

THE KOREAN WAR



MORE AIRPLANES!

The communist air forces in the far east had ground attack aircraft – the Ilyushin 10[IL-10] (below). This was a late war improved design of the former IL-2 Stormovik ground attack aircraft (above) which saw extensive service on the Russian Front. The newer IL-10 was faster and more heavily armored but no match for the U.S. fighters. Most were shot down when encountered and the North Korean IL-10's that were not shot down were destroyed on the ground in U.S. raids on their bases.

The IL-10 had no notable impact on the war – mainly because the U.S. gained and maintained air supremacy over the front lines practically from the beginning.

But the North Koreans did manage to operate a ground attack aircraft that was somewhat effective despite U.S. air supremacy...





In an early season episode of M*A*S*H, an antiquated North Korean plane bombed a field near the 4077th each day at 5:00 after Maj. Frank Burns parked a tank there. (above) As absurd as the episode was, it had a grain of truth.



The North Koreans used a Soviet Polikarpov Po-2 as a night bomber. (below) The Po-2 was a primary flight trainer that entered production in 1928 and was only slightly more modern than the planes that had fought the First World War. It was built mostly of wood and canvas – making it hard to spot on radar and hard to shoot down. (To kil, hit pilot, engine or small fuel tank, otherwise it keeps flying.)

It was also slow – top speed around 70 MPH, normal cruising speed around 50 MPH. This was below the stall speed of all of the jets and dangerously slow for other planes.



The only successful air to air “kill” of a North Korean Po-2 was by a Navy A-1 Skyraider (also the only aerial victory for the A-1). The Po-2 “claimed” a kill of its own when a hot shot F-84 pilot tried to shoot one down. The Po-2’s operated at very low altitudes. The F-84 stalled trying to aim and crashed before the plane could hope to recover or pilot eject.

Unlike M*A*S*H, the Po-2 was used against very large targets like airfields, supply depots and fuel dumps if in range. It also only flew on moonless nights, not in daylight.



Arguably, the most successful mission for the Po-2 in Korea was against a forward airstrip near Pyongyang in early December 1950. A single Po-2 dropped a single bomb and destroyed 3 P-51s and damaged 11 others.

But, this use was not a result of North Korean creativity. The Russians had used the Po-2 as a night bomber in WWII...



Specifically, it was invented by the 588th (later re-designated 64th Taman Guards) Night Bomber Regiment known as the “Night Witches”.

Formed in 1941, this regiment was entirely manned by women and they were the first Soviet women in combat roles. By the end of the war it was also one of the most highly decorated units in the entire Soviet military.



They flew at night against immobile German targets near the front. Their tactic was to cut their engines on the bomb run to mask their approach. They proved highly effective. (They also flew too low for parachutes.)

The Germans coined their names because they said that when gliding in the planes sounded like witch’s brooms (how they knew that is anyone’s guess.) When the ladies found this out, they liked it and the name stuck.

The North Koreans were not as successful.



The Americans had their own night time ground attack aircraft, the Douglas B-26 Invader (not to be confused with the Martin B-26 Marauder). Designated the A-26 before 1948, the Air Force used both a day and night variant for attacks on supply lines.

The B-26B (above) had a three man crew – a pilot, a navigator and a gunner. The gunner sat behind the bomb bay and controlled 6 guns; 2 in the tail and 4 in 2 turrets one on the top and the other on the bottom of the aircraft. He also served as an observer. The plane also had between 12 and 14 forward firing machine guns.



The B-26C (below) had a four man crew as it gave up the 6 to 8 guns in the nose for a bombardier's position. This plane could target from medium altitude (>5,000 ft AGL). Both variants could also carry an additional 6,000 lbs of ordinance.



While the B-26 was capable of medium altitude, daylight bombing missions, it was most effective at low altitude, night attack missions against trains, truck convoys and infantry columns. These missions were single plane search and destroy missions flown within a couple hundred feet of the ground.

Navigation was critical as this was before sophisticated navigation computers yet the missions required them to fly through the mountains and valleys below the ridges and peaks. Navigation was done by stop watch.

U.S. air supremacy in daylight forced the communists to move troops and supplies in darkness, hiding during the day. The B-26 meant even the night was not safe.

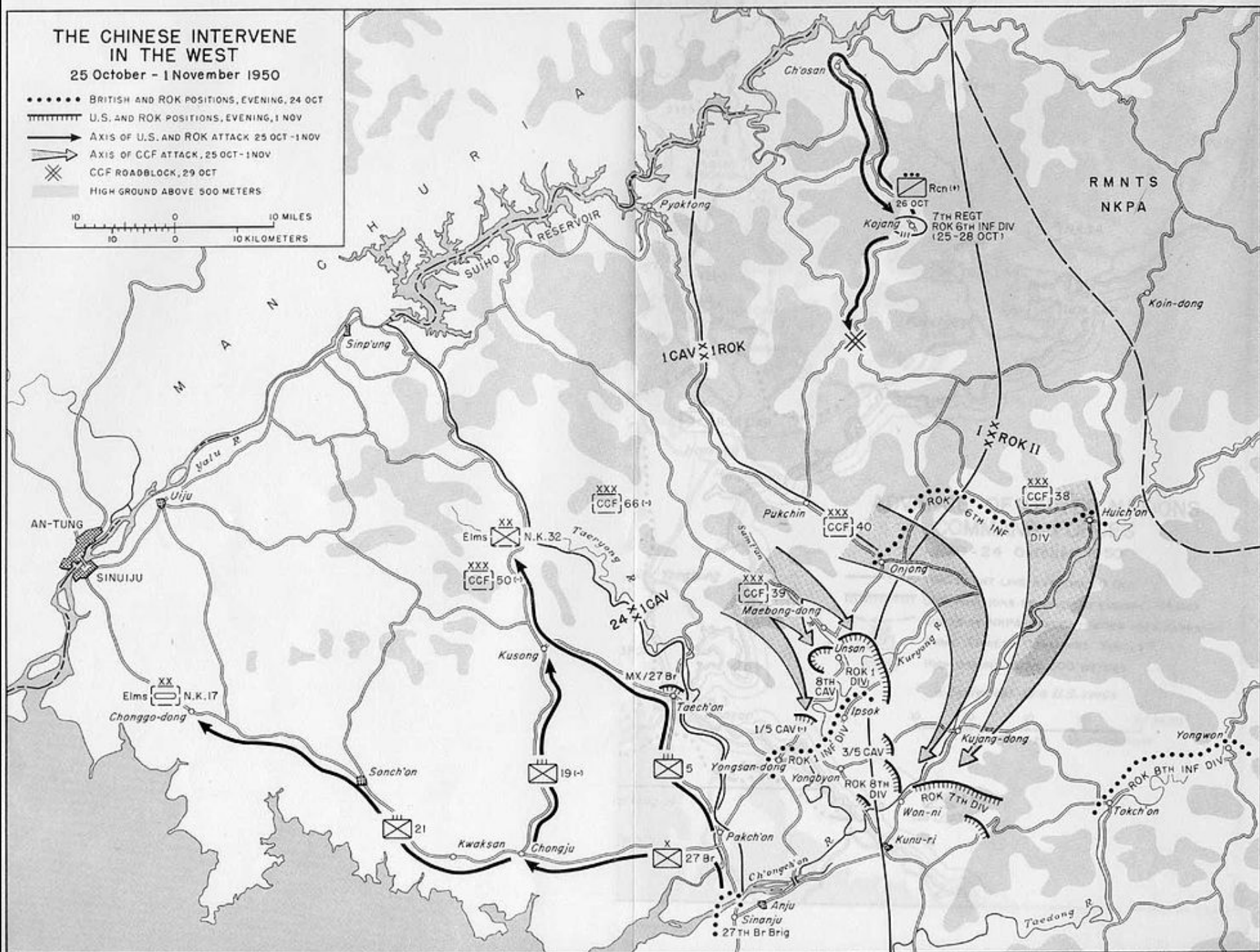
The missions were dangerous – less so because of ground fire (they passed over target too quickly) more so because of the high risk of encountering wires and rocks.



THE CHINESE INTERVENE IN THE WEST

25 October - 1 November 1950

- BRITISH AND ROK POSITIONS, EVENING, 24 OCT
- ||||| U.S. AND ROK POSITIONS, EVENING, 1 NOV
- ➔ AXIS OF U.S. AND ROK ATTACK 25 OCT-1 NOV
- ➔ AXIS OF CCF ATTACK, 25 OCT-1 NOV
- ⊗ CCF ROADBLOCK, 29 OCT
- ▨ HIGH GROUND ABOVE 500 METERS





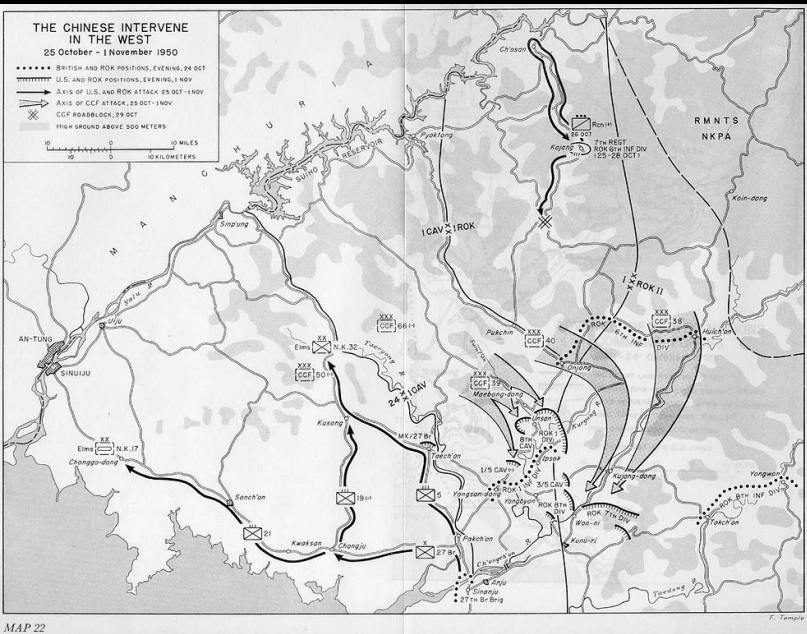
Late on the evening of October 25th, Chinese rocket batteries (Soviet Katyusha) opened fire on the positions of the 6th ROK division (less the regiment at the Yalu). These weapons were not known for their accuracy, but their volume of fire was another matter.

Soon after, two Chinese armies (the 38th and 40th) hit the ROK positions, overran the division's CP and most of the 6th ROK division in less than a day. Few escaped.



This was Phase I Operations, designed as a warning to the Americans – go back. The operations were to try to avoid contact with American units further to the west. Those units were to be allowed to advance unmolested for now.

But the South Koreans would have no such consideration. This would become known as the Battle of Unsan – after the town where the 1st ROK was headquartered.



On the 26th, the remaining regiment of the ROK 6th Division at the Yalu was ordered to retreat. Meanwhile, the Chinese 39th Army hit the ROK 1st Division at Unsan. Unlike the 6th, the 1st managed to hold – barely. On the 27th, the Chinese 39th Army stumbled upon the 8th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division as the Chinese were trying to turn the left flank of the stubborn ROK 1st Division. The 8th Cav was moving north to support the ROK drive on the Yalu and not deployed for defense. It was slaughtered. Few

made it back to the rear and those that did had abandoned their vehicles and equipment. It would be the worst singular defeat of the war for the Americans.

Also on the 27th, and without notifying Tokyo, General Walker ordered his units to pull back south of the Chongch'on River and go over to the defensive.

On the 29th, the remaining regiment of the ROK 6th Division retreating from the Yalu hit a roadblock set up by the Chinese. There were no friendly units within 20 miles of their position and they were outnumbered. That regiment ceased to exist. Fighting continued in the south with decreasing effectiveness until the 1st of November.

Then the Chinese disappeared. Seemingly completely.



Despite the destruction of the 6th ROK Division and the 8th Cavalry Regiment (the latter necessitating the withdrawal of the entire 1st Cavalry to reserve for refitting), MacArthur was convince the Chinese had shot their bolt. They disappeared because there were none left. (Chinese casualties had been high over the course of the Unsan battle.)

MacArthur informed Washington that the threat had passed and now with X Corps landed at Wosan and moving north to link up with the ROK divisions in the east, he was ready to execute his final offensive. This was not inconsistent with his orders of October 7th as he was allowed discretion to operate as he felt fit to do in the event of a Chinese intervention.



At the Pentagon, one man was convinced MacArthur was dead wrong. There had been few indicators that the Chinese had been in Korea before Unsan, but they were there namely Chinese deserters. The deserters were still being captured (in similar small numbers). No other indications existed that large Chinese formations were in Korea. The fact that they were not seen, that UN forces were not in contact with Chinese units did not mean the Chinese were not out there. Ridgway was convinced they were. But he could not convince the Pentagon to countermand MacArthur.



In the West, 8th Army took some time to reorganize after the Battle of Unsan. 1st Cav had to be replaced in the line and the ROK forces had to redeploy following the effective loss of the 6th Division. In the East, X Corps began moving north as soon as 7th Inf. Completed its landing at Wosan where it headed out to catch up the the ROK divisions to the North. When 1st Marines landed, they were ordered to head up the center towards was would be known as the Chosin

Reservoir. But aside from 7th Division, for weeks advance was slow and cautious.

On November 19th, General Peng released 103 prisoners at various points near UN lines including 30 Americans. These prisoners had been told they were being released because due to severe casualties and lack of supplies of food and ammunition, China was pulling out of the war.

It was a ruse...



The Chinese had not pulled out.

Mashall Peng wanted to draw the Americans (and Koreans) deep into the north and well within the Chinese front lines for a massive ambush. The relatively slow advance was concerning as the ambush depended upon surprise and the Chinese logistics could not sustain its forces in Korea for long. Delay increased the chance of detection and would reduce the Chinese ability to fight. Peng wanted the Americans to stick their necks out so he released the prisoners.

Due to the American (and Korean) own supply problems, the result was not immediate. But MacArthur was now convinced nothing stood between his troops and the Yalu and he ordered the

armies onto the offensive in what he called "The Home By Christmas Offensive."

"Home by Christmas" is something military commanders are foolish to say. It was said in 1861. It was said in 1914. And it was said in 1944. (And at other times.) It never turned out well...



This wishful offensive formally kicked off on November 20th when MacArthur visited the front.

8th Army proceeded cautiously, which irritated MacArthur to no end.

X Corps 7th Division hit the ground running and by November 23rd had reached the Yalu river where General Almond posed for a picture with the 7th Division commander.



The 1st Marine Division moved north from Hungnam to Hararu-Ri at the south end of the Chosin Reservoir. The road was terrible and General O.P. Smith, his staff and commanders all saw that road as a potential death trap. They had no support from the rest of the UN forces and were entirely exposed.

1st Marines stopped to fortify the town and bring up supplies to the annoyance of General Almond.



While MacArthur and Almond were convinced the Chinese had left and the war was almost over, two subordinate commanders disagreed. 8th Army Commander Walton Walker, after five hours with MacArthur on the 24th of November where he was told to move north for the Yalu as the Chinese were done, told his staff “bullshit” as soon as MacArthur was on his plane back to Tokyo. He told MGEN John Chuch, Commander of the reformed 24th Inf. Div. which was then the furthest north “If you so much as smell Chinese chow, pull back.” His staff began drawing up withdrawal plans.



In X Corp, Marine MGEN O.P. Smith had even less of an opinion of General Almond than Walker of MacArthur. Almond flew to his HG at Hagaru-ri and told him to get moving and not to fear “a bunch of Chinese laundrymen.” As soon as Almond’s helicopter left the ground, Smith told his staff that Almond’s orders were meaningless. The marines would not split up (as Almond ordered) nor advance any further than Kuni-ri about 8 miles further along the reservoir.

UN Forces in the Korean War.

