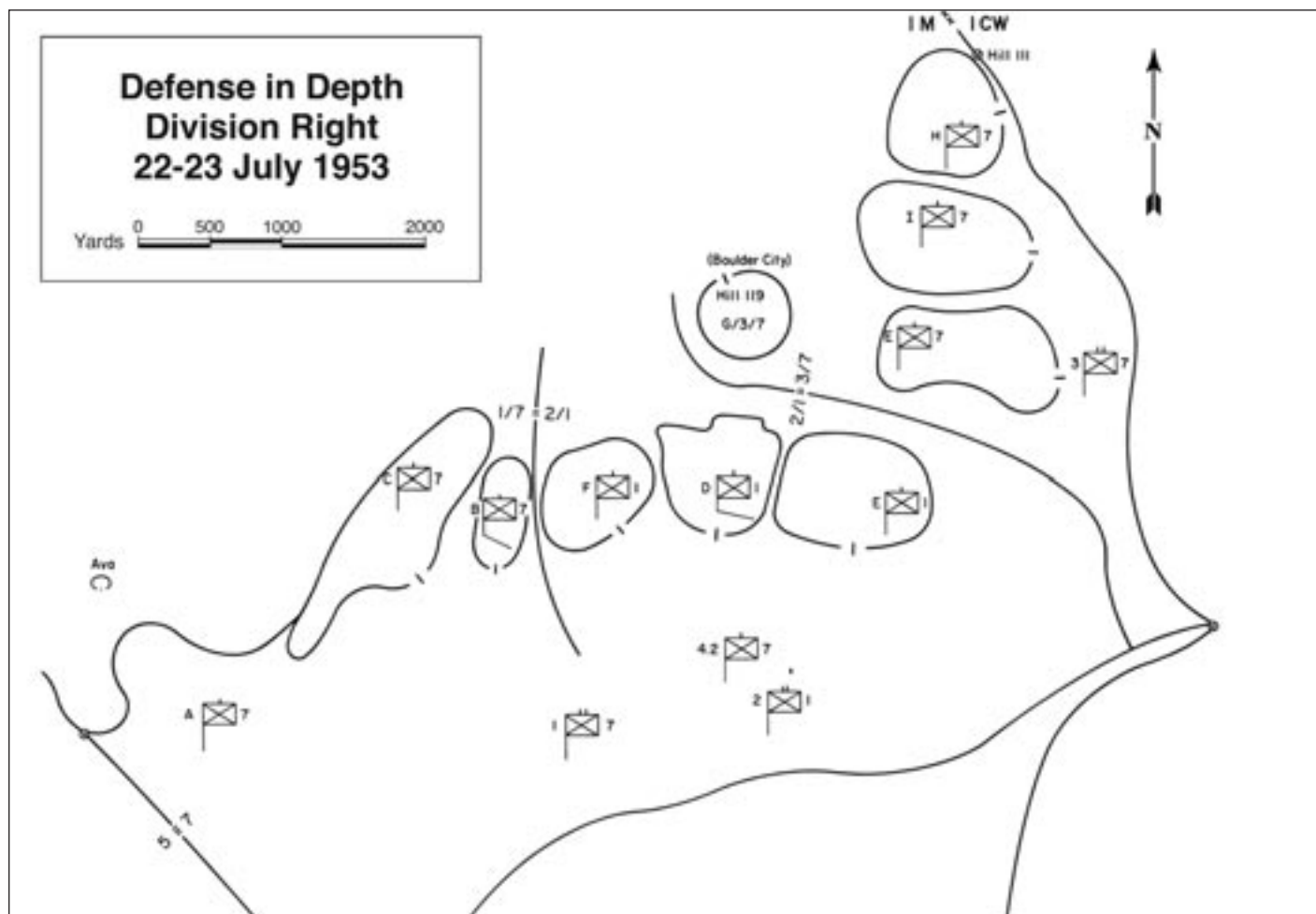
The Last Battle

Signs of an imminent Chinese attack multiplied as July drew to a close. The probable objectives seemed to include Outposts Hedy and Dagmar, but instead of attacking either in force, the enemy sent only a token force, wearing burlap camouflage, that appeared near Hedy on 21 July. The defenders opened fire, killing three of the Chinese, and the survivors fled.

Marine Fighter Squadrons 115 and 311, released by the Fifth Air

Force to support the United Nations troops fighting in central and eastern Korea, joined Marine Attack Squadron 121 in pounding the Chinese threatening the 1st Marine Division. Recurring cloud cover produced frequent downpours that interfered with operations during the critical period of 21-23 July, but the three squadrons nevertheless flew more than 15 radar-directed missions that dropped some 33 tons of bombs.

As the threats to Outposts Hedy and Dagmar abated, Chinese forces menaced Boulder City, where Company G, 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, commanded by First Lieutenant Oral R. Swigart, Jr.,



manned the defenses after relieving Company D, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines. On the evening of 24 July, hostile mortars and artillery began hammering Swigart's perimeter. Marine artillery and 4.5-inch rocket launchers immediately responded against targets that included a Chinese regiment massing behind Hill 139, northwest of enemy-held Outpost Berlin.

At 2030, Chinese troops began probing the right of the 1st Marine Division's line. After a powerful barrage by mortars and artillery, the assault force hit Hill 111 at the far right of the positions held by the 7th Marines, then shifted to Boulder City near the boundary between the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, and the attached 2d Battalion, 1st Marines. As he had on 7 July, when he sought to capitalize on the Marine division's

takeover of the lines of the 25th Infantry Division, the enemy sought to take advantage of the relief of the 7th Marines by the 1st Marines.

When the Chinese attack began, the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, attached to the 7th Marines, had already taken over positions that included Boulder City. The 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Roy D. Miller, was relieving the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, as Company H took over Hill 111 and Company G defended the critical ground at Boulder City.

At about 1930 on 24 July the enemy attacked Hill 111 and soon cracked the perimeter now manned by Company H of Miller's battalion. For about 50 minutes, the Chinese clung to a salient on the hilltop, but then withdrew. After

this flurry of action, apparently intended to divert attention from Boulder City, the enemy ignored Hill 111 until the morning of 25 July, when artillery fire battered the perimeter but no infantry assault followed.

The two Chinese battalions attacking on the Marine right had their greatest success at Boulder City, seizing a portion of the trenchline defended by Company G, 3d Battalion, 1st Marines. In an attempt to exploit this foothold, the enemy attacked the Berlin and East Berlin gates, passages through the wire that the Marines had used to supply and reinforce the two outposts before both were overwhelmed. Cloud cover prevented aerial observers from supporting the troops protecting the gates, and the Chinese managed to gain control of Berlin gate and

Second Lieutenant Raymond G. Murphy

An ardent athlete with a major in physical education, Murphy was born in Pueblo, Colorado, in 1930, and was commissioned in the Marine Corps Reserves in 1951. In Korea, he was awarded a Silver Star Medal for his actions on 22 November 1952 in assaulting an enemy strongpoint. Then his heroism, again as a platoon commander with Company A, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, on 3 February 1953, resulted in a Medal of Honor with a citation, which read in part:

Undeterred by the increasing intense enemy fire, he immediately located casualties as they fell and made several trips up and down the fire-swept hill to direct evacuation teams to the wounded, personally carrying many of the stricken Marines to safety. When reinforcements were needed by the assaulting elements, Second Lieutenant Murphy employed part of his unit as support and, during the ensuing battle, personally killed two of the enemy with his pistol. With all the wounded evacuated and the assaulting units beginning to disengage, he remained behind with a carbine to cover the movement of friendly forces off the hill and, though suffering intense pain from his previous wounds, seized an automatic rifle to provide more firepower when the enemy reappeared in the trenches.

After the war, he joined the Reserves and was discharged as a captain in 1959.

Hospital Corpsman Francis C. Hammond

Born in 1931, Hammond enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1951. Assigned to the Marine Corps as a "Hospitalman," he gave his life at Sanae-dong, Korea, serving with Company C, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, on 26 March 1953. His Medal of Honor citation reads, in part:

Hospitalman Hammond's platoon was subjected to a murderous barrage of hostile mortar and artillery fire, followed by a vicious assault by onrushing enemy troops. Resolutely advancing through the veritable curtain of fire to aid his stricken comrades, Hospitalman Hammond moved among the stalwart garrison of Marines and, although critically wounded himself, valiantly continued to administer aid to the other wounded throughout an exhausting four-hour period. When the unit was ordered to withdraw, he skillfully directed the evacuation of casualties and remained in the fire-swept area to assist the corpsmen of the relieving unit [Company F, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines] until he was struck by a round of enemy mortar fire and fell, mortally wounded.

After the war, a school in his hometown of Alexandria, Virginia, a medical clinic at Camp Pendleton, California, and the Knox-class destroyer *Francis Hammond* (DE 1067) were named in his honor.