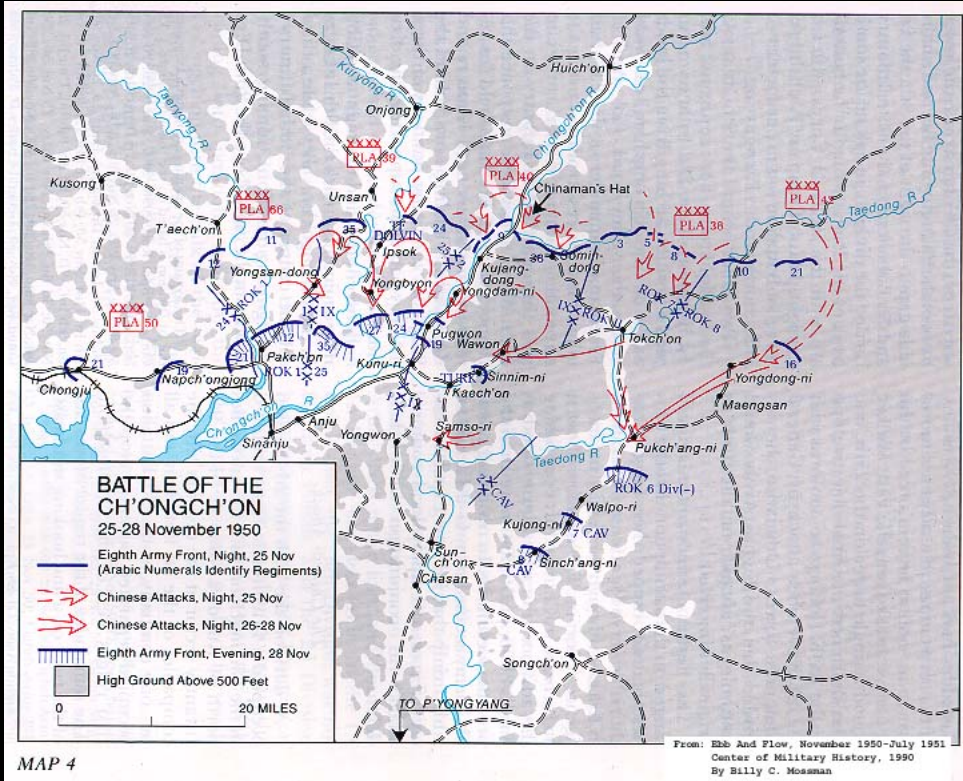
Combat Troops as of Jul 1953

South Korea:	590,911
United States:	302,483
Australia:	17,000
United Kingdom:	14,198
Thailand:	6,326
Canada:	6,146
Turkey:	5,453
Philippines:	1,468
New Zealand:	1,385
Ethiopia:	1,271
Greece:	1,263
France:	1,119
Colombia:	1,068
Belgium:	900
South Africa:	826
Netherlands:	819
Luxumberg:	44

Non Combat elements/Humanitarian Aid

Denmark
India
Italy
Norway
Sweden
West Germany
Isreal
Japan
Cuba
El Salvador
Spain

(The United Nations Command in Korea exists to this day)

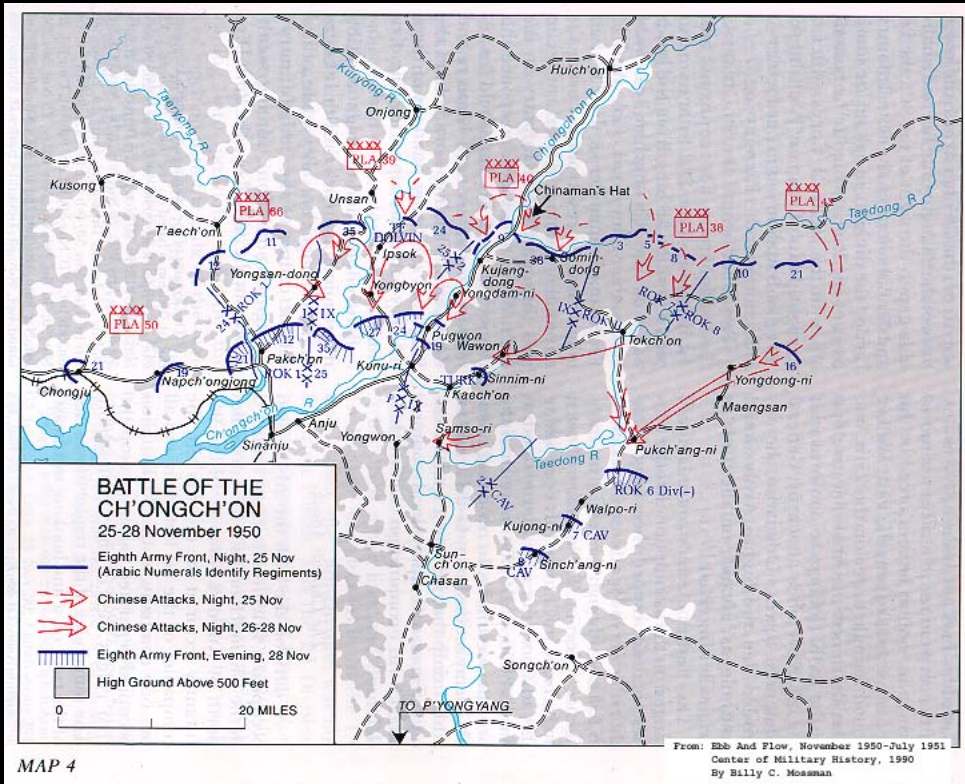


MAP 4

The blow fell first in the west against 8th Army. Five Chinese Armies (roughly 50,000 men each) attacked. In the east, they quickly broke through the scattered ROK defenses of the 8th ROK division and moved to cut off the retreat of the rest of the army. They also broke through the defenses of the remnants of the ROK 1st division although as at the Battle of Unsan a month earlier, the 1st ROK put up fight. But heavily outnumbered they could not hold and fell back. These two breakthroughs exposed the entire

flank of the remainder of 8th Army which was already dealing with frontal attacks against the U.S. 2nd Infantry around Kunu-ri. All that prevented a possible encirclement was the Turkish Brigade at Sinnim-ni. This unit broke and ran almost at first contact.

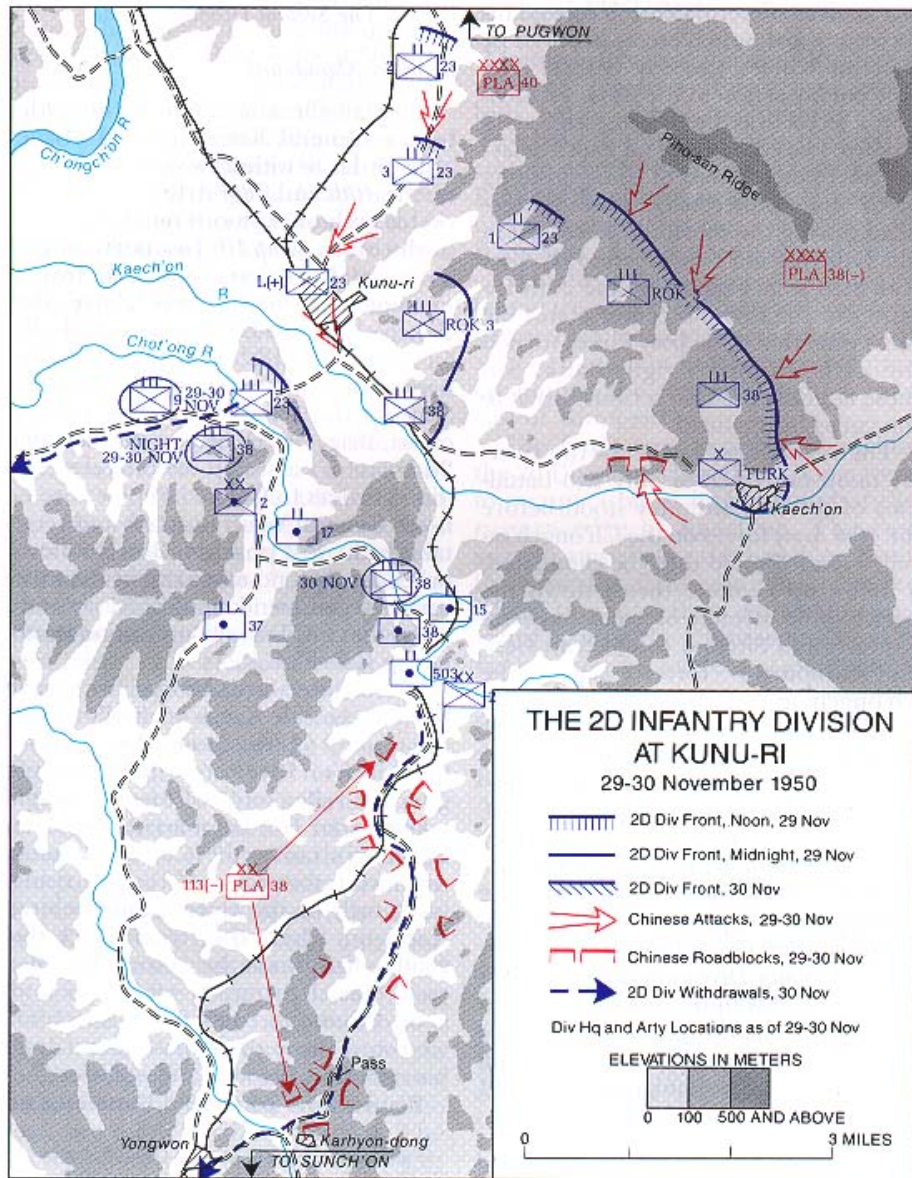
The Turks had arrived with a reputation they could not hope to match based largely on memories of Gallipoli in 1915. The troops were the poorest trained in any army – most were conscripts whose “training” consisted of being issued uniforms, rifles and ammunition just before they boarded the troopships for Korea. Their commander had been Chief of the Army and took a demotion from Field Marshal to Brigadier to lead them.



The collapse of the Turks exposed the 2nd Division's right flank, now undefended. The 2nd Division, still under the command of MGEN Kaiser, was no better organized than before. It was also not prepared to receive an attack. While other units were so prepared out of an abundance of caution, Kaiser was feeling the pressure from Tokyo to move north. His staff was concerned about what was probably out there. They were capturing deserters in the days leading up to the Chinese attack and while 8th

Army staff sympathized, they too were under pressure from above and, moreover, Willoughby and Tokyo were convinced the deserters were mere plants to deceive the Americans into thinking there was a massive Chinese Army when Tokyo was certain what army there was had long since moved back across the Yalu. However, once the attack began Walker ordered the as yet unengaged 24th Division to retreat towards Suncheon.

What made things worse, once the scale of the attack became obvious, 2nd Division's position at the center meant it had to serve as the rear guard for the entire 8th Army. It was allowed to pull back no further than the banks of the Chongch'on river for now.



MAP 10

The 8th Army was ordered to retreat to Sunchon, about half way between the Chongch'on River and Pyongyang were they would set up a defensive line.

The primary road from Kunu-ri to Sunchon ran through a narrow valley some 5 to 8 miles long. Most of the army had escaped along this road. On the 29th, the 2nd Division was ordered to pull out and follow.

None of the regimental commanders were keen. The hills were not in UN hands and while the Chinese had not blocked the road yet, if they did the column would be in trouble. Keiser ordered his division down the road.

By then, the 29th of November, the Chinese manned the ridges overlooking the valley.



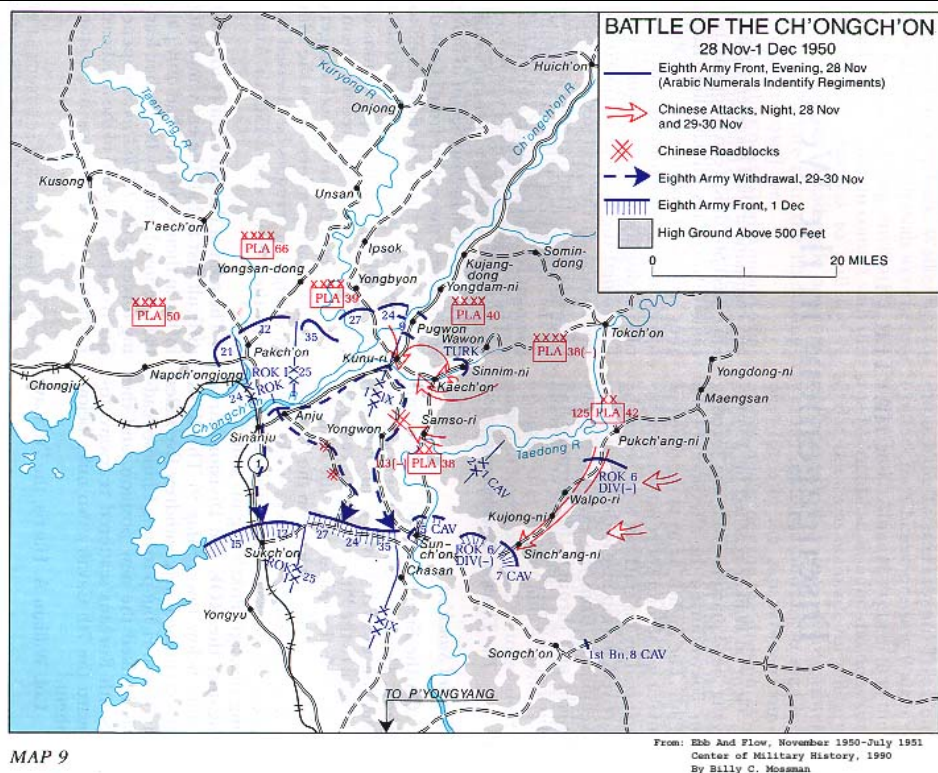
The miles long column of vehicles drove into a shooting gallery. Destroyed vehicles – from tanks to trucks to jeeps – littered and blocked the roads creating a traffic jam in the rear, itself now under attack by the Chinese.

Soldiers would dismount and take cover in the ditches, but as the fire was coming down from both sides, it was no cover at all. No attempt was made to take the ridgeline and the retreat became a complete rout, every man for himself. It became known as the Gauntlet.



Small groups of men and a handful of vehicles (mostly jeeps) made it out. This included the commanding general. But two regiments were effectively eliminated as a fighting force. Those that made it out were in no condition or mood to continue the fight.

Meanwhile, one regiment and a battalion of artillery remained behind to hold off the Chinese still attacking from the north.



MAP 9

The 9th Regiment held the rear covering the artillery. As the day wore on, it became apparent that retreat down the Gauntlet was suicide. The regimental commander ordered a recon patrol down the Anju road along the Chongch'on river, the same road the 24th Division had used the day before. It was unpaved – less ideal – but it was another way out. It turned out there were no Chinese anywhere along that road between 9th Regiment and Sunch'on. The commander recommended retreat down this road but was denied by division staff when he managed to get brief radio

contact. Later, as the artillery ran low on ammunition, he made the recommendation again, but this time he got no reply so he fired off the last of the artillery ammo in a massive barrage, sabotaged all the guns (as the bridges they knew of were questionable) put the artillerymen and his soldiers into trucks and headed down the Anju road. The 9th Regiment was the only regiment of the 2nd Division to make it to Sunch'on largely intact. Division threatened to Court Martial the commander for disobeying orders and not covering the rear of the retreat through the Gauntlet.

Instead, the Commander got the Distinguished Service Cross and MGEN Keiser was fired – along with many on his staff. The 2nd Division was now combat ineffective.



On November 26th, as 8th Army retreated south, MacArthur was forced to admit that the Chinese had, in fact, intervened in force. Still, his orders to Walker were to hold where he was and to Almond to continue as before.

He would admit on this day that America faced “an entirely new war.” He believed the Chinese had stabbed him in the back (refusing to admit he had been tricked in a manner which would have made Sun-Tsu proud or that Marshal Peng might actually be competent.)

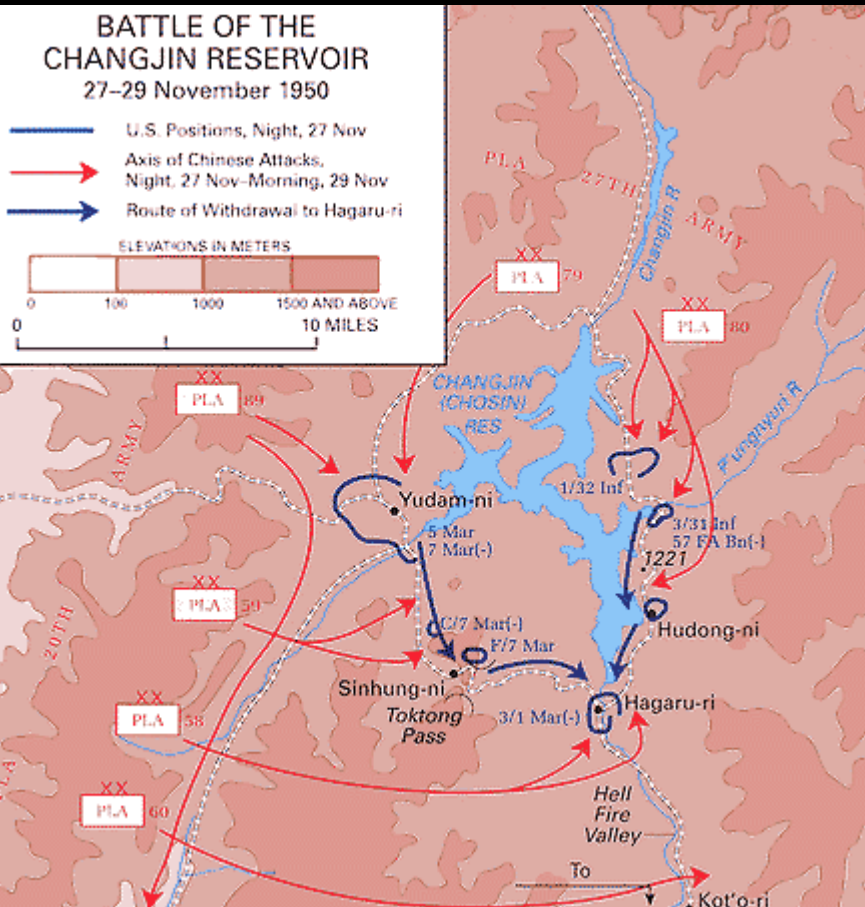
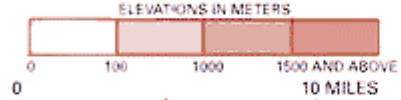
As events wore on and the scope of the situation became inarguable, it appears that his optimism and confidence which had been a dominant part of his personality his entire life, abandoned him never to truly return.

It was at this point, barely two month removed from the triumph that was Inchon, that the great man began to truly prove he was all too human.

BATTLE OF THE CHANGJIN RESERVOIR

27–29 November 1950

- U.S. Positions, Night, 27 Nov
- Axis of Chinese Attacks, Night, 27 Nov–Morning, 29 Nov
- Route of Withdrawal to Hagaru-ri



THE BATTLEFRONT

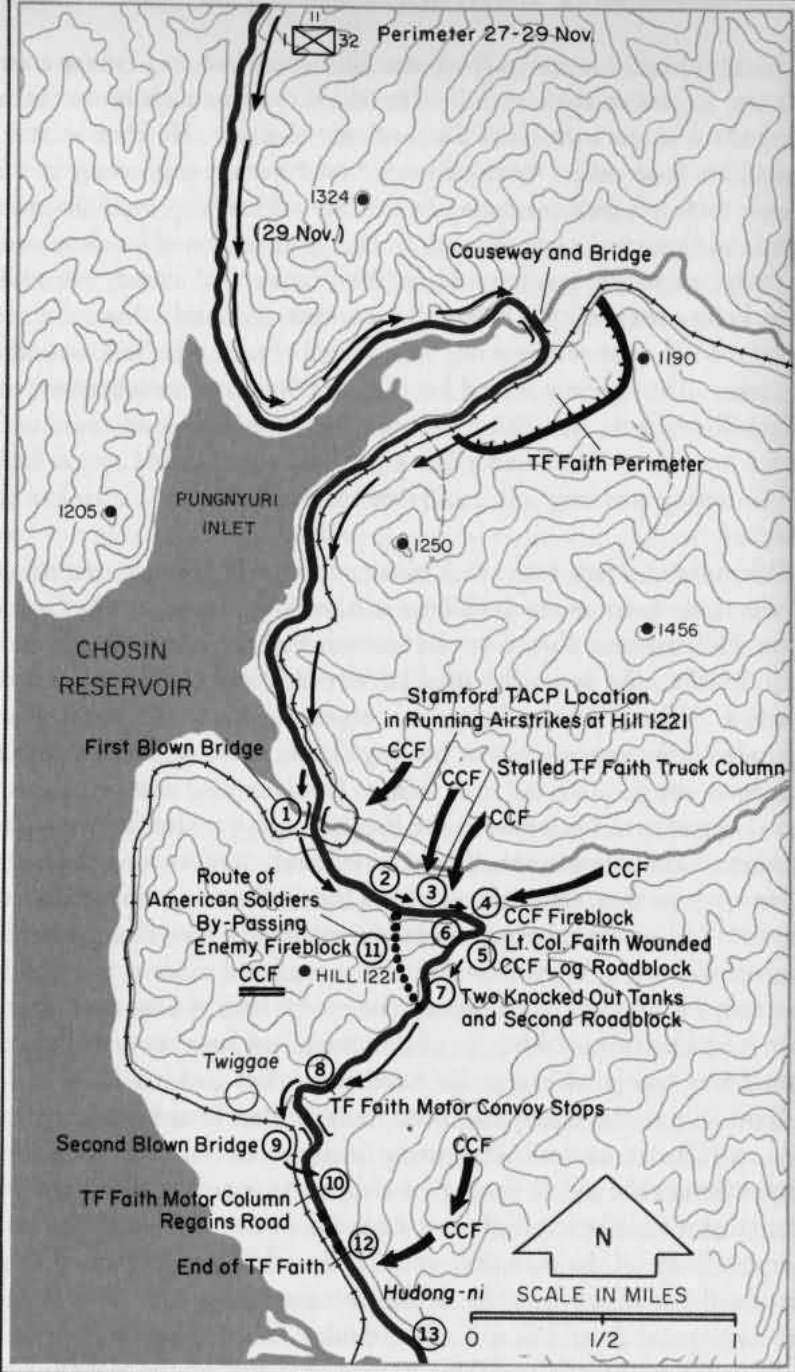
23 November 1950

High Ground Above 200 Meters

0 50 MILES



On the night of November 27th, the other shoe dropped when two Chinese armies attacked U.S. forces at the Changjin (Chosin) Reservoir in north central Korea. There were two separate units. In the West was the 1st Marine Division, its main effort centered on Yudam-ni and main supply base at Hagaru-ri at the south end of the reservoir. To the east, north of Hudong-ni were some 3,000 men of the 31st Regimental Combat Team from the 7th Infantry Division designated Task Force McLean – for now. The commander of TF McLean died in the opening hours and it was re-named after his successor, LTC Faith who commanded the furthest north battalion.



MAP II. Step-by-step sequence of Task Force Faith's breakout attempt.

The Task Force had been sent to Chosin to advance up the east bank when the Marines had refused Almond's orders to divide their force.

Almond had tried to assert his authority, but MGEN Smith went over his head, and MacArthur's to the Pentagon and the JCS backed him up. The Marine Division would not split up and advance on both sides of the reservoir. Almond then ordered the 31st Regimental Combat Team to head up the east bank as fast as possible. (It had been tasked to cover the supply route back to the port of Hamhung on the coast.) Unlike the Marines, the Task force commander could not go over Almond's head even if he had wanted to.

From the 27th to the 29th, the northern most battalion managed to barely hold its ground but realized it had to retreat. They fell back to a perimeter held by the rest of the regiment and expected a relief column from the Marines to come to their aid. This did not happen, not for a lack of effort on the part of the Marines but the stiffness of the Chinese blocking forces.



They then attempted a breakout of their own on the road south. The convoy had to deal with blown bridges and road blocks and entire units simply left the convoy to walk back to Marine lines over the ice of the lake. But the bulk of the force continued on for over a day before the way south became totally impassible.

At that point, all remaining senior officers were dead and the men were ordered to head south

as they could. For reasons unexplained to this day, the retreating survivors on the ice were not fired upon despite being in the open and in clear view of the Chinese on the shore.

The Task Force had set out with between 2850 and 3155 men on November 24th. The survivors, crossing the ice of the lake, began arriving in Hagaru-ri on December 1st and would continue to arrive through the 6th when the Marines began their own general withdrawal. ~1,500 Army wounded and frostbite cases were flown out of Hagaru-ri between December 1st and 5th (out of Over 4,500 air evacuations total.) Only 385 were deemed fit for further service and were assigned to the 7th Marine Regiment.

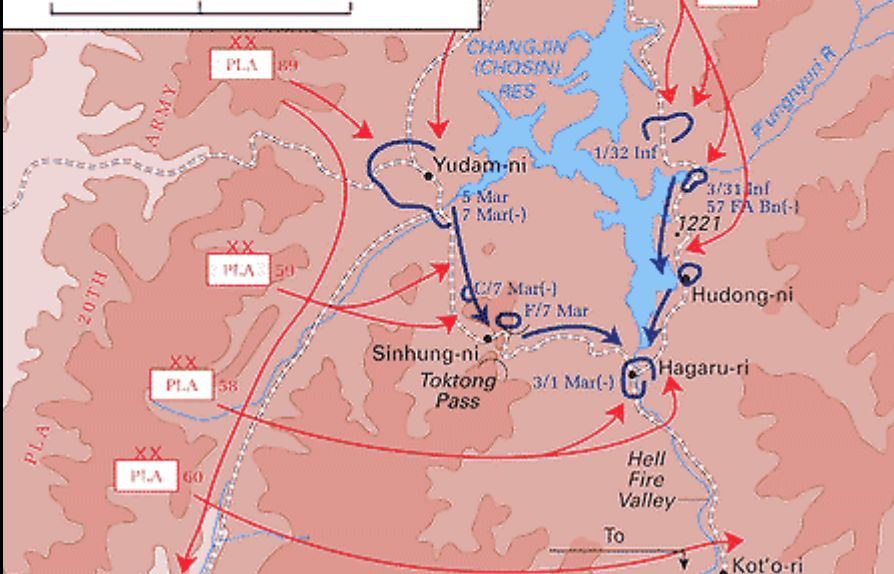
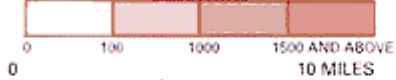
The remainder were KIA, POW or MIA. Yet despite suffering over 80% casualties, the Task Force had effectively destroyed the Chinese 80th Division it had faced. (That or the weather which was below zero the entire time with nighttime lows around -30.) The exact number of Chinese casualties is unknown.

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27-29 November 1950

- U.S. Positions, Night, 27 Nov
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- Route of Withdrawal to Hagaru-ri

ELEVATIONS IN METERS



The most well known battle of this Chinese offensive and arguably the best known of the entire war was that of the 1st Marine Division.

The Marines were concentrated in four places. The bulk of the 5th and 7th Marine Regiments were around Yudam-ni. Their orders from X Corps had been to push west to link up with 8th Army. Patrols had shown that the road west was a road in name only, impassible to vehicles so they stayed put. The 1st Marine Regiment was covering the supply route from Hagaru-ri to Koto-ri with the bulk at the main supply base at Hagaru-ri where the Marines had built an airstrip

capable of handling C-47 cargo planes.

Two smaller units, company sized, held two key positions on the road between Hagaru-ri and Yudam-ni.

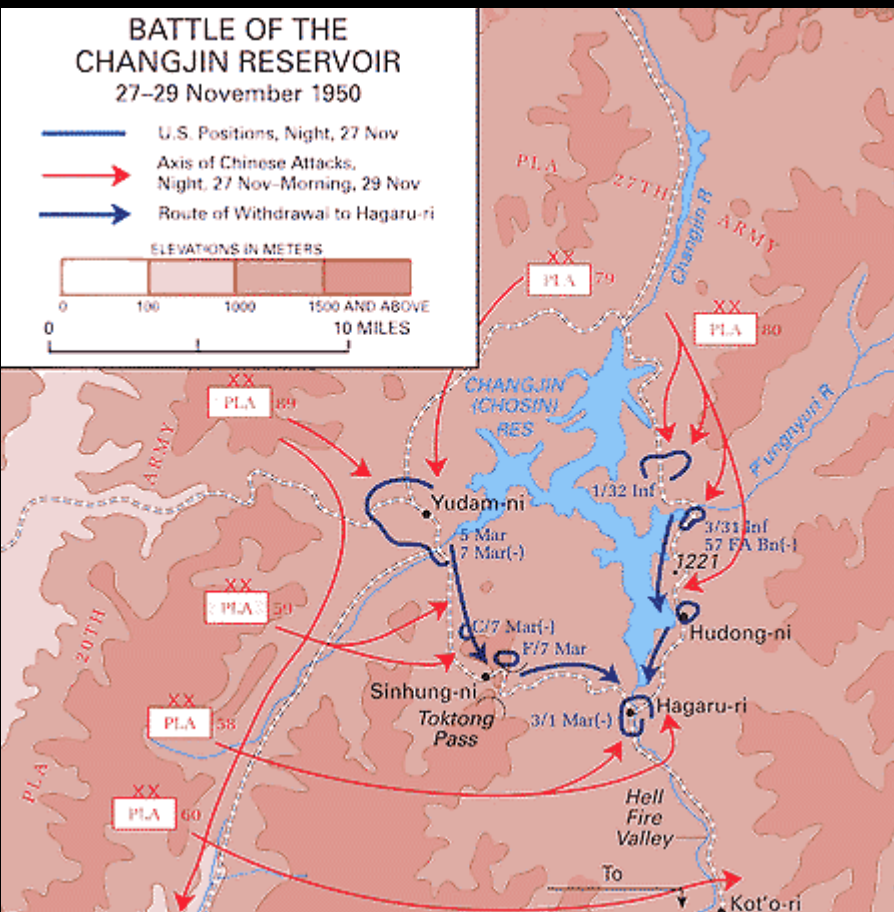
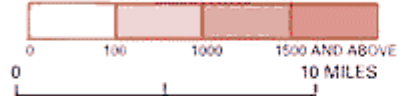
All Marine positions would be hit on the night of the 27th by the entirety of the Chinese 20th Army plus a division from the 27th Chinese Army.

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ELEVATIONS IN METERS



The Marines fought off the initial attacks and the units at Yudam-ni were ordered to withdraw to Hagaru-ri. The Marines had lost contact with one of the two companies holding a key position on the road south. They had to fight their way through several Chinese roadblocks to reach the position, including one that seemed particularly well defended with machine guns and mortars. But when fired upon the roadblock did not fire back. A patrol went forward and found that over one hundred Chinese manning the position had frozen to death over the night.

They reached the position of the presumed lost company only to find it still fighting.

While most of the company had been killed or wounded, over six times as many Chinese lay dead around their position. The column began arriving in Hagaru-ri the morning of November 29th.

But the Marines were not out of trouble. Mostly consolidated at Hagaru-ri, they were some sixty miles from the coast by road and the road had been cut and blocked at several points by the Chinese.



Over the next few days, the Marines of the 5th and 7th Regiments entered the perimeter around Hagaru-ri, as would the survivors of Task Force Faith. The Marines delayed moving south to allow time to recover as many stragglers as possible from both the Army and Marines, to fly in supplies for the drive south and to evacuate the wounded and frostbite casualties.

As desperate as the fighting had been up to this point, the majority of casualties evacuated had not been wounded but were victims of frostbite.



As Marines entered from the north, the Marines of the 1st Regiment which had held Hagaru-ri began pushing south to clear the Chinese roadblocks between Hagaru-ri and Koto-ri.



It was during this period, on December 4th 1950 that Ens. Jesse L. Brown was killed. Today, his death might be considered unremarkable, but Brown was at the time the first and only African American Naval Aviator.

Born and raised in Mississippi, he excelled in school then defied his parents and teachers advice to attend a traditionally black college and was admitted to Ohio State University in 1944. While there he would enter the NROTC as an Aviation Midshipmen which helped pay his costs. He graduated as an Ensign and with a degree in Architectural Engineering in 1947 and was sent to flight school.

By 1950, he was flying an F4U Corsair from the USS Leyte.

On December 4th, he took off on a close air support in support of the embattled Marines at Hagaru-Ri.





His plane took ground fire from the Chinese. While it seemed undamaged, it was losing fuel fast. He was forced to crash land the plane in a field about ten miles from the coast and behind enemy lines.

His wingman and roommate, LTJG Thomas Hudner saw the landing and saw Brown waiving. Against orders, Hudner crash landed to assist his friend. Brown was trapped in the plane by the instrument panel. Hudner tried to free him.

An Air Force rescue helicopter landed and the pilot joined Hudner in trying to pull brown from the plane. They were unable to do so as night fell and the helicopter had to leave.

Brown was unconscious when they left. Hudner fully expected to be Court Martialed for losing his airplane on purpose. Instead, he received the Medal of Honor for his effort.

Brown's plane was napalmed the next day to keep Brown's body and plane from the enemy.





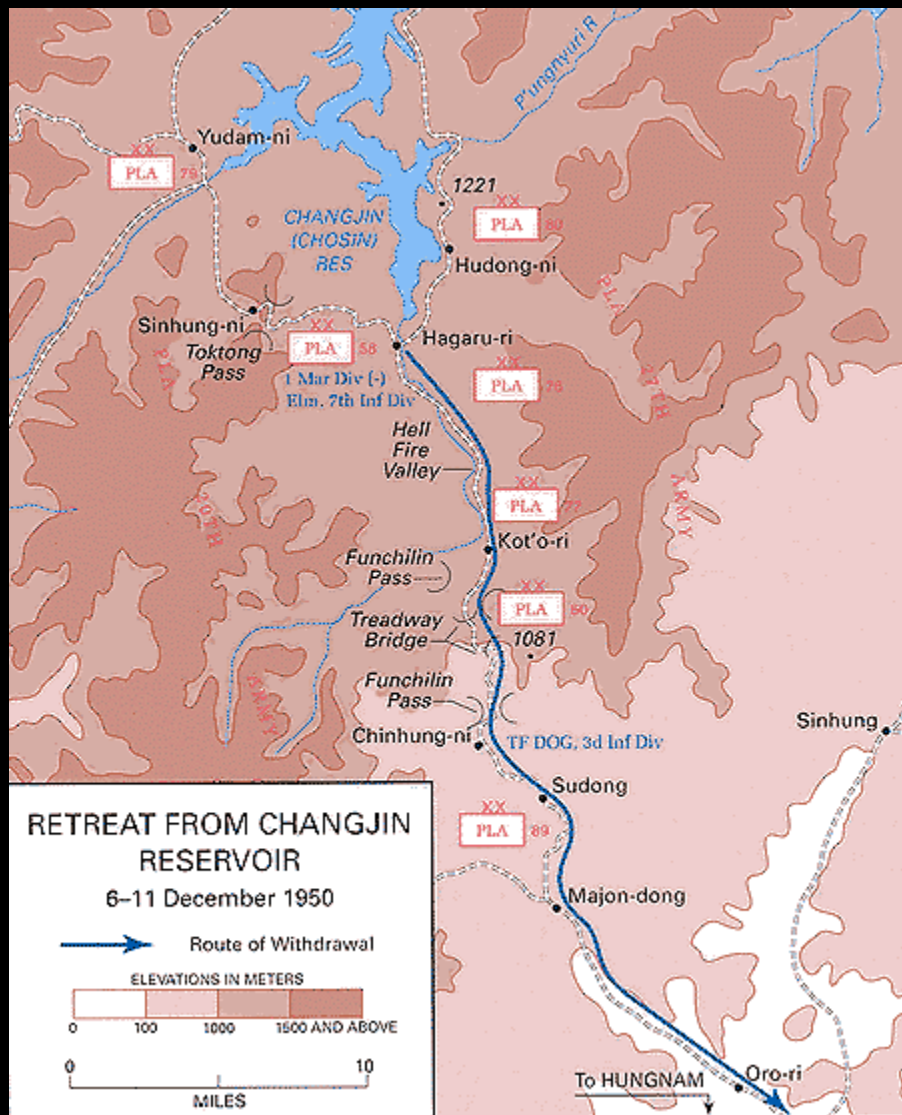
In 1973, the USS Jesse L. Brown (FF-1989) was commissioned. Present at the commissioning were his wingman Thomas Hudner and his widow and ship's sponsor. Hudner remained friends with Brown's widow and only child for the rest of his life.