—Captain John C. Chapin, USMCR (Ret)



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A49767



Navy Medicine Photo Collection

mount a second determined assault on the Boulder City perimeter. Hand-to-hand fighting raged all along the 700 yards of trench that Lieutenant Swigart's Marines still held. The company's ammunition ran low, and the plight of casualties became increasingly difficult as Chinese fire killed two of Boulder City's eight corpsmen and wounded

most of the others. By midnight, Swigart's company could muster no more than half its earlier strength, but it still clung to the rear slope of Boulder City. In the words of one of Company G's Marines, "only a never-say-die resistance was keeping the enemy from seizing the remainder of the position."

Casualties had further eroded

the strength of the Boulder City garrison, when Captain Louis J. Sartor, at 15 minutes after midnight on the morning of the 25th, led Company I, 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, toward the hill to reinforce Swigart's survivors. The Chinese intercepted and correctly interpreted the coded radio message ordering Sartor's Marines forward, thus obtaining information

that enabled enemy artillery and mortars to wound or kill about a third of the reinforcements. Despite the deadly barrage, much of Company I reached Boulder City, joined forces with the remnants of Swigart's garrison, and took part in a counterattack led by

Captain Sartor that recaptured the hill by 0330. Further reinforcements from Company E, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, and Company E, 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, arrived by 0530 to consolidate the position. A few Chinese, however, continued to

cling to positions on the slopes nearest their main line of resistance.

Since the enemy still controlled the approaches to Boulder City, he was able to mount another attack on that position at 0820, 25 July. Fire from Marine mortars and

Hospital Corpsman Third Class William R. Charette

A native of Ludington, Michigan, Charette was born in 1932 and enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1951. For his actions during the early morning hours of 27 March 1953 in the Panmunjom Corridor, while attached to Company F, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, he was recommended for and later received the Medal of Honor. His citation reads, in part:

When an enemy grenade landed within a few feet of a Marine he was attending, he immediately threw himself upon the stricken man and absorbed the entire concussion of the deadly missile with his body. Although sustaining painful facial wounds, and undergoing shock from the intensity of the blast which ripped the helmet and medical aid kit from his person, Hospital Corpsman Third Class Charette resourcefully improvised emergency bandages by tearing off part of his clothing, and gallantly continued to administer medical aid to the wounded in his own unit and to those in adjacent platoon areas as well. . . . Moving to the side of another casualty who was suffering excruciating pain from a serious leg wound, Hospital Corpsman Third Class Charette stood upright in the trench line and exposed himself to a deadly hail of enemy fire in order to lend more effective aid to the victim and to alleviate his anguish while being removed to a position of safety.

Miraculously surviving his wounds, he rose to the rank of master chief hospital corpsman before retiring in 1977. A hospital facility at the Naval Medical Center, Portsmouth, Virginia, is named for Corpsman Charette.

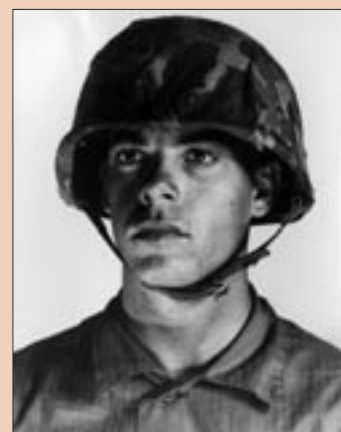


Navy Medicine Photo Collection

Sergeant Daniel P. Matthews

Born in Van Nuys, California, in 1931, Matthews enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1951. After completing recruit training he was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 3d Marines, at Camp Pendleton, California. He sailed for Korea in January 1953, joining Company F, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines. On 28 March 1953 he was killed in a counterattack on Vegas Hill. His Medal of Honor citation reads, in part:

Sergeant Matthews fearlessly advanced in the attack until his squad was pinned down by a murderous sweep of fire from an enemy machine gun located on the peak of the outpost. Observing that the deadly fire prevented a corpsman from removing a wounded man lying in an open area fully exposed to the brunt of the devastating gunfire, he worked his way to the base of the hostile machine-gun emplacement, leaped onto the rock fortification surrounding the gun and, taking the enemy by complete surprise, single-handedly charged the hostile emplacement with his rifle. Although severely wounded when the enemy brought a withering hail of fire to bear upon him, he gallantly continued his valiant one-man assault and, firing his rifle with deadly effectiveness, succeeded in killing two of the enemy, routing a third and completely silencing the enemy weapon, thereby enabling his comrades to evacuate the stricken Marine to a safe position. [He died of] his wounds before aid could reach him.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A76499

—Captain John C. Chapin, USMCR (Ret)

Staff Sergeant Ambrosio Guillen

Born in La Junta, Colorado, in 1929, Guillen grew up in El Paso, Texas; he enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1947. After sea duty and serving as a drill instructor at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, he was assigned as a platoon sergeant with Company F, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, in Korea. He died of wounds incurred near Songuch-on 25 July 1953. Ironically, the ceasefire was signed two days later. His Medal of Honor citation reads, in part:

With his unit pinned down, when the outpost was attacked under cover of darkness by an estimated force of two enemy battalions supported by mortar and artillery fire, he deliberately exposed himself to the heavy barrage and attacks to direct his men in defending their positions and personally supervise the treatment and evacuation of the wounded. Inspired by his leadership, the platoon quickly rallied and engaged the enemy force in fierce hand-to-hand combat. Although critically wounded during the course of the battle, Staff Sergeant Guillen refused medical aid and continued to direct his men throughout the remainder of the engagement until the enemy was defeated and thrown into disorderly retreat.

A middle school in El Paso, Texas, is named for Staff Sergeant Guillen.

—Captain John C. Chapin, USMCR (Ret)



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 407003

artillery, and from the 90mm weapons of 10 tanks dug in on the Marine positions, played the key role in breaking up the new assault, although the last of the attackers did not withdraw until afternoon. The M-46 tanks proved deadly against advancing Chinese troops, but also presented an inviting target for Chinese artillery and mortar crews, who directed some 2,200 rounds at the armored vehicles. Aircraft also helped repulse the 25 July attack on Boulder City, as when Panther jets flew nine missions, guided by Marine radar on the ground, against hostile positions threatening Boulder City and nearby defensive strong-points.

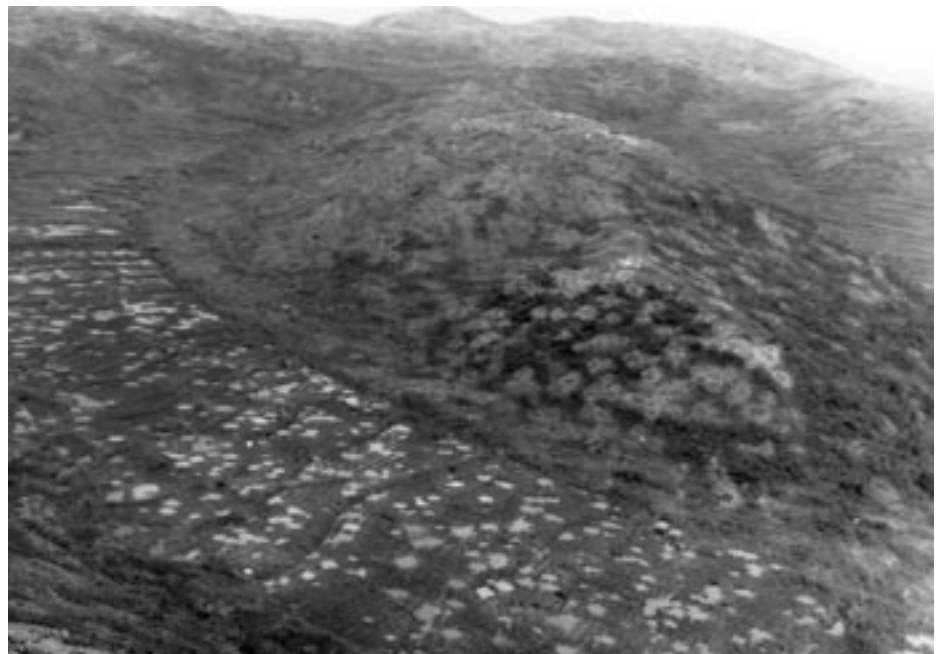
Before midnight on 24 July, in an attack perhaps loosely coordinated with the thrust at Boulder City, Chinese forces hit the positions held by the 5th Marines. After probing the defenses of Outposts Dagmar and Esther, the enemy concentrated against the latter, manned by elements of Company H, 3d Battalion, 5th Marines. The Chinese tried to isolate Outpost

Esther by shelling and patrolling the routes leading there from the main line of resistance and succeeded in overrunning outer portions of the perimeter. The defenders, commanded by Second

Lieutenant William H. Bates, prevailed because of the skillful use of their own weapons, including flamethrowers and the support of mortars, machine guns, tanks, and the always-deadly artillery. The 3d

Aerial view of the pockmarked terrain in front of Boulder City taken from an HMR-161 helicopter. Although the monsoon rains of July limited normal support missions, when weather conditions cooperated planes of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing worked from morning to sundown unleashing tons of ordnance on Chinese positions seen just beyond the Marine sector of the line.