Capt Hudner retired from the navy a few days after the ship named for his friend was commissioned.



On December 1st 2017, the destroyer USS Thomas Hudner (DDG-116) was commissioned.

Its namesake, the aviator who risked his life and career to save his friend had died less than a month earlier at the age of 93.



LTGEN Smith decided the Marines would move out for the port of Hungnam on December 6th. By then, the wounded and most of the frostbitten soldiers and Marines had been evacuated and the trucks of the supply convoy stacked with the dead Marines. When asked about the retreat by a reporter, Smith replied: "Retreat? Hell, we're just attacking in a different direction!"

It was an accurate statement given that the Marines were surrounded by two Chinese Armies bent on their destruction. In fact, the two armies had orders to make it so given that 8th Army had managed to slip away.

The Chinese tried the same sort of ambush that had worked on the 2nd Infantry along with roadblocks. The difference was the Marine infantry attacked the high ground driving the Chinese from their positions before the convoy came within range. That and they had the close air support from the Navy and Marine Corps.





In addition to the Chinese, a critical bridge across a deep (but narrow) gorge had been blown. It was the only road out of their predicament and it caused the column to halt. The Chinese tried to take advantage of this but were driven back with heavy casualties each time.

The Air Force air dropped a bridge – or at least the engineering equipment to build one. The Marines set it up in less than a day and were on the road again.



But it took a couple of days for this to happen and X Corps was concerned they might not have the time. X Corps sent a Regimental Combat Team from the 3rd Infantry Division north to link up with the Marines. Named Task Force Dog, it included the 65th Infantry Regiment from Puerto Rico – who in addition from being from the tropics were not equipped with winter gear.

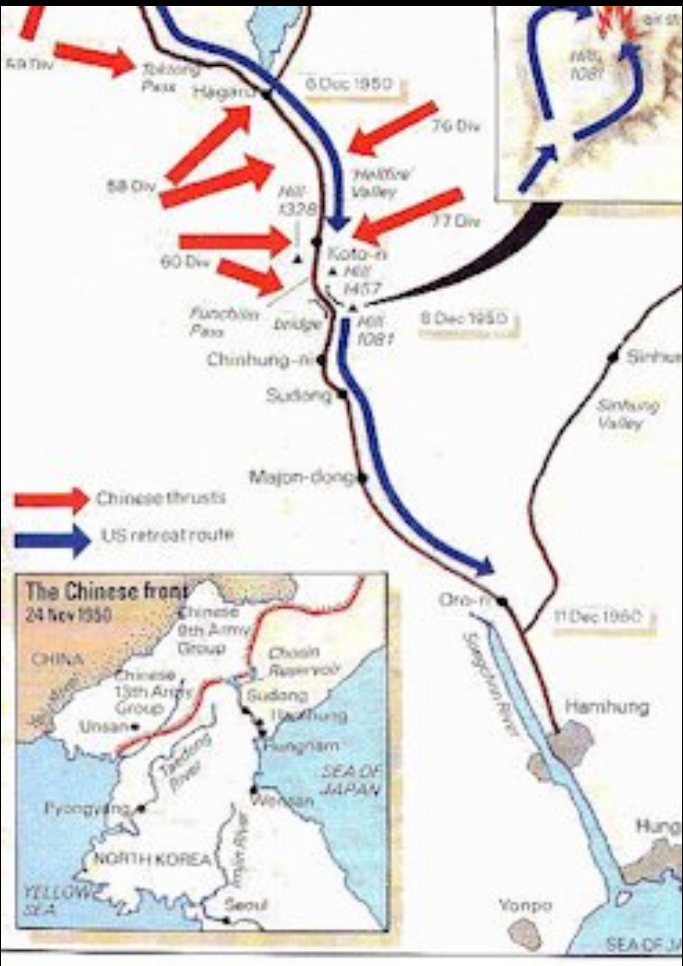


With the bridge in place, the Marines continued south, linking up with the Army near Sudong. Once they had crossed the bridge, it was blown again.

The Marines suffered over 10,000 casualties in their fight at and from the Chosin Reservoir. However, well over half were frostbite cases as opposed to killed, wounded etc.

When they left the bridge behind, the Chinese attacks stopped. The truth was as battered as the Marines were, the Chinese were worse off. The two Chinese Armies that had attacked at Chosin were effectively wiped out – mostly by the cold. The total Chinese casualties is unknown.

The Marines began arriving in the port of Hungnam on the coast on December 10th and began embarking on ships as soon as ships were available. Hungnam was the evacuation point for all X Corps and ROK forces in the east.



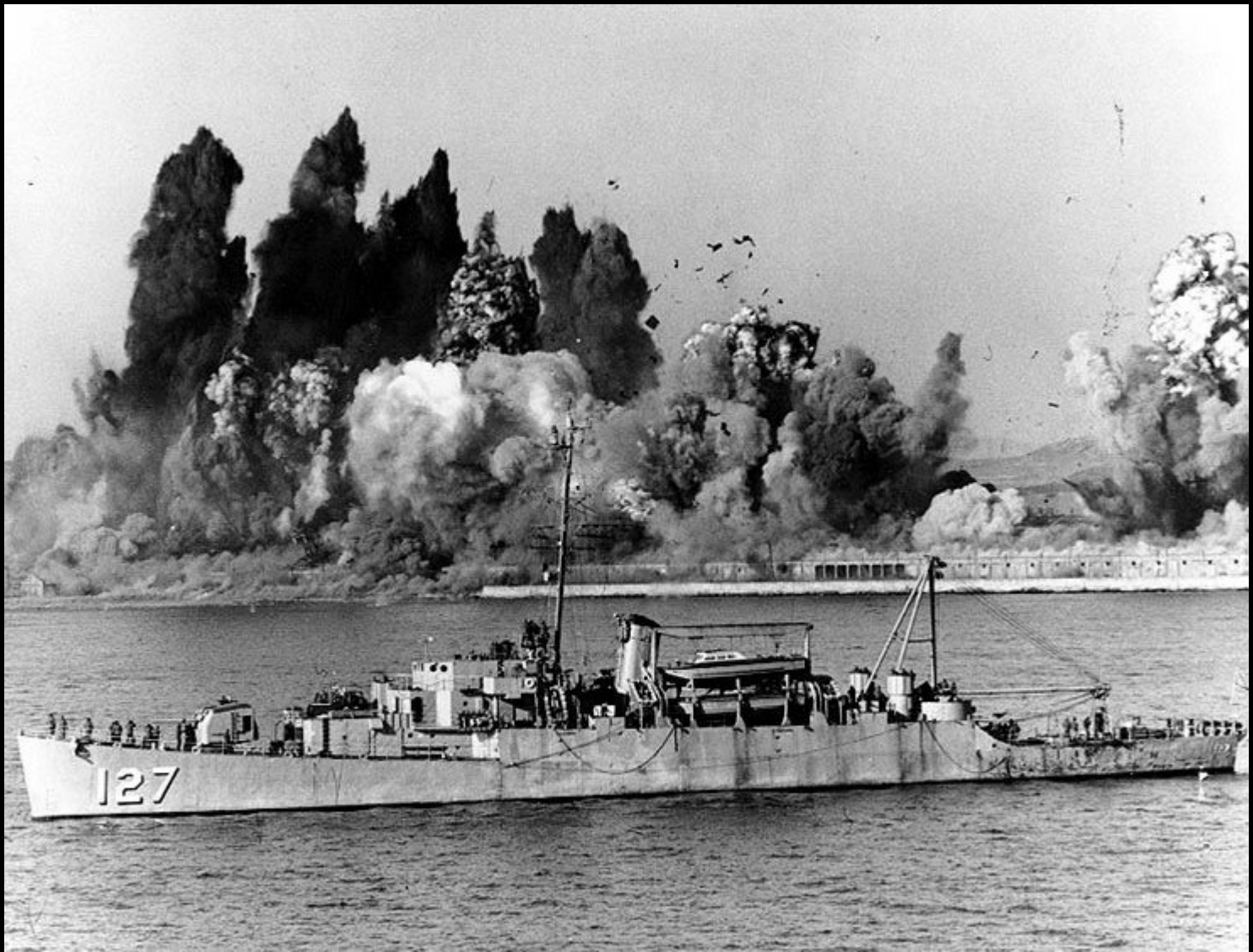


In WWII it was remarked that the picture of the Marines raising the flag over Iwo Jima guaranteed a Marine Corps for the next 500 years. By 1950, it looked like they might not last another five. Arguably, it was their fight at the Chosin Reservoir that saved the Marine Corps. It certainly did not hurt that it was about the only good news in December 1950.

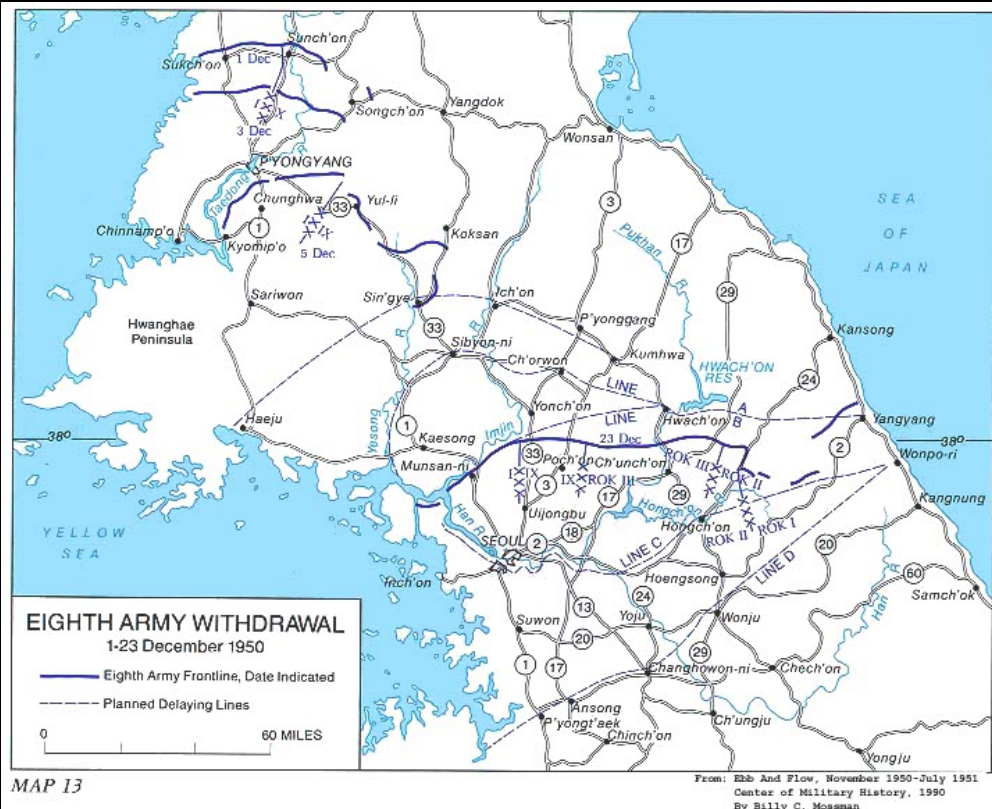
But what of the 7th Infantry and ROK Divisions?

Aside from Task Force Faith, they did not encounter the Chinese. They were ordered to pull back to Hungnam and board ships for the south. Somewhat surprisingly, LGEN Almond did not complain about having to run from the Chinese laundrymen. Almond had to evacuate over 105,000 men, 18,422 vehicles and over 350,000 tons. The port could not move this amount of cargo quickly.

The Marines began embarking on December 15th. The last unit to embark, the 65th Infantry Regiment PRNG embarked on December 24th.



As a Christmas present, the engineers blew up the port and what supplies they could not ship out on December 25th, 1950. Meanwhile the Marine Corps made it clear to MacArthur that no Marine would serve under Ned Almond again.



MAP 13

8th Army continued to retreat. It was mostly organized although it was clear from the beginning morale was non-existent and a strong defense was not possible. 8th Army mostly avoided contact with the Chinese, managing to retreat faster than the Chinese could advance.

This was due to the fact that despite his losses, LGEN Walker managed to preserve most of his motor transport and supplies. In fact, most of his divisions were still in good shape – but for morale. By December 23rd, 8th Army established a defensive line on the Imjim River north of Seoul having abandoned North Korea.

MacArthur wanted to fire his general. But on December 23rd, General Walker died in a jeep accident.





The Pentagon named MacArthur's most outspoken critic on the Joint Staff as Walker's replacement – LGEN Matthew B. Ridgway.

It was a logical choice given that Ridgway knew more about the situation than just about anyone else in the Army. Moreover, he was convinced (correctly as it would turn out) that the Chinese were nearing the limit of their logistics capability.

Peng had lured the Americans north extending their supply lines and leading them into an ambush. Ridgway was convinced he could turn the tables on the Chinese in the south. He was, perhaps, the only one who seemed even slightly confident about the situation.

The question was would MacArthur give him a free hand in Korea? MacArthur was convinced the war was lost and disaster loomed unless...



MacArthur was defeated. He was convinced that unless there was a major escalation the war was lost.

He wanted more divisions.

He wanted Taiwan to invade the mainland with U.S. support.

He wanted to bomb the airbases and rail centers in Manchuria.

He even suggested deploying nuclear weapons.

He was not about to make do with what he had.

But his statements and messages to the JCS were not what the President or the Pentagon wanted. He had lost the plot – which was to contain this war for fear of unleashing WWII.

If he did not have his way, he foresaw a disaster worse than Dunkirk...



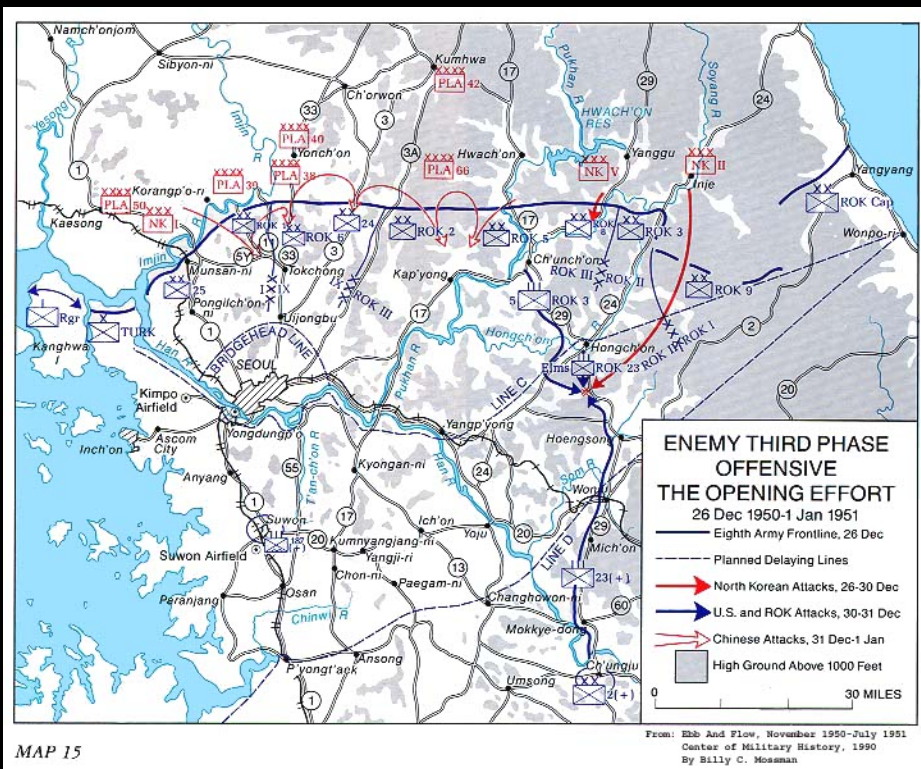
Ridgway arrived in Japan on December 26th.

He had a lengthy meeting with MacArthur where it was clear to him MacArthur no longer saw the true picture. At the end of the meeting he asked what he thought was a question that would enrage the old general.

“If I see an opportunity to counterattack...?”

“8th Army is yours, Matt.”

His plans were already to counterattack as soon as 8th Army was ready. He gained a key concession from MacArthur. Almond’s X Corps was no longer an independent command. From now on, it answered to him. But whether 8th Army would fight was another question.



MAP 15

On December 26th, the day after Ridgway took command, the Chinese launched an all out offensive to take Seoul. Ridgway's orders were to hold as long as possible but not risk an encirclement. He did not immediately issue orders, rather he toured the frontline units to get a feel for 8th Army. While he knew the situation, he did not know this army.

Morale was the worse he had ever seen. While the ROKs were eager to fight, 8th Army was eager to retreat. On January 3rd, 1951, Ridgway ordered 8th Army to

retreat across the Han river. The city fell on the 7th.

He would draw the Army back to south of Osan hoping to overtax the Chinese supply lines. What he had was a defeated army. He felt he could fix it but he was certain time was not on his side.

The officers needed to learn to fight. The soldiers needed to learn how to be infantrymen. Officers did not think retreat first. Infantry did not ride around on trucks near the front lines or stay near them. What Ridgway would accomplish in his first months in Korea was nothing short of miraculous...



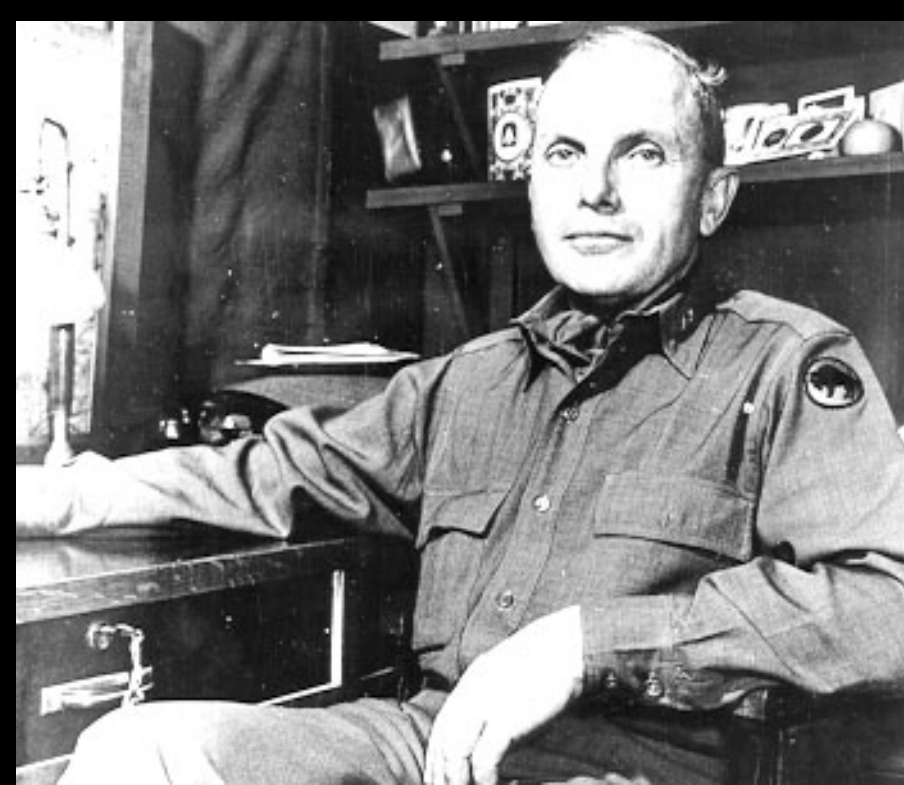
In World War II, senior commanders (regiment, division, corps) were given roughly 90 days in combat to sink or swim meaning if they failed to perform they were sent home. And after 90 days, if they really messed up they were sent home.

(This did not mean either their careers or their war was over. Several relieved early in the war returned to combat command later – notably Terry Allen [1st and 106th Infantry Divisions].)

This had not happened in Korea.

Moreover, several replacements had been sent to Korea to replace commanders or staff at or near the end of their tours of duty only to be seconded to MacArthur's staff.

This policy was reversed and those officers formerly destined for 8th Army went where the Army had originally intended.



One senior officer who was not replaced was X Corps commander Ned Almond. It was not that Ridgway had no issues with the man for he did. The man was reckless and overly aggressive as a commander. But, while you can reign in such a person and manage them, you cannot make a timid man into a lion. Ned stayed in part because his instincts could be controlled.

But another reason was he was still MacArthur's Chief of Staff. Now, as Ridgway's subordinate (as commander X Corps) the man's access to MacArthur was

both limited and also useful. It was through Almond as Chief of Staff that Ridgway was able to raid MacArthur's staff for proven combat leaders. (And Ridgway foresaw a need for an aggressively reckless Corps commander in the near future.) And through Almond as a subordinate, Ridgway could also somewhat manage the always mercurial and now pessimistic MacArthur. MacArthur saw the war as lost unless he got what he wanted.

Ridgway saw things differently, including what defined "victory." He understood this was not WWII thus defeating China was not the goal and the more limited goal was possible with the forces available despite MacArthur's doomsday predictions.

The command re-staffing occurred during Ridgway's first month or so on the job. As noted, this had been within traditional discretion in the past – but Ridgway's re-staffing was effectively a purge of 8th Army's higher ranking officers. George Marshall had done something similar in 1939 – but that was during peacetime with officers at, near or over retirement age or who had not and would not be promoted. That was not the situation in early 1951.

The Army Staff in Washington took exception. Ridgway's purge had upset career tracks and personnel assignments not just in Korea. As Ridgway prepared 8th Army to stand, the Army was expanding. (But not in the way MacArthur wanted.) The Army was beginning to reinforce Europe, a process that would continue. But now key positions needed to be filled in Korea that had been manned days before.

The Army did not countermand Ridgway, but made it clear he (and all other commanders) could no longer fire at will.

They also decided that all combat tours were restricted to 12 – 13 months from privates to generals. No longer would any serve “for the duration.”

This policy has continued to the present day for better or worse. (Since 1951 only one senior combat commander has been fired summarily for poor battlefield performance [during Vietnam]. That is not so much a reflection of the competence of commanders more recently, but a reflection of the reluctance to take such action.)



Ridgway also found the logistics situation unacceptable. It was managed from Tokyo, not from Korea and Tokyo was more than willing to second guess the requests from the army on the ground. Moreover, that Tokyo organization – overstuffed and therefore underworked and trying to justify itself – had to supply not just the U.S. troops, but also the Koreans and much of the UN units.

With the backing of the Pentagon, all Army logistics for Korea was transferred to Pusan along with many of the logistics staff from Tokyo and they now answered to the 8th Army commander and not SCAP.

And because Korea was a “police action,” the U.S economy was not mobilized. Fortunately, MacArthur had allowed less regulation and the expansion of Japanese industry, who were more than willing to build and sell...

By 1952, Japanese industry had been largely retooled by the United States.

By 1952, most of the supplies for 8th Army and U.N. forces were made in Japan.

This included basic items like tents and uniforms but it also included trucks, jeeps, ammunition and artillery. The equipment was built to U.S. Army plans and specifications – in other words identical in all respects to what would have come out of Detroit at the time. The only “end items” not built in Japan were tanks and combat aircraft.

Japan’s economic miracle of the 1950’s was fueled by it becoming the arsenal for Korea at the start of the decade (much as the U.S. economy of the late 1940’s and 1950’s was fueled by supplying WWII).





Ridgway also spoke with and listened to the enlisted ranks, both veterans and draftees. They complained of the leadership (which he would address regardless), the food, the mail, the situation, the lack of time off...

Some was an unavoidable consequence of actually being in an Army – the army in Japan was one in name only. Much of it, however, fell under the leadership issue – or lack thereof.

Hiss reorganization of the logistics would solve the mail issue as that was moved from Japan.

He would allow more behind the lines passes for front line troops and recommended the one year tour limit – based on a post WWII study that demonstrated troops lost combat effectiveness after 6 months in combat.



He also mandated that all soldiers regardless of where they were have regular access to showers, laundry and hot food – much to the horror of the service troops who now had to be much, much closer to the front line.

And he saw to it that winter uniforms were issued as a highest priority. Only the Marines came prepared for winter – although not as prepared for the severity of a Korean winter. The 65th Regiment from Puerto Rico arrived with jungle fatigues and had to make do until Ridgway took over.

But what he had to address was a prevailing fear of the Chinese and a general lack of any understanding as to what they were doing in Korea. Training would solve both.

And in regards to the Chinese, he told the troops the truth. The Chinese actually had it worse than they did.

But not all his reforms were accepted...



Because Korea was a “Police Action,” manpower had not been mobilized as it had been in 1861, 1898, 1914 or 1940. The increases in overall manpower went to Europe, not to expand U.S. forces in Korea. Moreover, there was nothing like a replacement pool anywhere in the U.S. Army. U.S. units had to wait weeks or longer to replace battlefield casualties, often long enough that all but the most seriously wounded soldiers returned to their units without replacement. But units still needed manpower.

And it was available. Partly due to universal conscription and because the South did not want the North to win, the Korean Army could not organize recruits fast enough. Thus, under Ridgway (although it was MacArthur’s idea) the KATUSA program (Koreans Augmenting U.S. Army) was born.

Korean troops (mostly raw recruits) were sent to U.S. units as replacements. Naturally, there were problems mostly due to the fact that few of the recruits spoke English and fewer Americans spoke Korean. But it was Korean speaking recruits or no replacements at all/



In addition to the language barrier, there was also no set policy on how to incorporate Korean replacements. This was left to the individual units – and the attitudes of the officers and men in those units with very mixed results most of which jaded American attitudes towards their Korean allies.

The most common policy was to use the Koreans as labor – digging latrines, fighting positions, KP duty, laundry – all the jobs no one wanted. After all, the Korean recruits had no real training usually and many Americans felt they had better things to do than teach. Those soldiers wanted to fight, not be pack mules and houseboys. Their attitude and discipline was lacking and they were the most likely to desert (as in return to the

Korean Army in most cases and be sent to fight).

A minority of the KATUSA replacements went into the line alongside the Americans despite the language barrier. And they usually fought well despite their lack of training. The smallest group entered as replacement units (platoons, companies and battalions) with their own officers and NCOs some of whom spoke English. These troops often fought as well if not better than their American counterparts.



By 1952, the KATUSA program had been standardized. Korean troops were no longer integrated as mere labor, rather assigned as regular replacements and expected to train on the job. By the end of the war, U.S. soldiers in Korea had high regard for their Korean counterparts – but they were not back in the U.S. making this known.

Still, the program must have been successful.

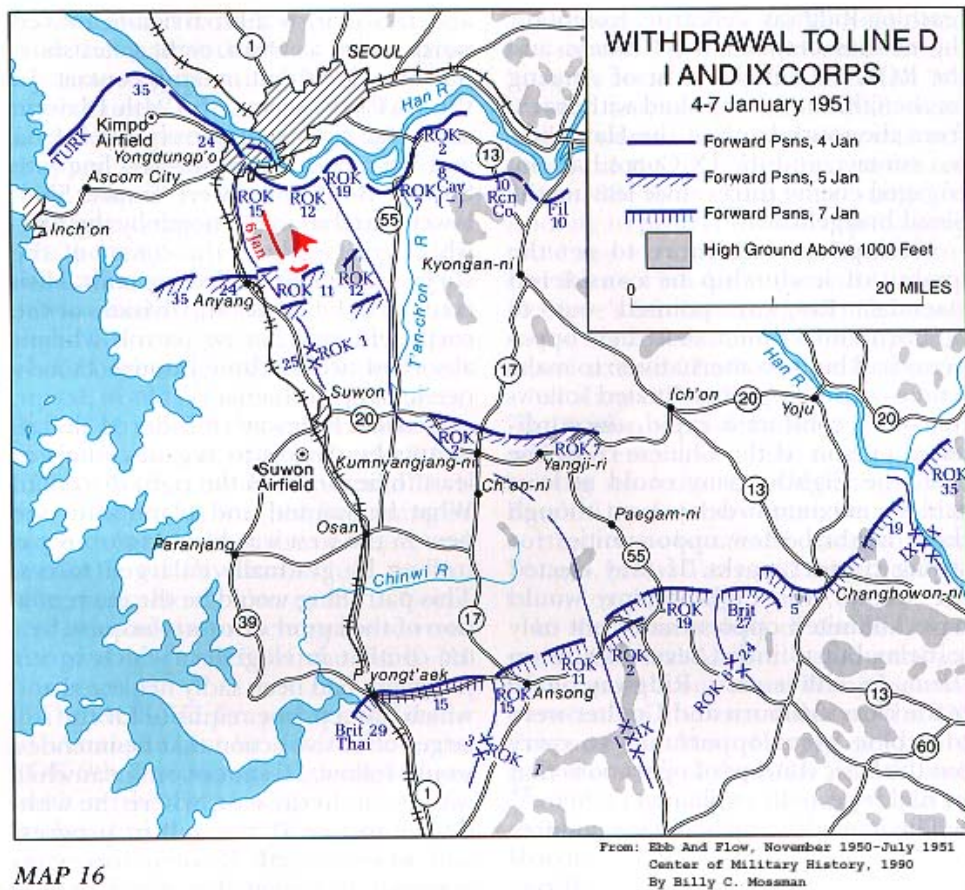
The KATUSA program remained in effect in Korea ever since and is still in use today with the modern 8th Army. (Most KATUSA may have been drafted – Korea still has universal conscription – but KATUSA are volunteers for the assignment, most taking it to perfect their English skills for later use in business.)



The final problem was the fear the American troops had vis the Chinese. (Americans were no longer afraid of the North Koreans.) This had to do with Chinese tactics as much as anything. It was the Chinese who launched the so called “human wave” assaults and used bugles during the attack. The reason was simple – they had poor battlefield communications. But it had been unnerving.

Ridgway began intensive education of the Army. He made it clear that there was a reason for the Chinese madness and it did not mean they were better – the opposite in fact. Moreover, rather than see the massed attacks as terrifying, the army should see it for what it truly was – a large, vulnerable tactic. Staffs were ordered to drop all plans for retreat and begin to plan ways to take advantage of the enemy in the open.

The biggest fear he had to combat was the fear most troops had of being surrounded. His best unit commanders (such as Col. Michealis) were not unnerved when the enemy was in the rear. Then again, most of his best commanders were veteran airborne troops who were used to being surrounded. Over the next couple of month, 8th Army began to learn what the Airborne had learned in WWII. (The enemy has us surrounded! I feel sorry for the poor bastards!)



MAP 16

an enemy who is not yet there.

Ridgway did not see the situation as either dire or disastrous (provided the Army got its collective act together.) The word from MacArthur in Tokyo was another matter. He was convinced disaster loomed and he was facing the worst defeat in U.S. history. Aside from limited bombing of the Yalu River bridges – which had stopped once the river iced over – every request he made to expand the war had been denied.

But the war did not wait for Ridgway to sort things out. He arrived in Korea with the Chinese threatening Seoul. There was already a plan in place to fall back to Line D (lower positions) which was deemed a defensible line. There were lines closer to Pusan, but Ridgway ordered his officer to ignore them.

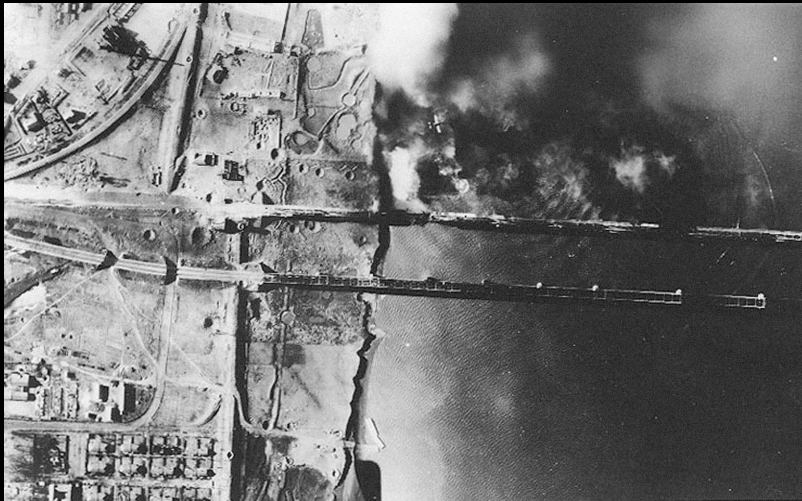
8th Army manned Line D by Jan 7th. What annoyed Ridgway was many units had no contact with the Chinese and had not had contact in days. He ordered aggressive patrolling to re-establish contact. (Find them. Fix them. Fight them.) One cannot fight

Photo # 80-G-423495 Bombing Yalu bridges at Sinuiju, North Korea, Nov. 1950



The bombing of the Yalu bridges began in late November 1950 once it was clear that the Chinese had intervened in force. The approval from Washington came with restrictions:

- U.S. warplanes could not violate Chinese airspace – the north side of the river.**
- The U.S. could not bomb or strafe anything on the Chinese side of the river, and**
- Only the southern bank and southern spans could be bombed.**



The Air Force could not manage the navigation without violating China's airspace nor were their bombers accurate enough to hit the Korean side consistently.