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A173886





National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A173809

A Marine holds a wounded buddy onto an armored personnel carrier being brought to the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines aid station during the heavy fighting in the Berlin sector.

Battalion, 11th Marines, fired 3,886 rounds against Chinese troops attacking Outpost Esther, and hostile gunners matched this volume of fire. The Marines suffered 12 killed and 98 wounded in the fighting that began at Dagmar and continued at Esther, while Chinese casualties may have totaled 195 killed and 250 wounded.

Dawn on 26 July brought a lull in these last battles. Chinese attempts to revive their attack by infiltrating reinforcements through the site of Outpost Berlin failed, thanks to accurate fire from Marine riflemen and machine gunners. The 1st Marines completed its relief of the 7th Marines at 1330. That night,

the enemy probed Boulder City for the last time, sending a patrol from captured Outpost Berlin that failed to penetrate the defensive wire and shortly after midnight dispatching another platoon that prowled about before Marine fire repulsed it.

Although the last of the Chinese attacks seized Outposts Berlin and East Berlin, they failed to wrest Boulder City from its Marine defenders. Had the enemy captured Boulder City, he might have exploited it and seized the high ground to the south and east, from which he could have fired directly into the rear areas that sustained the 1st Marine Division in its positions

beyond the Imjin River. In fighting the Chinese to a standstill during July 1953, the division suffered 1,611 casualties—killed, wounded, and missing—the most severe losses since October 1952 when savage fighting had raged at Outposts Carson, Reno, and Vegas, and on the Hook. Chinese losses during July 1953 may have exceeded 3,100.

The Final Patrols

During the last few nights of combat in July, Marines continued patrolling aggressively, even though a truce was fast approaching. *The Last Parallel*—a wartime

memoir by Martin Russ, a corporal in Company A, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, in July 1953—describes an action that took place just before the truce, as the 1st Marines was taking over from the 7th Marines. A Lieutenant from Company A, 7th Marines, led a 30-man combat patrol, made up of men from Companies A of both regiments, that set out from Outpost Ava near midnight and

crossed a rice paddy on the way to raid Chinese positions on the Hill 104. A reconnaissance probe, which had preceded the raiding party, reported the presence of Chinese on the approaches to the objective.

The route to Hill 104 followed a trail flanked by waist-high rice, growth that not only impeded off-trail movement, but also might conceal a Chinese ambush. The

soft muck in which the rice thrived provided poor support for some types of mines, thus reducing one threat to the patrol, but moving through the paddy would have snapped the brittle rice stalks and created noise to alert any lurking ambush party. Balancing less noise against greater danger from mines, the Marines decided to follow the trail.

The patrol's point man, as he approached the far end of the rice paddy, found a trip wire stretched across the trail and followed it to a Russian-built, antipersonnel mine attached to a stick thrust deep into the mud and aimed to scatter deadly fragments low across the surface of the trail. The patrol halted, bunching up somewhat as the members tried to see why the lieutenant was moving forward to confer with the point man. At this moment, Chinese soldiers crouching hidden in the rice opened fire from as close as 50 feet to the Marines.

The fusillade wounded the patrol leader and within 10 seconds killed or wounded nine of the first 10 men in the patrol. Dragged into the paddy by members of the ambush party, the lieutenant disappeared until he surfaced in the exchange of prisoners after hostilities ended. The point man proved luckier, however, hurling himself to the ground as soon as he realized what was happening, finding cover beside the trail, and escaping injury. From the rear of the patrol, the other survivors fired at the muzzle flashes of the Chinese weapons. Marine firepower prevailed, silencing the enemy after five or so minutes, although not before six members of the patrol had been killed, 14 wounded, and the wounded lieutenant carried off as a prisoner. The survivors regrouped and moved forward, retrieving as many

Two members of the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, quickly clean a semi-automatic M-1 carbine with grenade launcher after firing in support of a night patrol. A third Marine take a break in one of the sandbagged culverts, which provided overhead cover along the trenchline.

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A173671





National Archives Photo (USN) 80-G-625731

Flanked on the left by Gen Otto P. Weyland, USAF, commanding general of Far East Air Forces, and on the right by VAdm Robert P. Briscoe, Commander, Naval Forces Far East, and VAdm Joesph J. Clark, Seventh Fleet commander, Gen Mark W. Clarke, commander in chief of United Nations forces, countersigns the armistice agreement at Munsan-ni.

as they could of the dead and wounded. A half-dozen Marines covered the patrol's withdrawal, preventing the Chinese from encircling the group. When the men who had helped evacuate the wounded returned from the aid station and reinforced the firepower of the hastily formed screening force, the Chinese vanished into the night.

The Marines kept up their patrolling until the moment the truce took effect. On the night of 27 July, according to Martin Russ, his company sent out a patrol sched-

uled to return shortly before the fighting would end at 2200. As the Marines prepared to move out, Chinese mortars fired on Outpost Ava, through which the patrol staged, and nearby portions of the main line of resistance. The bombardment wounded five members of the patrol and two of the Marines defending the outpost.

The patrol returned as planned, and at 2200, Russ, who was not a member, watched from the main line of resistance as white star clusters and colored flares cast a pulsating light that set the shad-

ows dancing in ravines and paddies and on hillsides, while the final shells fired in the 37-month war exploded harmlessly. As Russ described the scene:

A beautiful moon hung low in the sky like a Chinese lantern. Men appeared along the trench, some of them had shed their flak jackets and helmets. The first sound we heard was the sound of shrill voices.... The Chinese were singing. A hundred yards or so down the trench, someone



National Archives Photo (USN) 80-G-626455

Marines take a well-deserved rest after word of the armistice is passed. Less than 24 hours after the signing of the armistice, Marine units began withdrawing from the Demilitarized Zone to their new battle positions.

was shouting the Marine Corps Hymn at the top of his lungs. Others joined in bellying the words. All along the battle line, matches flared and cigarettes glowed, but no snipers peered through telescopic sights to fire at these targets. The war had ended.

After the Ceasefire

The ceasefire agreement, which was signed on the morning of 27 July and went into effect 12 hours later, required that both the United Nations forces and the Communist enemy withdraw from the most advanced positions held when the fighting ended. In effect, the abandoned area formed the trace of a Military Demarcation Line, as the opposing armies fell back 2,000 yards to organize new main battle positions, thus creating the 4,000-yard Demilitarized Zone between them. The Marines built as they destroyed, evacuating certain portions of the old main line of resistance, giving up some of its

outposts, and dismantling fortifications simultaneously with their construction of the new line and its mutually supporting strongpoints.

A No-Fly Line supplemented the controls imposed by the Demilitarized Zone. Restrictions on the movement of aircraft applied throughout the Demilitarized Zone and in a corridor extending from the vicinity of Panmunjom to Kaesong. Only helicopters could fly beyond the No-Fly Line, provided they remained 500 yards from the Military Demarcation Line.

Establishing the Demilitarized Zone

The armistice document set a timetable for the creation of the Demilitarized Zone. Within 72 hours after the ceasefire went into effect, the combatants were to remove “all military forces, supplies, and equipment” and report the location of “demolitions, minefields, wire entanglements, and other hazards” capable of impeding

the safe movement of the organizations that would oversee the armistice—the Military Armistice Commission, its Joint Observer Teams, and the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission. For 45 days following the initial 72 hours, the parties to the ceasefire would salvage the materials still in the designated Demilitarized Zone, using only unarmed troops for the task. Meanwhile, during the 10 days after 27 July, Chinese or North Korean troops took over all offshore islands, east coast and west, that lay north of the 38th Parallel. The United Nations retained control of Taechong-do, Paengyong-do, Sochong-do, and Yongpyong-do, along with U-do, Tokchok-to, and Kangwha-do, all of them off the west coast and south of the demarcation line.

Since the agreement of July 27 called for a truce rather than peace—indeed, it sought to ensure a cessation of hostilities until “a final peaceful settlement is achieved”—the possibility existed that the fighting might resume. Despite the shower of flares and the singing that marked the moment the truce went into effect, some battle-tested Marines fully expected a Chinese attack in the hours after the ceasefire. As the skies lightened on the morning of 28 July, Chinese commanders obtained permission to recover the bodies of their men killed in the final assaults on Marine positions. The sight of “the enemy moving around within a stone’s throw of our front lines” underscored the possibility of renewed attacks, but nothing happened, and as the morning wore on, it became obvious that the truce was holding—at least for the present.