The Navy and Marine Corps – flying much lower – could hit the designated targets without violating Chinese airspace.

Photo # 80-G-423495 Bombing Yalu bridges at Sinuiju, North Korea, Nov. 1950

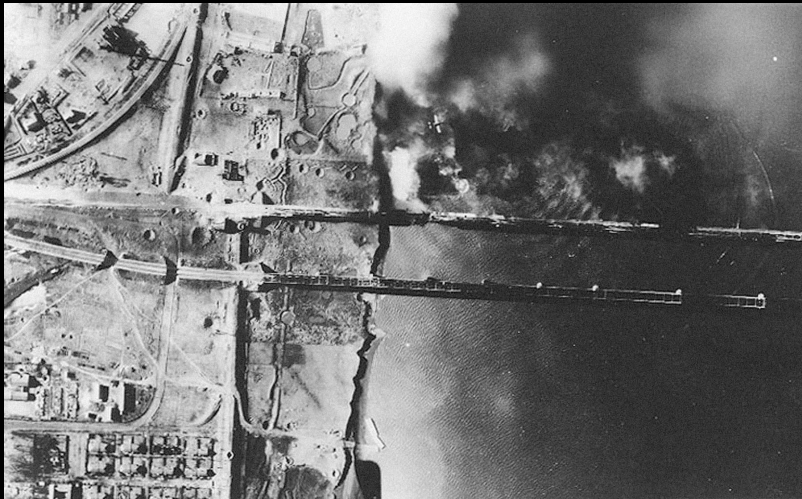


The mission, therefore, fell to the A-1's and F4Us of the Navy and Marine Corps operating from carriers off shore. They hated the assignment mainly because the restrictions meant the air defense could be placed on the north side of the Yalu and would be untouchable.

They also hated the job because while damaging a bridge was easy, destroying it was not. Spans could be replaced – in hours for foot traffic and days for vehicles – meaning they had to return again and again.

By late December, the river froze over so bombing had no effect as troops and equipment could cross almost anywhere.

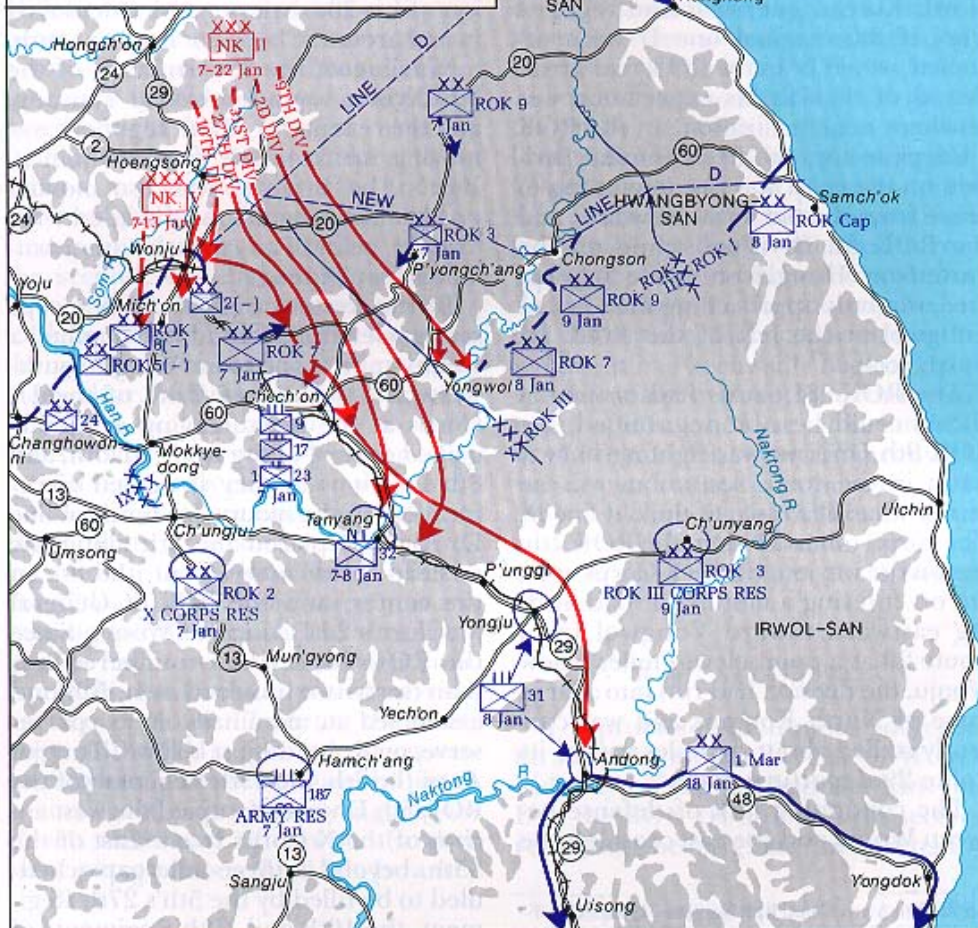
But the immediate effect was not the reduction of supplies (they were being bombed everywhere), but the arrival of the Russian flown jet fighters, which came as a rude shock. Prior to that point, the U.S. enjoyed air supremacy over all of Korea. After, "Mig Alley" (far north Korea) became no man's land (or sky).



NK II CORPS AND V CORPS ATTACKS 7-22 January 1951

- X Corps Frontline, Morning, 7 Jan
- Other U.S. and ROK Positions Occupied or Established on Dates Indicated
- Axis of N.K. Attacks, Dates Indicated
- High Ground Above 1000 Feet

0 25 MILES



From: Ebb And Flow, November 1950-July 1951
Center of Military History, 1990
By Billy C. Mossman

MAP 17

On Jan 7th, just as the Chinese offensive ground to a halt in western and central Korea, the NKPA re-entered the war on the east side of Korea. Their attack happened to exploit a gap between the ROK III Corps and U.S X Corps and broke into the rear.

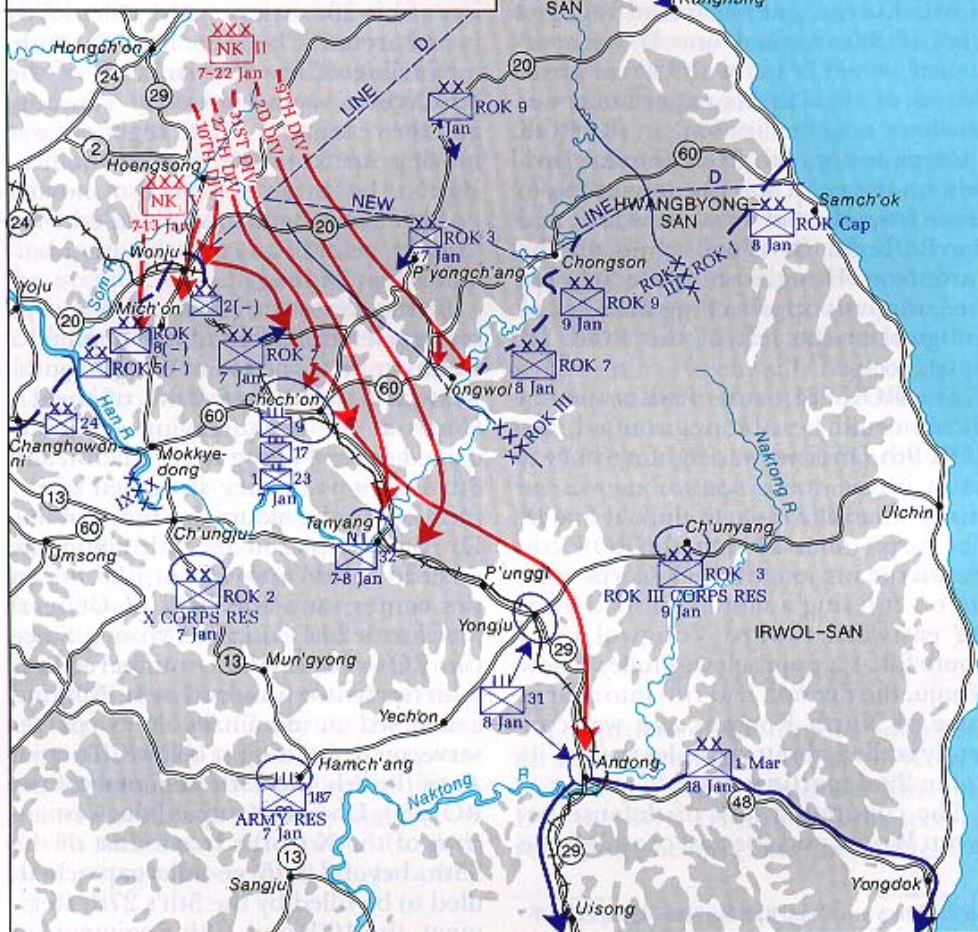
This cause a panic in Tokyo as the attack seemed to threaten Pusan.

Ridgway and the ROK army, however did not panic. The U.S. and Korean forces had not run off at the attack, but held the flanks of the breakthrough. The penetration was over poor ground – meaning the NKPA could barely supply their troops. This presented an opportunity to cripple the reconstituted NKPA before they had a chance...

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By holding the flanks of the breakthrough, Ridgway and the UN forced the NKPA into a narrow corridor without any north/south roads. The air forces and artillery pounded this corridor over the next several days.

Elements of the NKPA 31st Division made it as far south as Andong, which months before had been the northern part of the Pusan Perimeter, but by then it lacked the strength or supply to continue and was forced to pull back.

Poorly supplied and under constant air attack and artillery bombardment, the NKPA offensive ground to a halt and then yielded the ground gained – albeit slowly. The result, in the end, was the decimation of what little remained of the veterans in the NKPA and no lasting success.

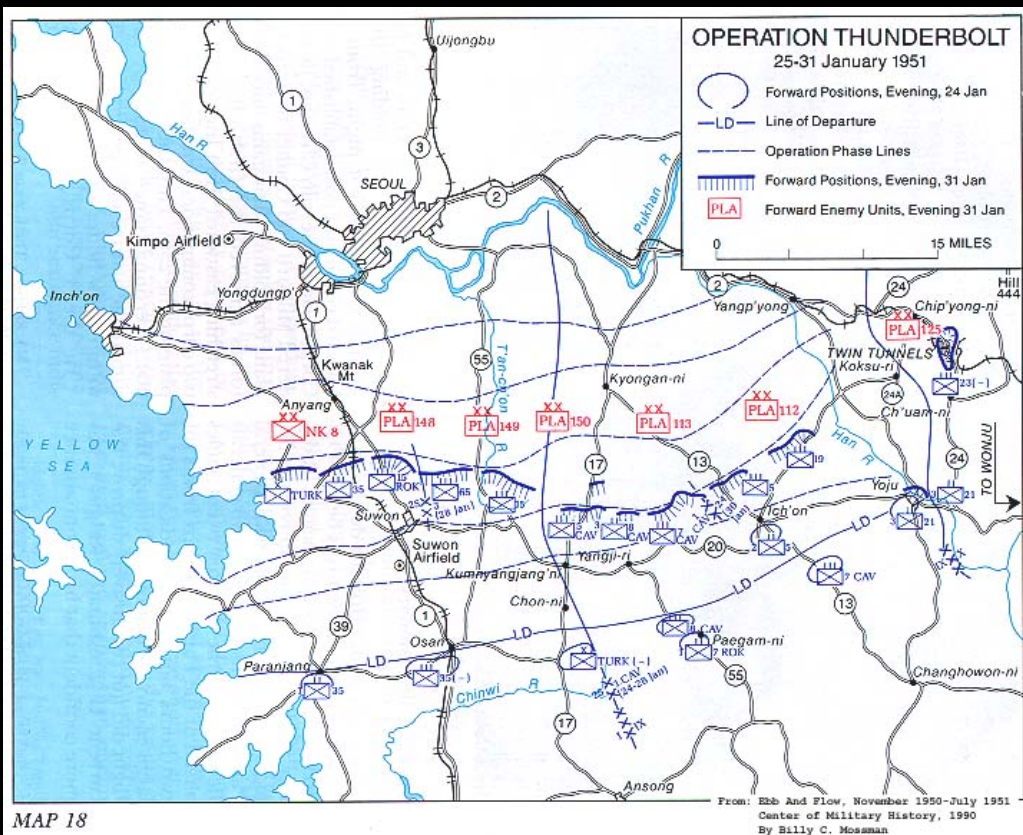


But that is not what the American people were hearing at the time. Following the breakthrough, MacArthur made his complaints about the war public via press interviews. He said the war could be lost and the consequences disastrous unless he was given full reign to prosecute the war as he saw fit.

This was completely the opposite of the reports coming out of 8th Army from General Ridgway, although unlike MacArthur, Ridgway was not holding inflammatory press interviews. Truman considered firing MacArthur but held back as relieving the man at this juncture – when the outcome was not truly certain – might destroy 8th Army.

He did, however, send MacArthur a message forbidding any future press interviews and directing SCAP to forward any questions to the Pentagon.

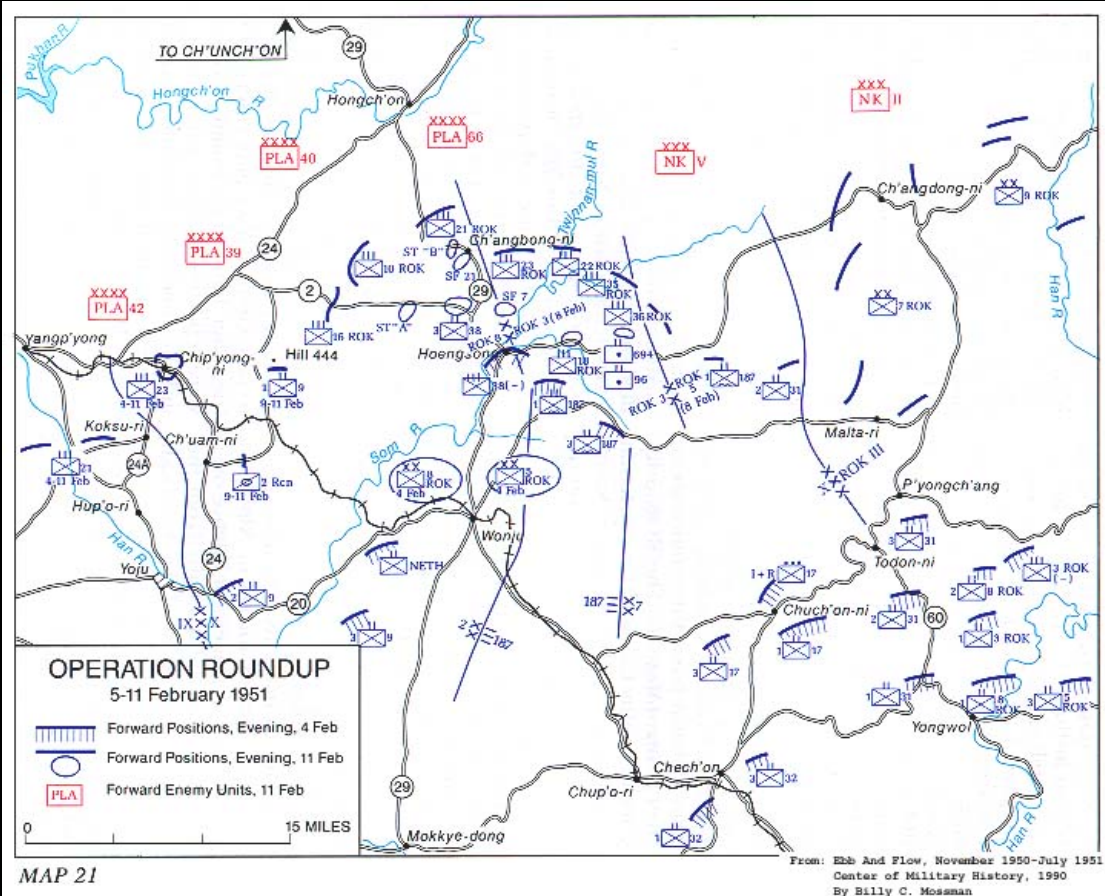
MacArthur clearly chafed under this order but for now he complied...



While MacArthur railed about how Washington was denying him the ability to win the war, 8th Army patrols indicated that the ground to the north was largely devoid of Chinese. Ridgway ordered a limited offensive. 8th Army would advance to contact and then push. But this was not intended as a general counter offensive as Ridgway felt 8th Army was not quite recovered from the defeats earlier. The operation in the West – I and XI Corps – was named “Thunderbolt.”