Like the Chinese, the Marines used the first morning of the ceasefire to recover the bodies of men killed in recent days. Most of



National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A173878

Following the armistice, the commanding general of the 1st Marine Division, MajGen Randolph McC. Pate, his chief of staff, Col Lewis W. Walt, and the commanding officer of the 1st Marines, Col Wallace M. Nelson, survey the aftermath of the battle for Boulder City.

the dead had fallen at Hill 111 and Boulder City. By the end of the day, all the bodies had been retrieved and were on the way to the rear.

In the three days immediately after the armistice took effect, some 50 companies of Marine infantry, both American and South Korean, began dismantling the old defenses, with the help of elements of the division's engineers. Working day and night—taking frequent breaks during the day-time heat, sleeping during the three hours after noon when the heat was most enervating, and

using portable lighting to take advantage of the comparative cool of the night—the Marines and the Korean service troops helping them removed supplies and ammunition, tore apart bunkers, and stacked the timbers for shipment to the new battle line. Some of the work parties treated the bunkers like trenches and filled them with earth, which then had to be shoveled out to provide access to the salvageable timbers.

Dismantling the old battle line required the removal of some structures on elements of both the combat outpost line and the main

line of resistance, while at the same time building the new main battle position and sealing off the Demilitarized Zone that the truce established between the contending armies. Some of the former Marine outposts like Bunker Hill, Esther, and Ava lay north of the Military Demarcation Line. As a result, the Marines could be sure of having access to them only during the 72 hours after the ceasefire began. Moreover, anything salvaged from Bunker Hill or nearby Outpost Hedy had to travel over a primitive road described as “particularly tortuous,” which made the transfer

"of first the ammunition and then the fortification materials a physical ordeal." Further complicating the dismantling of these distant outposts, a horde of reporters, photographers, and newsreel cameramen arrived, eager to record the activity of both the Marines and the Chinese soldiers who could be seen tearing down their own defenses on nearby ridgelines or hilltops.

Salvaging building materials proved to be hard work, whether tearing apart structures on the combat outpost line or on the main line of resistance. The picks, shovels, and steel pry bars available to the infantrymen could not remove timbers, measuring up to 12 inches square and secured by

spikes 10 to 24 inches long, that formed the skeleton of bunkers measuring perhaps 12 by 20 feet. Wherever possible bulldozers bore the brunt, but heavy trucks fitted with power winches and even tow trucks helped out, as did medium tanks, their guns removed so they could enter the demilitarized area. The Marines found that the fastest method of dismantling a bunker was to uncover it, winch it out of its hole, and bounce it down the hill it had guarded.

Once the bunker had been disassembled, the Marines manhandled the timbers onto vehicles, usually several two-and-one-half-ton trucks, although heavier vehicles saw service during the first 72 hours until the ban took effect on

disarmed tanks, tank retrievers, and other vehicles that fit the armistice agreement's imprecise definition of "military equipment." Fortunately, two-and-one-half-ton trucks could still be used over the next 45 days, although restricted to designated routes of access into the Demilitarized Zone.

As the dismantling of the abandoned defenses went ahead on schedule, the 1st Marine Division moved into its new positions, a transfer completed by the morning of 1 August. The main battle position, to the rear of the former line, consisted of a succession of strongpoints. From the division's right-hand boundary near the Samichon River, the new line formed a misshapen arc encom-

Marines begin the task of dismantling bunkers on the abandoned main line of resistance after the ceasefire went into effect on 27 July. Trenchlines were filled in, tank slots bull-

dozed under, and usable timber carried to salvage collection points.

National Archives Photo (USN) 80-G-626370



passing the town of Changdan on the north bank of the Imjin River and the bridges across that stream. The main battle position then crossed to the south bank of the Imjin, which it followed to the conflux of that river and the Han before shifting to the Han's south bank and continuing westward. The 5th Marines occupied the ground north of the Imjin, organizing strongpoints that in effect functioned as an outpost line for the rest of the division. The 7th Marines dug in south of the Imjin and the 1st Marines provided a reserve. The South Korean Marines formed the left of the line, south of the Imjin and along the Han.

From the end of the 72-hour period until the 45-day deadline of 13 September, the infantry companies north of the Imjin sent out each day work parties of from 25 to 100 men to finish the salvage effort begun immediately after the ceasefire took effect. By the time the task ended, the 5th Marines had retrieved some 12 tons of miscellaneous equipment, 2,000 miles of telephone line, 2,850 rolls of barbed wire and 340 of concertina wire, 19,000 pickets for use with the wire, 339,000 sand bags, and 150,000 linear feet of timber. Most of the salvaged items were incorporated on the positions being built by the regiment to defend the bulge north of the Imjin.

Maintaining Order in the Demilitarized Zone

At the outset of its salvage operation, the 5th Marines marked the adjacent portion of the Demilitarized Zone and began controlling access to it. After constructing a so-called No-Pass Fence some 200 yards south of the near edge of the Demilitarized Zone, the regiment marked the fence with warning signs, engineer tape, and panels



Department of Defense Photo (USMC)
Marine Sgt Richard J. Thompson checks in on his radio at one of the checkpoints throughout the 1st Marine Division's front while patrolling the buffer zone south of the line of demarcation.

visible from the air. Next, the 5th Marines established 21 crossing stations into the Demilitarized Zone, each one manned by at least two Marines who denied access to anyone carrying weapons or lacking authorization. As the work of salvaging material drew to a close, the regiment closed the crossing stations it no longer needed.

Each person entering the Demilitarized Zone through the area held by the 5th Marines had to show a pass issued by the regi-

ment. The salvage operation generated heavy traffic, especially in its earlier stages; indeed, vehicles passed through the crossing stations more than 3,500 times. After 13 September, when the salvage project ended, I Corps assumed responsibility for issuing passes.

Controlling access through its lines to the Demilitarized Zone and maintaining order there became continuing missions of the 1st Marine Division. The ceasefire
(Continued on page 68)

The Prisoners Return

Like the earlier exchange of sick and wounded prisoners, Operation Little Switch, the process of repatriation following the ceasefire took place within the sector held by the 1st Marine Division. Because the final exchange, appropriately named Big Switch, involved more than 10 times the number repatriated earlier, the medical facilities used in April could not meet the new challenge. A large Army warehouse at Munsan-ni, converted into a hospital by Marine engineers, replaced the old treatment center. A newly created administrative agency, the Munsan-ni Provisional Command, assumed overall responsibility for Big Switch, with the 1st Marine Division carrying out the actual processing.

When Operation Big Switch got underway on 5 August, a Marine receipt and control section, functioning as part of the provisional command, accepted the first group of prisoners at Panmunjom, checked them against the names on a roster the captors had submitted, and began sending them south along the Panmunjom Corridor. Returnees not in need of immediate medical care boarded ambulances for the drive to the Freedom Village complex at Munsan-ni. Those requiring prompt or extensive care were flown to Freedom Village in Marine helicopters; the most serious cases were then rushed either to hospital ships off Inchon or directly to hospitals in Japan.

Ambulances carrying sick and wounded United Nations prisoners of war arrive at Freedom Village. The seriously

Besides helping evacuate the sick or wounded, Marine helicopters played the principal role in an airlift designed to placate President Rhee, who believed that India's refusal to send troops to help defend his nation demonstrated support for North Korea and China. The United States sought to ensure his cooperation with Big Switch by promising that no Indian troops would set foot on South Korean soil. As a result, the Indian contingent involved in taking custody of the prisoners who refused repatriation flew by helicopter from ships anchored in Inchon harbor to a camp in the Demilitarized Zone.

Processing the Freed Prisoners

At Freedom Village—South Korea operated a Liberty Village for its returnees—the newly freed prisoners underwent a medical evaluation, brought their records up to date, received new uniforms, mail, newspapers, and magazines, and ate a light meal. The steak that many of them craved would have shocked weakened digestive systems and had to wait until they had readjusted to American fare. Those former captives judged healthy enough could meet with reporters at Freedom Village and answer questions about their experiences. After a brief period of recuperation, the former prisoners embarked for the United States.

injured were transferred directly to hospital ships at Inchon or air-evacuated to Japan.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A174375





National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A174381

For the benefit of the press and distinguished visitors, Marines maintained a map showing the progress of road convoys bringing former prisoners from Panmunjom to Freedom Village during Operation Big Switch.

Communist prisoners of war rip off their U.S. provided uniforms and toss them contemptuously to the ground. Shouting Communist slogans and hurling insults at United

During the voyage, or shortly after disembarking, they described for intelligence specialists the treatment they had received at the hands of the enemy.

The fifth former prisoner to arrive at Freedom Village on 5 August turned out to be a Marine, Private First Class Alfred P. Graham, captured in July 1951. Forced labor and malnutrition left him too weak to meet with reporters at Munsan-ni, but later, at a hospital in Japan, he would describe how he had routinely been compelled to carry firewood 11 miles for the stoves at his prison camp. Two other Marines reached Munsan-ni on the first day: Sergeant Robert J. Coffee, wounded and captured in November 1950, and Private First Class Pedron E. Aviles, knocked unconscious by a Chinese rifle butt in December 1952 and taken prisoner.

The stream of returning Americans continued until 6 September, apparently with scant regard for time in captivity, physical condition, rank, or duties. For example, Private First Class Richard D. Johnson, a machine gunner in the 5th Marines captured on 25 July 1953, returned on 24 August, two days before the repatriation of Captain Jesse V. Booker, an aviator and the first Marine taken prisoner, who was captured on 7 August 1950. Some of the returnees had been given up for dead, among them: First Lieutenant Paul L. Martelli, a fighter pilot officially listed as killed in action; First Lieutenant Robert J. O'Shea, an infantry officer whose name did not appear on any list of prisoners; and Private First Class Leonard E. Steege, believed by his buddies to have been killed in the fighting at Boulder City.

Operation Big Switch continued until 6 September and resulted in the release of 88,596 prisoners, 75,823 of them

Nations forces, they put on a propaganda show for the benefit of world newsreel cameras.

National Archives Photo (USN) 80-G-626976



North Korean or Chinese. South Koreans, both soldiers and Marines, totaled 7,862, and those repatriated to other countries in the United Nations coalition numbered 4,911, 3,597 of them Americans, including 197 Marines.

Although the overwhelming majority of prisoners agreed to repatriation, more than 22,000 did not, entrusting themselves to the custody of the Indian troops overseeing the process on behalf of the five officially neutral nations. The Indians released 22,467 former prisoners; two-thirds of them Chinese, after a final attempt at persuasion allowed by the armistice agreement was made. Most of the Chinese were veterans of the Nationalist forces, who had been captured on the mainland and impressed into the service of the People's Republic. Once released, these veterans joined the Nationalists who had fled the mainland and established themselves on Taiwan and its satellite isles. The North Koreans disappeared into the populace of the South.

A total of 357 United Nations troops refused repatriation, 333 of them South Korean. Only 23 Americans—none of them a Marine—chose to stay behind, along with one British serviceman, a Royal Marine. Two of the American soldiers, swayed by the final efforts at persuasion, changed their minds at the last minute. Over the years, another 12 reconsidered their decision and returned to the United States.

MajGen Vernon E. Megee, center, Commanding General, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, introduces former prisoner of war, Capt Gerald Fink, to MajGen Randolph McC. Pate,

Behind Barbed Wire

As had happened in previous wars, Americans captured in Korea endured mistreatment from their captors, whether inflicted deliberately or the result of callousness. In this war, unlike the earlier ones, prisoners served as pawns in an ideological contest in which the Chinese and North Koreans tried to convert them to Communism or, failing that, to force them to make statements that would further the Communist cause in its world-wide struggle against capitalism. The methods of conversion or coercion varied from unceasing lectures extolling Communism to threats and torture, with the harshest treatment meted out for acts of resistance. By using these techniques, the prison staffs sought a variety of objectives that included maintaining order, persuading prisoners to embrace Communism, obtaining military information, or extorting confessions to alleged war crimes, statements designed to turn worldwide public opinion against the United States. By 1952, the enemy was focusing in particular on forcing captured fliers of all the Services to confess to participating in germ warfare.

The vigor of the persuasion or punishment varied according to the camp, the whim of the guards, or the policy of the moment. In July 1951, for example, the Chinese,

Commanding General, 1st Marine Division, at Freedom Village.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A174480





Department of Defense Photo (USN) 627709

Marine prisoner of war 1stLt Richard Bell is dusted with DDT prior to his departure for Inchon. Dusting with DDT was mandatory for all Marines leaving Korea for the United States.

who had assumed custody of the prisoners, announced a policy of leniency that offered organized athletic competition among the prisoners and promised better treatment in return for cooperation. The new policy aimed at winning over world opinion while converting “reactionaries”—those prisoners who resisted indoctrination—into “progressives,” who did not.

The new leniency did not apply to Lieutenant Colonel William G. Thrash, an arch-reactionary. Accused of “Criminal Acts and Hostile Attitude,” he spent eight months in solitary confinement. In January 1952, he was beaten, dragged outside, and exposed overnight to the deadly cold, an ordeal that nearly killed him.

To facilitate the indoctrination of the prisoners, a process that came to be called brainwashing, the enemy tried to shatter the chain-of-command. He separated officers from enlisted men and tried to place progressives in places of leadership. The reactionaries fought back by creating a network of their own to frustrate the Chinese tactics by restoring military discipline.

Lieutenant Colonel Thrash of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and Major John N. McLaughlin of the 1st Marine Division proved especially successful in creating solidarity among the prisoners. After recovering from the effects of his confinement, Thrash stirred up resistance to the indoctrination effort and to a related attempt to encourage the writing of letters that might serve as Chinese propaganda. He also warned that interrogators would try to pressure accused reactionaries into implicating fellow prisoners who shared reactionary views. McLaughlin created a chain-of-command using five veteran Marine Corps noncommissioned officers and, like Thrash, helped form the escape committees that took shape shortly before the armistice.

Resistance to the Chinese might be passive, essentially an internal rejection of Communist attempts at indoctrination, or active, with a range of actions that varied from symbolic to practical to defiant. Symbolic gestures included a celebration of the Marine Corps birthday on 10 November 1952, featuring a cake made from eggs, sugar, and flour stolen from the Chinese. A 22-inch crucifix, carved by Captain Gerald Fink with improvised tools and given the title “Christ in Barbed Wire,” symbolized both hope and resistance. Captain Fink also fashioned practical implements, an artificial leg for an Air Force officer, Major Thomas D. Harrison, injured when his plane was shot down, and crude stethoscopes for the medical personnel among the prisoners.

Captain Fink’s handiwork also played a part in an effort to keep track of as many of the prisoners as possible. The hollow portion of the artificial leg he had made contained a list of names, the dates of death for those known to have perished, and details of treatment while in captivity. The Chinese forced Harrison—a cousin of Lieutenant General William K. Harrison, Jr., the chief United Nations truce negotiator—to give them the leg when he was repatriated, but the information survived. The Air Force officer had a copy in the hollow handgrip of his crutch, and another prisoner carried a copy in a hollowed-out part of his cane.

Escape was the ultimate act of defiance, and also the most difficult. No underground existed in the Korean War, as there had been during World War II, to shepherd escaped prisoners or downed airmen through hostile territory to safety. Moreover, the average American could not blend as easily into the civilian populace of North Korea as he might have in Europe.

Despite the difficulty, captured Marines made several attempts to escape from various prison camps. Unfortunately, most attempts ended in failure. Sergeant Donald M. Griffith slipped away from a guard who had fallen asleep only to be recaptured when he asked a peasant family for food. Captain Byron H. Beswick, although badly burned when his aircraft was shot down, tried with four other prisoners to escape from a column on the march, but guards recaptured them all. While being held prior to transfer to a prison camp, Private First Class Graham, the first Marine repatriated in Operation Big Switch, joined another Marine in an escape attempt, but both were recaptured try-

ing to obtain food. After one unsuccessful try, punished as usual by a period of solitary confinement, First Lieutenant Robert J. Gillette, accompanied for a time by a South African pilot, succeeded in remaining at large for 10 days. Lieutenant Colonel Thrash and Major McLaughlin, together with First Lieutenant Richard Bell, got beyond the barbed wire, only to be cornered and forced to try to sneak back into the compound; Bell, however, was caught and punished with solitary confinement. Captain Martelli, who was reported killed but literally returned from the dead as a result of Big Switch, escaped and evaded recapture for 10 days. The final attempt, the product of one of the recently formed escape committees, took place on 1 July 1953, but the escapees remained at large for only a short time. With a ceasefire, and presumably an exchange of prisoners, drawing nearer, escape planning was suspended.

On rare occasions, special circumstances enabled captured Marines to escape and rejoin the United Nations forces. In August 1950, Private First Class Richard E. Barnett, driving a jeep, took a wrong turn and was captured by North Korean soldiers, who confined him in a cellar. When his captors took him along on a night attack, he managed to lag behind, threw a rock to distract the guard nearest him, and bolted into the darkness. He avoided recapture and rejoined his embattled unit before it had reported him missing.