In the east, X Corps and ROK III Corps advanced in a separate operation called “Roundup.” (next slide)

The advance met little resistance at first and was carried out cautiously. When the army met the Chinese main line of resistance, the operation was halted as 8th Army prepared for a new operation. At the far right of the line, 23rd Regiment from 2nd Division X Corps advanced towards Chip’yong-no – a vital crossroad village. It failed to reach the village, hit by a force about three times its size in the vicinity of twin railway tunnels. It held out for over a day before the Chinese retreated and then entered the vital town and was ordered to dig in.



defended and to close the gaps between formations to limit the potential of another enemy breakthrough.

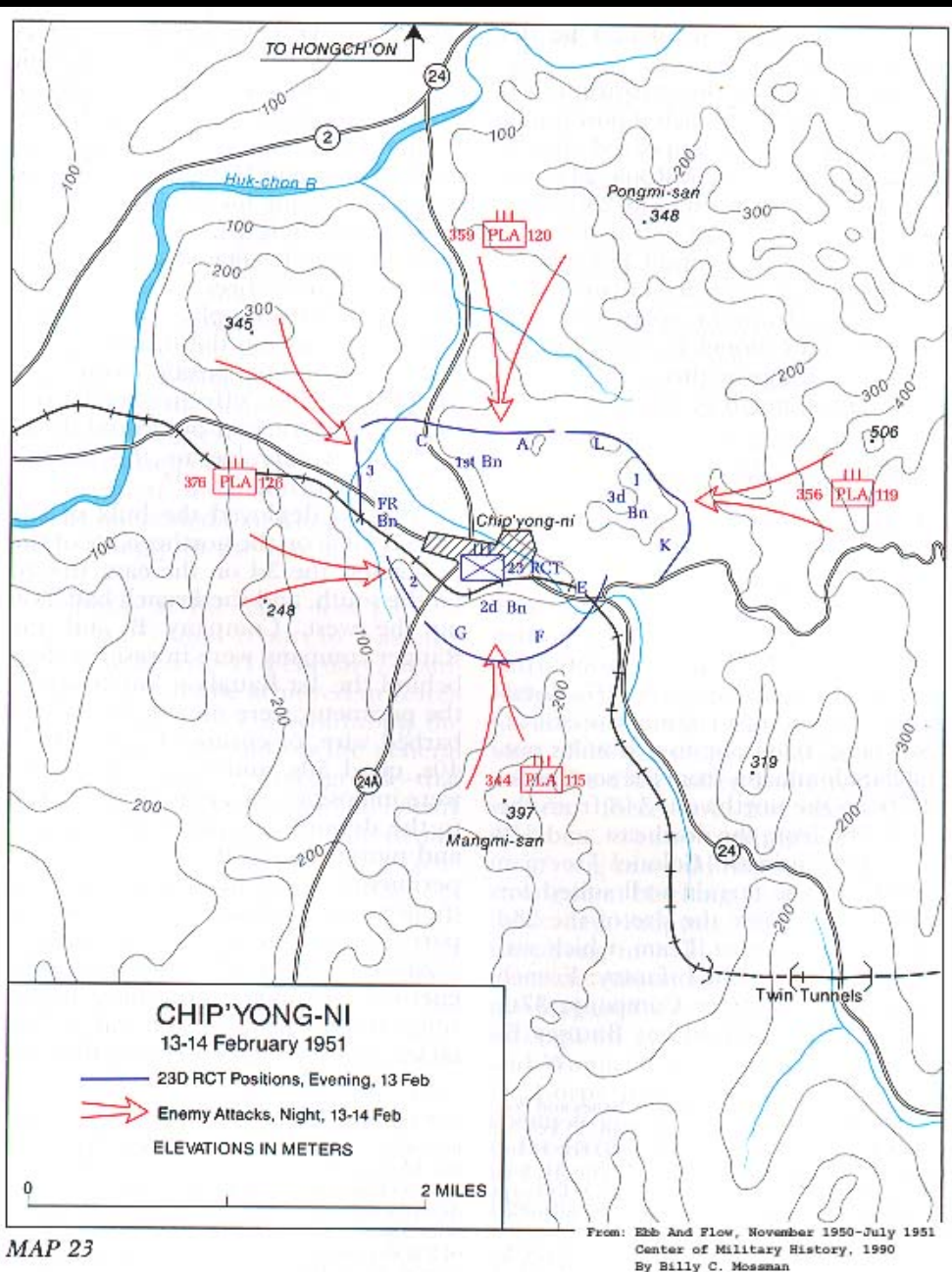
What the limited advances had not done was quell the fear of the Chinese. For that to happen, a unit would need to be cut off and survive the worst the Chinese could muster.

And Ridgway was planning to do just that...

Operation Roundup kicked off just as Operation Thunderbolt wound down. The goal was to regain all ground lost to the NKPA in the earlier battle and move the line of X Corps and II ROK Corps forward until it linked up with the line to the west.

The purpose of both advances was to maintain contact with the enemy forces thus limiting the enemy's ability to achieve surprise.

A secondary goal was to establish a forward line that could be

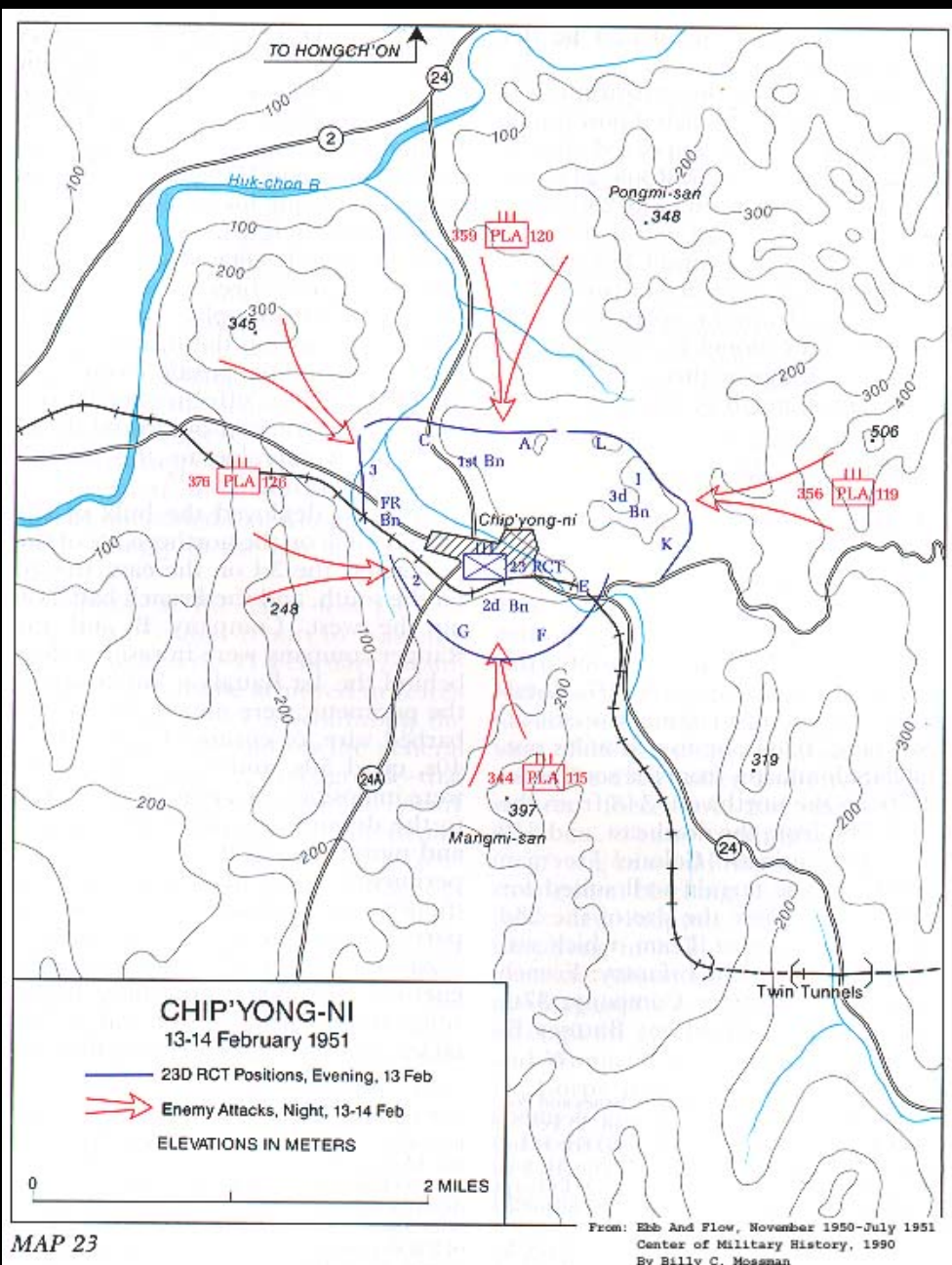


MAP 23

The crossroads of Chip'yong-ni would be the place. The Chinese had to retake it – otherwise their east-west supply route would be forced back over fifty miles. The 23rd Inf. Regt. Had dug in around the town and scraped out an airfield in their perimeter and this time they had effect forward air controllers to coordinate resupply and medi-evacuation flights and close air support.

By the 12th, the 23rd was cut off and surrounded by three Chinese divisions intent on taking the town. A relief force from the 1st Cav was forming 15 miles to the south but there was serious concerns as to whether it would make it in time.

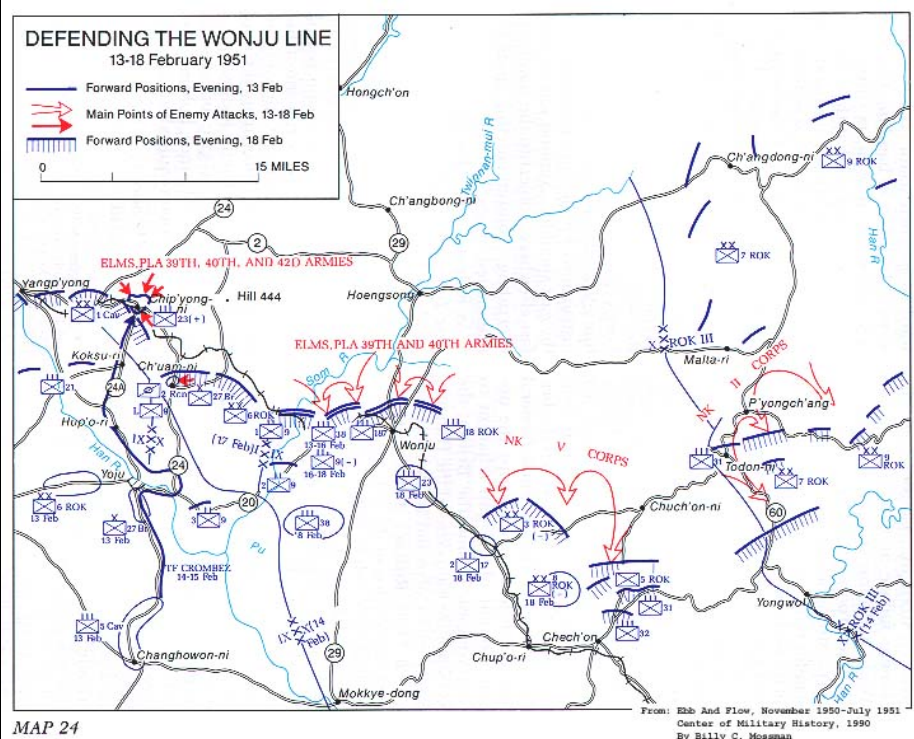
Dogged fighting and effective close air support – despite dangerously low overcast – exacted a crippling toll on the attacking Chinese.



A small force of Chinese managed to break into the perimeter on the afternoon of the 15th, but was destroyed by a napalm strike. The Chinese southern flank then came under attack from the relief force of 20 tanks with a battalion of supporting infantry and broke.

The 23rd Regiment (and attached battalion of French Foreign Legion) suffered about 350 casualties. The Chinese had lost ten times their number – almost one per man in the defending regiment. The Chinese were no longer invincible.

And 8th Army now knew this as the battle for the besieged village had been made known to the entire army as it happened. The morale of the army turned almost overnight.



MAP 24

The siege of the 23rd Inf. Reg. at Chip'yong-ni was a small part of a much bigger operation that the communists launched in an effort to regain the initiative and continue to drive UN forces to the south. The communists were most successful against the ROK III Corps which had advanced rapidly in the previous days and failed to establish a solid line of resistance in the east.

In the center and west, however, the advances gained little ground against more concentrated defensive lines. Moreover,

even in the east, the NKPA found itself once again countered by heavy air and artillery attacks. While the communists gained some ground, it had come at a terrible price in lives without inflicting similar losses on the UN forces.

Moreover, it did not deter Ridgway's plans. After the successful defense of Chip'yong-ni and the effect on the army's morale, he planned a series of counter-offensives to retake Seoul and push the communists north of the 38th parallel. The offensives would not be nearly as ambitious as MacArthur's drive north had been. Each attack would gain ground then consolidate a solid defense and resupply before the next advance. (In WWI, this limited thrust was known as "bite and hold.")

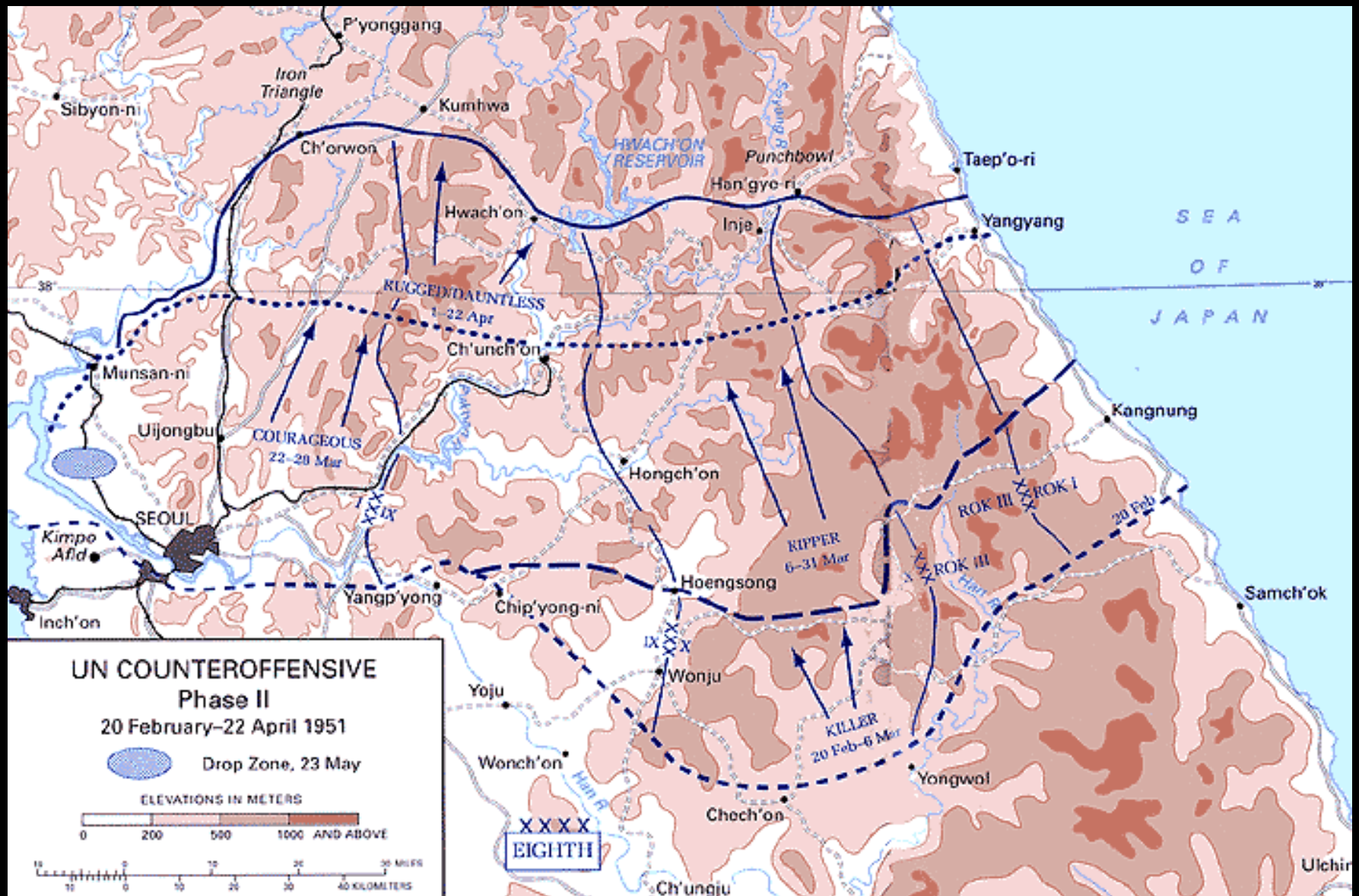


It was during the defense of the Wonju Line in February 1951 that the Puerto Ricans made a name for themselves. The 65th Infantry had a respectable record in WWII and had served well in supporting the Marines' retreat from the Chosin Reservoir. But around Feb 17th, 1951, it was hit hard by a large Chinese attack. It held the line but eventually ran out of ammunition.