Other successful escapes took place in May 1951. On the 15th, four days after their capture, Corporal Harold L. Kidd and Private First Class Richard R. Grindle, both from Company B, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, made their way to United Nations lines. Later that month, a group of 18 Marines and an Army interpreter assigned to the 1st Marine Division were forced to join Chinese troops near the 38th Parallel. As the prisoners approached the frontlines, the Army interpreter, Corporal Saburo Shimamura, reported to the senior Marine, First Lieutenant Frank E. Cold that their captors planned to release them near Marine lines. The Chinese issued safe-conduct passes, lending credence to the report, but rather than wait to see if the Chinese would do as they said, the group took advantage of the distraction caused by United Nations artillery registering nearby and fled into the hills. They evaded the patrols looking for them; spread out improvised signal panels, and caught the attention of an aerial observer who reported their location. On 25 May, the day after their escape, two Army tanks clattered up to the men and escorted them to the nearest United Nations position.

In the spring of 1951, the enemy actually did release two prisoners, presumably as an overture to the policy of leniency announced shortly afterward. Whatever the reason, Corporal William S. Blair and Private First Class Bernard W. Insko were turned loose near the frontlines. Captured on 24 April, they regained their freedom on 12 May.

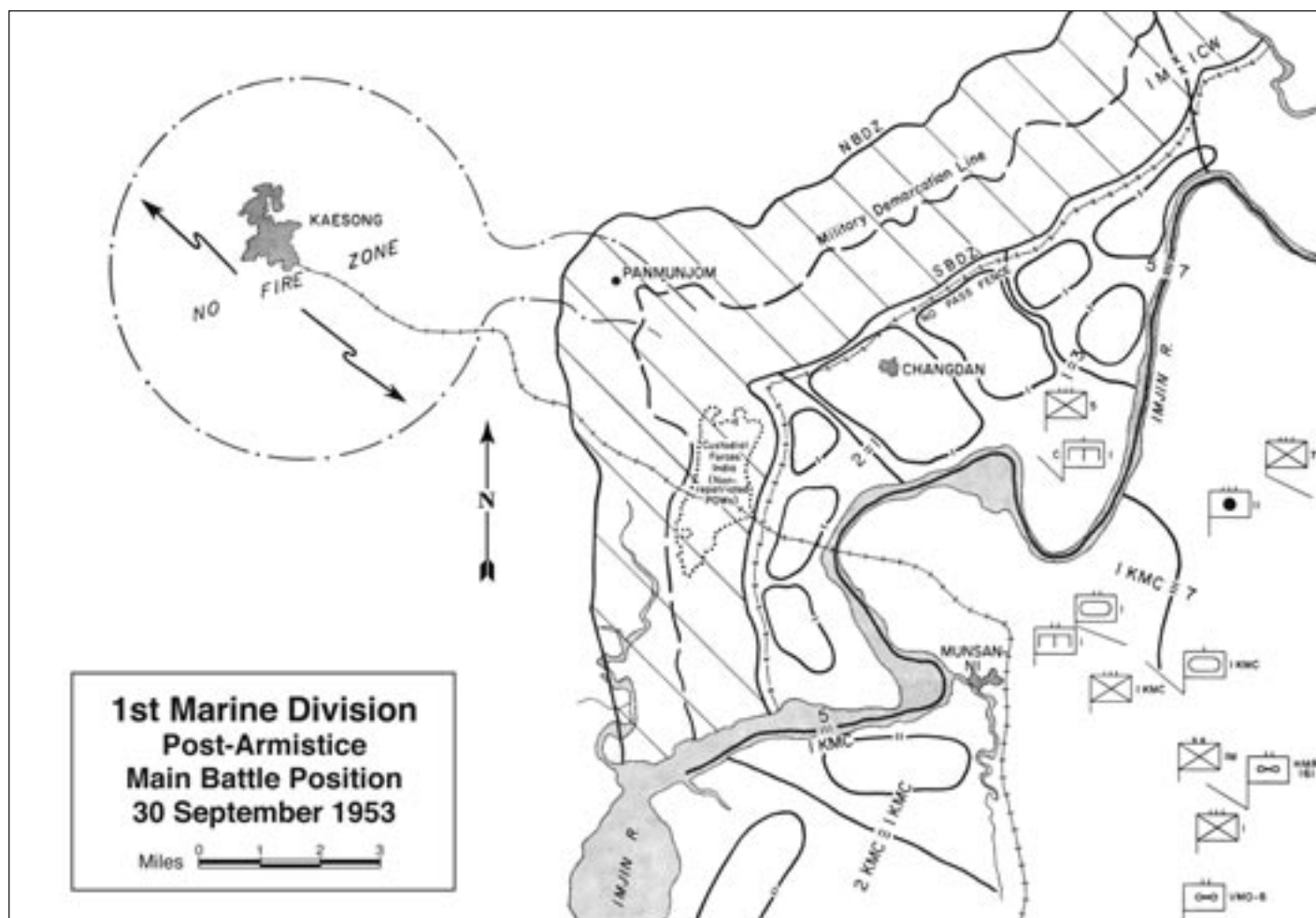
At times, captured Marines sought to invent fictitious statements that would ease the pressure on them by creating an illusion of cooperation. Master Sergeant John T.

Cain, an enlisted pilot, had the misfortune of being mistaken for a senior officer because of his age and military bearing, thus becoming a prized target for the interrogators. He tried to satisfy them with elaborate details about a non-existent logistics command in which he claimed to have served. The pressure continued, however, until he was taken to a hillside one day, blindfolded, and subjected to a mock execution. He spent 84 days in solitary confinement before the Chinese intelligence officers either gave up or realized their error.

Attempts to outsmart the enemy could end in tragic failure, as demonstrated by the fate of Colonel Frank H. Schwable, the chief of staff of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, who became a prisoner when his aircraft was shot down on a reconnaissance flight in July 1952. Deprived of sleep and medical care, subjected to relentless pressure to confess to war crimes, he tried to frustrate the enemy by making a statement so obviously false that it not only would fail to help the Chinese, but also demonstrate their use of coercion. This action, however, merely whetted the appetite of interrogators determined to exploit his rank and position. They rewrote the document to create an illusion of truth, and forced him to choose between endorsing the revised version or spending the rest of his life in prison. After he was freed as Operation Big Switch drew to an end, a Court of Inquiry—functioning like a civilian grand jury—recommended that he not face a court-martial for aiding the enemy because he had resisted to the best of his ability. The inquiry also found that his future in the Marine Corps was “seriously impaired” by his conduct as a prisoner, thus putting an end to a once-promising career. Only one Marine faced a trial, an enlisted man convicted of fraternizing with the enemy and dismissed from the Service.

The 221 Marines captured in Korea endured an unexpected ordeal. Prisoners in past wars had suffered malnutrition, forced labor, and other acts of cruelty, but never before had their captors tried systematically to coerce them into participating in a propaganda campaign. Despite the harsh treatment the Chinese meted out, 197 Marines survived captivity and returned in Operation Big Switch.

Five Marines received official recognition for their steadfast conduct and strong leadership while prisoners of war. Lieutenant Colonel Thrash received a gold star signifying his second Legion of Merit. Major McLaughlin also earned the Legion of Merit, as did Major Walter R. Harris, another reactionary, who set up a communications network in one camp by designating locations where messages could be hidden and picked up. Harris also took advantage of the policy of leniency by organizing Spanish-language classes as cover for providing information and encouragement to offset Chinese attempts at indoctrination. Captain John P. Flynn, who refused despite torture to confess to war crimes and encouraged others to resist, earned the Navy and Marine Corps Medal. Master Sergeant Cain, who did not yield to solitary confinement and threats of execution, received a Letter of Commendation with Ribbon.



(Continued from page 62)

agreement specified that each side, Communist and United Nations, maintain a force of 1,000 "civil police" to preserve the status of the demilitarized buffer. Since no civilian law enforcement agencies existed to provide this manpower, troops had to function as police. For maintaining the security of the Demilitarized Zone along its portion of the main battle position, the division on 4 September activated the 1st Provisional Demilitarized Zone Police Company, drawing men from its infantry regiments. Attached to the 5th Marines, the police company, which initially numbered 104 men under Captain Samuel G. Goich, took over the crossing stations, manned observation posts to monitor the demilitarized Zone, and escorted members of the Military

Armistice Commission, the Joint Observation Teams, and the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission along with other persons authorized to enter the zone. According to a Marine Corps journalist, the average enlisted man assigned to the police company had to know "map reading on an officer level, first aid, radio, and understand the fine print of the ceasefire agreement like a striped-trouser diplomat."

Besides providing armed escorts—usually one-half-dozen Marines carrying rifles and pistols—and staffing fixed observation posts, the police company operated roving patrols. Traveling in radio-equipped jeeps these groups reported any unusual activity in the Demilitarized Zone. In case of a genuine emergency, a platoon, standing by as a mobile

reserve, would respond.

Marine Demilitarized Zone police manning the observation posts monitored aerial activity as well as events on the ground. Besides keeping a record of all flights, they made sure that light reconnaissance planes had an appropriate clearance and that helicopters operating in front of the 5th Marines also had obtained permission for each flight. Helicopters responding to medical emergencies need not obtain specific approval from the ground commander.

The truce specified that prisoners of war who had refused repatriation to North Korea and China would enter the Demilitarized Zone, where their fellow countrymen, joined by Polish and Czech members of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission, could try

to persuade them to return. The Communist persuasion teams required escorts from the police company, which therefore had to be tripled in size.

Main Battle Position

After the fighting ended, the 1st Marine Division formed the left of the line held by I Corps. The Commonwealth Division dug in on the right of the Marines then, in

succession, the 1st Republic of Korea Division and the U.S. 7th Infantry Division. The Imjin River continued to challenge the ability of the Marines to move men and cargo, perhaps to a greater degree than before the armistice. A shallower and less defensible crescent of Marine-controlled ground lay north of the stream, which separated the supply center at Munsan-ni from the lines manned by the 5th Marines and forced the division to

Machine gunners stand-by with loaded belts as riflemen take positions on the forward line. When the "Black Alert" siren sounded, Marines did not know whether it was "for real," but truce or not, they were always ready.

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A349038



rely on bridges and fords to transport material and reinforcements across the Imjin. Because the salient was more vulnerable than before, the division would have to react faster and in greater strength to repulse any new attack there.

The main battle position began at the No-Pass Fence, which served in effect as a trip wire to warn of an attack across the Demilitarized Zone, and consisted of successive lines of mutually supporting strongpoints, each stronger than the one to its front, that extended from the near edge of the Demilitarized Zone to the vicinity of the old Kansas and Wyoming Lines. Indeed, wherever possible, Marine engineers incorporated portions of these two lines in the new battle position. North of the Imjin, the 5th Marines manned the equivalent of an outpost line of resistance, in which firepower from large numbers of automatic weapons took the place of manpower. Within the northern salient, Colonel Tschirgi, the regimental commander, placed the 3d Battalion on the right, the 1st Battalion in the center, and the 2d Battalion on the left. South of the Imjin, the 7th Marines defended the right of the line, with the 1st Regiment of South Korean Marines in the center and the 1st Marines, the division reserve, manning a series of positions behind the South Koreans. The 11th Marines emplaced its howitzers behind the 7th Marines and prepared to fire in general support of the division.

In October, however, a major reshuffling took place south of the river. The ongoing exchange of prisoners—which brought to the Demilitarized Zone large numbers of North Koreans and Chinese who had refused repatriation, along with their former comrades who were trying to persuade the defectors to return—raised the



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A365246

MajGen Randolph McC. Pate breaks ground for a new tuberculosis hospital donated and built by the 1st Marine Division. The completed hospital eventually bore a highly polished brass plaque, bearing a Marine Corps emblem and the words, "Built by the First Marine Division."

specter of another South Korean attempt to disrupt the settlement. To guard against this eventuality, troops from the reserve regiment, the 1st Marines, took over the sector manned by South Korean Marines.

Clearly, the strongpoints manned by the 5th Marines formed the most vulnerable portion of the new battle position. The regiment held a frontage of 36,000 yards, about three times the usual width during the Korean War. Under Colonel Rathvon McC. Tompkins, who assumed command on 2

August, the 5th Marines fortified hills that included wartime Outposts Marilyn and Kate, along with Boulder City and the Hook. Behind this arc of mutually supporting strongpoints, the regiment established bridgehead positions to protect the vital river crossings.

Maintaining an adequate supply of ammunition to defend the salient posed a problem because of the reliance on automatic weapons and the range at which they would have to open fire. Not only did the large number of machine guns devour .30-caliber

ammunition faster than the usual mix of these weapons, rifles, and automatic rifles, the gunners would have to open fire sooner than normal if they were to close the gaps between outposts. As a result, the amount of ammunition at the outposts had to be increased and the reserve stocks moved forward from regimental to battalion dumps. These changes, however, could not solve the problem of dividing a finite supply of ammunition among the regiments and replenishing the 5th Marines by bridges or ferries vulnerable to



Courtesy of *Leatherneck Magazine*

Men of the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, poke holes in a frozen Korean stream and ignore the icy waters to scrub their clothing before stowing it in their seabags for the trip back to the States.

flood, ice, or—if the fighting resumed—hostile fire.

The ceasefire provided an opportunity for training to hone the cutting edge of the Marine forces. Within the division, individuals and small units practiced their skills, and all but two of the infantry battalions took part in landing exercises. Besides remain-

ing on alert in case the fighting resumed, Marine airmen also trained, sometimes in conjunction with Air Force squadrons. They practiced bombing and ground-controlled intercepts and supported an amphibious exercise at Tokchok-to Island involving the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines.

The division, as part of the

Armed Forces Assistance to Korea program, also undertook 51 building projects—42 to them schools. As each school was completed it received kits containing instructional supplies and athletic gear. These extras were made possible solely by the donations of 1st Division Marines and matching funds from CARE, the Cooperative



National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A366243

Two Marines from Company A, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, show men of the U.S. Army's 24th Infantry Division their new positions near the Demilitarized Zone. The division's attitude

about returning to Korea from Japan was summed up by two disillusioned privates: "Man, sixteen months in this forsaken place."

for American Remittances to Europe.

The post-armistice activity included athletics that provided a break from training and routine housekeeping. Athletic competition took place among Marine units and between organizations and bases. Indeed, some Marines stationed at Pyongtaek played on an Air Force softball team representing that airfield.

Routine housekeeping continued, however. Each day, for example, latrines had to be burned out, primarily to prevent disease but

also to eliminate foul odors. A Marine poured a quart or so of gasoline into the privy, tossed in a lighted match, and stepped outside. Too much gasoline could produce spectacular results, as Corporal Lee Ballenger recalled. A buddy of his grew impatient when a succession of matches seemed to fizzle, poured gasoline directly from the can and was knocked down by a blast that splintered the wooden structure. Luckily, the flame did nothing worse than singe the Marine's hair and eyebrows.

The 1st Marine Division manned its portion of the main battle position for almost two years after the ceasefire. General Pate, in command at the time of the truce, was succeeded by Major General Robert H. Pepper (12 May 1954 to 22 July 1954), Major General Robert E. Hogaboom (23 July 1954 to 17 January 1955), and Major General Merrill B. Twining, who took over on 18 January 1955 and would bring the division home.

The first hint of the division's redeployment came from the

White House when a reporter “blandly asked the President if he could lend official credence to the ‘authoritative sources’ announcement that the First Division would be pulled out of Korea.” The reporter gained a “grinning admission” from President Dwight D. Eisenhower that the Marines would be moved in the near future.

When the news hit Korea, it was greeted with mixed enthusiasm and skepticism—every Marine knew that “in the near future” could mean months or years. But soon clippings sent by mothers, wives, and girl friends began to arrive, lending credibility to the move. Marines who had been wary now became convinced. However,

there was little spontaneous rejoicing; few celebrations or sayonara parties were planned.

Soon there was a gradual switch from hours spent on training to the packing and crating of gear. Most trucks, tanks, tents, clothing, and other “common” gear would stay in Korea, while all Marine Corps “peculiar” gear would accompany the division to Camp Pendleton, California. Despite contemporary newspaper reports to the contrary, there was no massive swapping of troops from the 1st to the 3d Marine Division in Japan. The only exceptions were a Rocket Battery and an Armored Amphibian Company.

In mid-March 1955, the division turned its sector of the demarcation

line over to the U.S. Army’s 24th Infantry Division. Every Marine hoped that lugging water up steep, slimy hills, helmet baths, rations, sleeping bags, pot-belly stoves, long-handled skivves, parkas, DDT, and Mongolian “piss cutters” would become just memories.

The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, now commanded by Brigadier General Samuel S. Jack, began withdrawing some of its components from South Korea in June 1956. The wing remained in the Far East, however. General Jack established his headquarters at Iwakuni Naval Air Station, Japan. Some of the wing’s elements moved to Japan, but others continued to operate from bases in South Korea.

The 7th Marines rode trucks to the Munsan-ni railhead where they wait to board trains for Inchon. Divided into landing teams, the 7th Marines followed the 5th Marines, which was the first Marine unit to arrive in Korea.

Courtesy of Leatherneck Magazine





Courtesy of Leatherneck Magazine

Packed on board small landing craft like sardines, Marines were carried out to waiting Navy transports where they easily climb the cargo net with a full pack and rifle. They were homeward bound.

The War in Perspective

Marine participation in the Korean War began with the desperate defense of the Pusan Perimeter, continued when the 1st Marine Division spearheaded a daring amphibious assault at Inchon, and, after the Chinese intervention forced the United Nations to withdraw from the Yalu River to the vicinity of the 38th Parallel, ended in static warfare fought along a battle line that extended across the width of the Korean peninsula. A highly mobile amphibious assault force thus became tied to fixed positions, a condition that lasted from the spring of 1952 until the armistice in July of the following year. Indeed,

by January 1953, defense overshadowed the offense, even though defensive operations required frequent and often bloody counterattacks to maintain the positions held by the United Nations. The Chinese succeeded in capturing and holding several outposts, but the 1st Marine Division clung tenaciously to its segment of the main line of resistance, helping force the enemy to agree to the ceasefire, with provisions for the exchange of prisoners of war, that had become the overriding American objective of the war.

Before North Korea invaded the South, American strategy focused on the defense of Western Europe against the Soviet Union and its satellites. The aggression in Asia

presented an unexpected challenge, which the Truman administration decided to meet, although not at the expense of weakening the newly formed North Atlantic Treaty Organization. As a result, the United States fought a limited war in Korea, withholding nuclear weapons and relying with few exceptions on the weapons of World War II or improved versions of them.

In Korea, the Marines used to deadly effect the weapons they had, whether old or improved, massing artillery, supplementing the howitzers with rockets, and when necessary employing tanks as pillboxes on the battle line, but new weapons lay just over the horizon. The weight of the standard infantry weapons of World War II—for example, the M1 rifle weighing 9.5 pounds, and the Browning automatic rifle almost twice as heavy—aroused interest in lighter, fully automatic weapons like the sub-machine guns used by Chinese infantry. A lightweight automatic rifle, the M16, was therefore developed but did not become the standard weapon for Marine infantrymen until the Vietnam War. Although the steel helmet remained essentially unchanged since World War II, body armor had undergone improvement because of experience in Korea, as had the original antitank rocket launcher or Bazooka.

Infantry tactics changed to meet the evolving demands of the war on the ground. Fighting at night, especially patrol actions, received greater emphasis, for instance. Also, by the time of the battles for Berlin, East Berlin, and Boulder City in July 1953, the 1st Marine Division was committed to a defense in depth, made up of mutually supporting strongpoints, a principal followed in establishing the post-armistice main battle line.



Courtesy of *Leatherneck Magazine*

Col Raymond L. Murray, who commanded the 5th Marines during its first action in Korea almost five years before, greets the regiment's current commanding officer, Col Robert H. Ruud, upon his arrival at San Diego, California, in March 1955.

The construction of the bunkers and covered fighting positions that made up these strongpoints had improved greatly since the Marines took over their segment of the Jamestown Line in the spring of 1952.

The most dramatic changes took place in aviation. The new jet fighters, which had barely seen action against the enemy during World War II, proved their worth in support of the 1st Marine Division and also in aerial combat. Fourteen Marine pilots, flying aircraft of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing downed 16 hostile airplanes, ranging from biplanes engaging in nighttime harassment to modern jets. Eleven other Marine pilots, flying North American F-86 jet fighters in U.S. Air Force squadrons, were credited with downing 21 Chinese jet fighters. Moreover, the helicopter showed tremendous potential in limited use during the Korean fighting; this potential, however, would not be realized

Marines of the 1st Division parade through downtown San Diego following their return from Korea. A hero's welcome

was furnished the combat-clad veterans as they marched up Broadway to Balboa Park.

Marine Corps Historical Center Photo Collection



fully until the Vietnam conflict.

Because the Korean War had demonstrated the importance of integrated action between air and ground components, the Marine Corps in January 1953 established the 1st Provisional Air-Ground Task Force at Kaneohe in Hawaii. This unit, built around an infantry regiment and an aircraft group, stood ready for deployment throughout the Pacific.

In short, the Marine Corps had responded quickly and effectively to the peculiar demands of the Korean War without losing sight of its amphibious mission and its role as a force in readiness. To Marine eyes, the use of one of its amphibious divisions in an extended ground campaign seemed an aberration, a misapplication

of resources, no matter how well that division had fought. Because of this commitment to amphibious operations, the 1st Marine Division participated in landing exercises whenever possible during the course of the fighting, activity that may well have reminded the enemy of the abiding threat of another assault like the victory at Inchon.

After the truce went into effect, amphibious training continued in the Far East for the 1st Marine Division, until its return to the United States. In August 1953, as the Demilitarized Zone took shape, the 3d Marine Division, teamed with two aircraft groups, arrived in Japan. A program of amphibious training, which included regimental landings at Iwo Jima and Ok-

inawa, got underway while the 3d Marine Division was based in Japan and continued after its redeployment to Okinawa.

The continued existence of a force, normally one battalion, afloat with the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean provided a further demonstration of the abiding orientation of the Marine Corps toward amphibious warfare. Since 1949, a succession of battalions drawn from the 2d Marine Division at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, had embarked with the Sixth Fleet. Clearly, the Korean fighting in 1952 and 1953 had not converted the Marine Corps from amphibious operations to extended ground warfare, from assault to attrition, or affected its dedication to the air-ground team.

A Douglas F3D is hauled on board ship after being ferried out by two amphibious trucks, as the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing transferred its headquarters and most of its aircraft from

Korea to Iwakuni, Japan, in June 1956. Postwar plans called for the wing to occupy bases in both Korea and Japan.

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About the Author

Bernard C. Nalty, a member of the Marine Corps historical program from October 1956 to September 1961, collaborated with Henry I. Shaw, Jr., and Edwin T. Turnbladh on *Central Pacific Drive*, a volume of the *History of U. S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II*. He also completed more than 14 short historical studies, some of which appeared in *Leatherneck* magazine or the *Marine Corps Gazette*. He joined the history office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1961, transferred in 1964 to the Air Force history program, and retired in 1994. Mr. Nalty has written or edited a number of publications, including *Blacks in the Military: Essential Documents*, *Strength for the Fight: A History of Black Americans in the Military*, *The Vietnam War*, *Tigers Over Asia*, *Air Power and the Fight for Khe Sanh*, and *Winged Shield, Winged Sword: A History of the U.S. Air Force*. In addition to contributing to this series on the Korean War by writing *Stalemate: U.S. Marines from Bunker Hill to the Hook*, he took part in the Marines in World War II commemorative series, completing two pamphlets, *Cape Gloucester: The Green Inferno* and *The Right to Fight: African-American Marines in World War II*.



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The best account of operations by Marines during 1953, their role in establishing the Demilitarized Zone, and their eventual withdrawal from South Korea appears in *Operations in West Korea*, volume five of *U. S. Marine Corps Operations in Korea, 1950-1953* (Washington, D.C.: Historical Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1972), by LtCol Pat Meid, USMCR, and Maj James M. Yingling, USMC.

The Marine Corps historical program also has dealt thoroughly with the treatment received by Marines held as prisoners of war, their reaction to deprivation and hostile pressure, and their repatriation. James Angus MacDonald has made extensive use of interviews with former prisoners in his *The Problems of U. S. Marine Corps Prisoners of War in Korea*, published by the History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps, in 1988.

Walter G. Hermes discusses Marine

Corps operations in his contribution to the official history of Army activity during the Korean War, *Truce Tent and Fighting Front* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1966), a volume that deals with negotiation as well as fighting.

Martin Russ, a wartime Marine Corps infantryman, has written the best known and most revealing memoir covering the final months of the fighting, *The Last Parallel: A Marine's War Journal* (New York: Rinehart, 1957).

Personal accounts by other Marines appear in *Korean Vignettes: Faces of War* (Portland, OR: Artwork Publications, 1996), a compilation of narratives and photographs by 201 veterans of the Korean War, prepared by Arthur W. Wilson and Norman L. Stickbine.

Valuable insights and first-hand accounts are also available in *The Korean War: The Uncertain Victory; The Concluding Volume of an Oral History* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988), by Donald Knox with additional text by Alfred Coppel.

William H. Jantzen, a participant in one of the fiercer actions of 1953, has written a riveting account of that fight in "A Bad Night at Reno Block," in the March 1998 issue of *Leatherneck* magazine.

The *Marine Corps Gazette* has analyzed the tactics and lessons learned of the Korean War in three especially useful articles: Peter Braestrup's "Outpost Warfare" (November 1953) and "Back to the Trenches" (March 1955); and "Random Notes on Korea" (November 1955) by LtCol Roy A. Batterton. Also of use was the article by MSgt Paul Sarokin, "Going Home," in the May 1955 issue of *Leatherneck*.

The personal papers collection of the Marine Corps history program contains journals, photographs, letters, memoirs, and at least one academic paper, a master's thesis on outpost warfare by a Marine, Maj Norman W. Hicks. For events of the year 1953, the most valuable of these items were the submissions by Eldon D. Allen and Gen Vernon E. Megee.