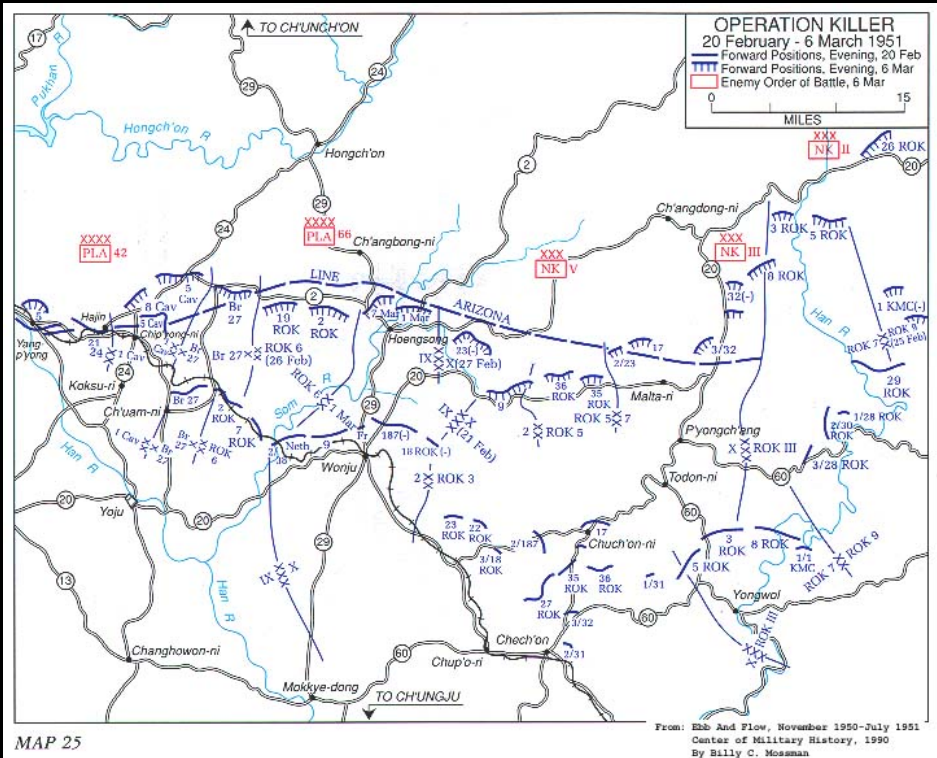
Rather than retreat, which had been the practice up to then, the lead

battalion fixed bayonets and charged the oncoming Chinese despite being massively outnumbered. The Chinese were taken completely by surprise and routed. The 65th Regiment was able to advance, but was later called back to its original positions lest it find itself encircled – and still out of ammunition.

It was the last bayonet charge in the history of the U.S. Army.



Map depicting UN offensive operations in the spring of 1951. (The airborne drop is a typo. It should be 23 March not 23 May.)



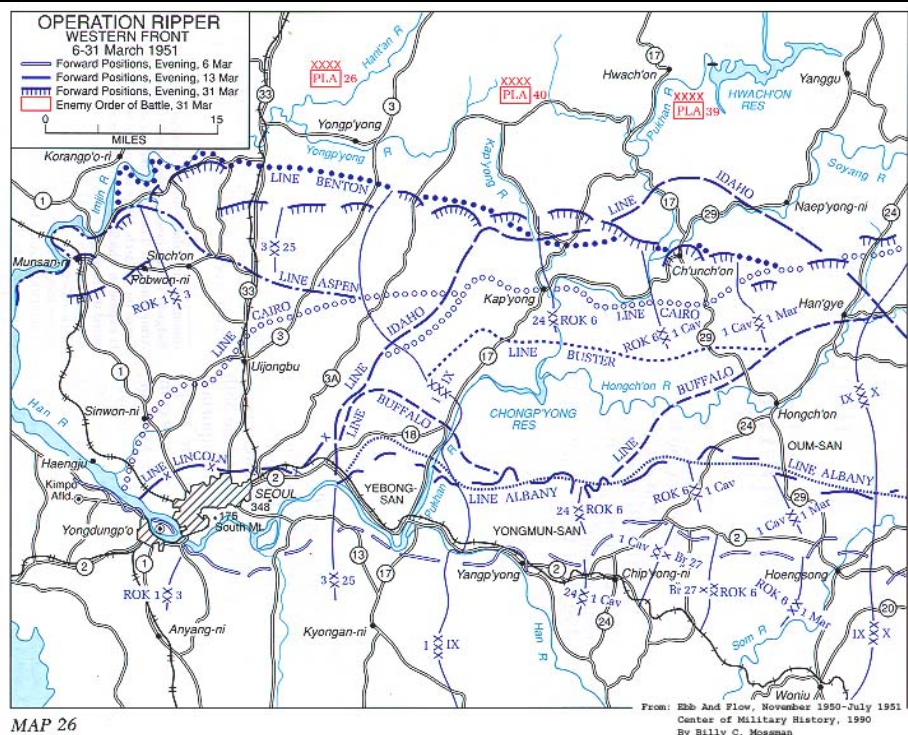
The first operation, “Killer” had been scheduled to kick off around Feb 17th. On the morning it was set to begin, MacArthur arrived and Almond’s headquarters to watch the attack go in. Upon hearing MacArthur arrived in Korea (and before he arrived at Almond’s Headquarters) Ridgway called off the attack. MacArthur sought an explanation.

Ridgway had one. Since 1942, every time there had been a major offensive operation under MacArthur’s command, he had been

present at the opening of the attack even if his headquarters was hundreds or more miles to the rear. While it seemed that the Japanese had never made the connection, the Chinese had and by showing up, MacArthur was broadcasting that a major attack was imminent.

Oddly, MacArthur left without comment. Operation Killer went forward a few days later catching the communist forces unprepared.

MacArthur returned to Tokyo and spent time drafting a lengthy letter to be presented at the annual meeting of the VFW. Once again, it railed against the restrictions imposed upon him.



Operation Killer was followed almost without pause by operation Ripper. This was an attack across the entire front with the goals of retaking Seoul and driving the communists to the 38th parallel. Ridgway did not consider the 38th parallel sacred in any way and intended to move north somewhat to a line he considered far more suitable for defense but that was for later.

Seoul was retaken by March 12th. In the west, the advance stalled just north of the city. On March 23rd, the 187th Airborne

Regimental Combat Team was dropped north of Seoul and south of the Imjin River. As had been the case in their jump north of Pyongyang back in November, 1950, the objective had been to catch the enemy from behind. As had been the case previously, while the jump itself was successful, the prize had already slipped away to the north. All that was found were stragglers.

But in the whole, Operation Ripper succeeded in driving the communists north and into North Korea.



The VFW forwarded MacArthur's letter to the Pentagon for comment about two weeks before their annual meeting. The Pentagon exploded. The VFW was told that the letter was unauthorized and contrary to orders moreover it had no relation whatsoever to the situation in Korea and therefore it should be shelved. The VFW complied.

MacArthur received an informal reprimand where, in effect, all communications from his office had to be cleared through the Pentagon in advance. But the damage was done as a fan of MacArthur's in the VFW hierarchy leaked the letter to the press. Still, MacArthur was left in place.

But not for long. As Ridgway prepared to move further north, the President considered the war "won" and asked both Ridgway and MacArthur for their opinions regarding a ceasefire.

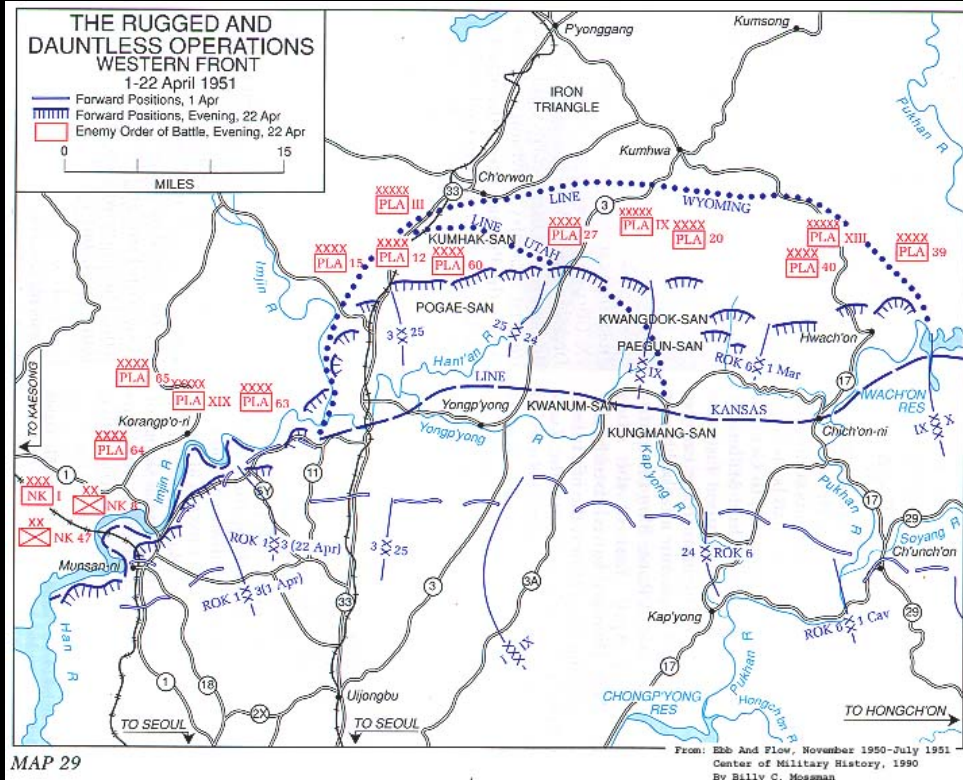


Ridgway wanted to consolidate a defensible line north of the 38th parallel otherwise he had no concerns about an armistice.

MacArthur's response was a radio message from Tokyo in plain voice (no encryption) demanding the unconditional surrender of communist forces in Korea or else. The message was sent on April 10th, Washington time.

MacArthur was fired the next day.

In fact, the press release that he had been relieved of all his commands and responsibilities and recalled to Washington was published in Tokyo before the message informing MacArthur of his relief from command had made it through the SCAP communications center.



MacArthur's message to the Chinese that ended his career meant any talk of an armistice was off the table for now. Ridgway was informed he would take over as UN commander and SCAP as soon as his replacement for command of 8th Army arrived from the states. In the meantime, Ridgway continued his slow but steady drive north.

It was during this drive that the Han River overflowed its banks. There had not been rain nor enough runoff to

cause the river to flood, but it had and the effect was that many of the pontoon bridges across the Han had washed out, interrupting supply of the units in Seoul and to the north.

It was determined the cause of the flooding was the Hwochon Reservoir. While some of the south bank was in UN hands, most of the bank and more critically the dam remained in communist control. The 7th Infantry Division was tasked to take the dam and put it out of operations. While they managed to get to the dam and hold on for about three days, they lacked the means to disable the spillways before they were driven back.



The Air Force then lunched B-29 raids against the dam and while they managed to knock out the powerplant, they failed to damage the spillways or dam itself. (Similar efforts had been tried in WWII with similar lack of results. Dams are hard to bomb.)

The UN needed to take out the dam. So long as it remained in operation, the communists could control the level of the Han, raising it to thwart UN efforts and lowering it to assist in their own.



A Navy commander of an A-1 squadron had an idea. The A-1 was designed to drop torpedoes. (It had been a replacement of both the dive bombers and torpedo bombers.) The commander had flown torpedo bombers in the war and figured well placed torpedeos could take out the spillways at the top of the dam. And his ship had Mk-13 torpedoes somewhere in its magazines. The problem was, he was about the only pilot who had ever dropped a torpedo.



CDR Dick Merritt spent a couple of days briefing his pilots on how to drop torpedoes and then on the specific mission to attack the dam. On April 30th, 1950, 8 A-1's from USS Princeton took off armed with torpedoes escorted by 24 F-4U's to suppress any air defenses around the reservoir and dam. Six of the torpedoes struck the spillways dead on and detonated, destroying two spillway gates and critically damaging a third making the dam inoperable for flood control purposes.

VA-195 had been called the Tigers prior to this mission. Since the mission and to this day they are called the Dam Busters. It was the last air attack with anti-surface torpedoes in history. (Not to be confused with RAF 617 Squadron which successfully bombed German dams in the Ruhr in WWII.)

VA-195 had been lucky. USS Princeton was in the process of being mothballed when the Korean War broke out and the ship had not yet offloaded its magazines, which included a supply of surplus (and no longer used) Mk-13 torpedoes.



On April 19th, 1950, barely a week after he was fired, MacArthur appeared before a Joint Session of Congress. He had arrived in San Francisco a few days before. It was the first time he had set foot in the continental United States in sixteen years and he received a hero's welcome and an invitation to address congress.

In his address, he reiterated the point he had made since the Chinese intervention, but without the hysteria of his prior missives. He had wanted massive reinforcements. He wanted to bomb Manchuria – to include control over nuclear weapons. He wanted to blockade China – which would have required a blockade of the Soviet border as that was their trade route. And he wanted to land the Chinese Nationalist Army on the mainland. Anything less, he argued, would see defeat.

He went on to a ticker tape parade in New York.

Had that been the end of it, his reputation would not have been as tarnished as it became. But before the ink had dried in the press, his supporters in congress (mostly Republican and China Lobby) launched an investigation into the Truman Administration and its handling of the Korean War.



The Joint Chiefs of Staff and several other senior generals, active and retired were called in to testify. All refuted MacArthur. Omar Bradley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs made it clear that had MacArthur had his way, the war would escalate. It would become the wrong war, in the wrong place and against the wrong enemy. Europe was the critical geopolitical theater, not mainland Asia. The deeper

the Republicans dug looking for something that supported MacArthur, the worse it got for MacArthur.

When he was called to testify, it was a disaster. The eloquence of his farewell to congress was lacking. A man usually in command of the facts seemed to be unable to recall any. The Democrats begged the hearings end to salvage what little was left of MacArthur's reputation and eventually they relented. But too much had been made public. Instead of crucifying Truman, the hearings had destroyed MacArthur and Truman seemed almost reasonable by comparison.

In the end, while few liked the notion of "limited war," the alternative – WWII – was unthinkable and that was what would have happened had MacArthur had his way.



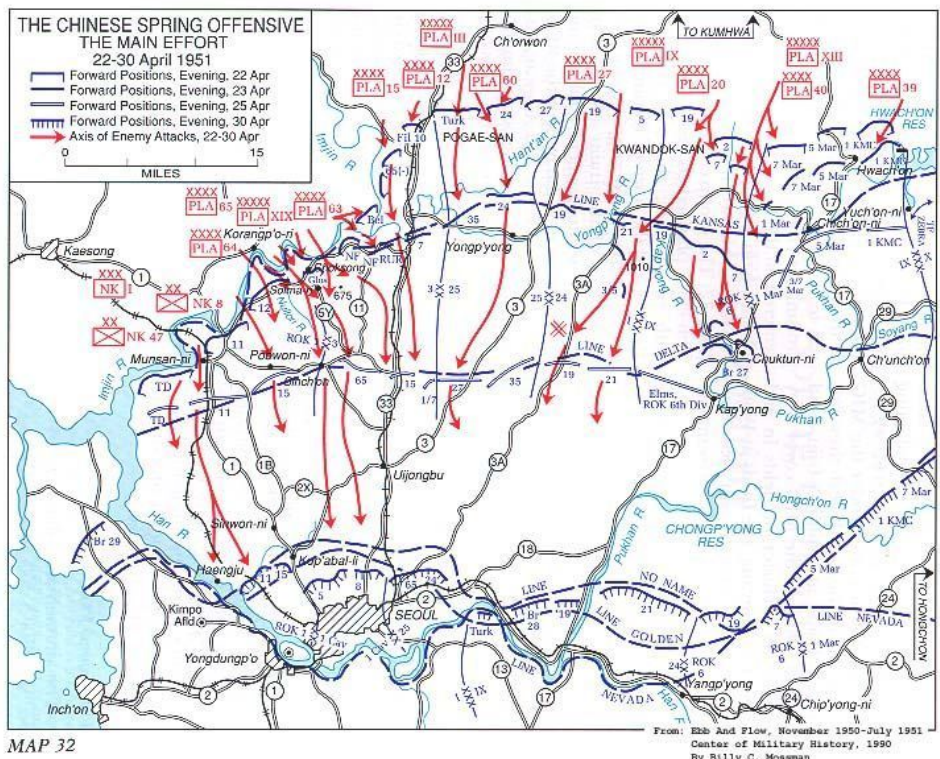
Despite the drama in Washington, the war went on. Ridgway became supreme commander when LGEN James Van Fleet arrived to take over 8th Army. Van Fleet had been a successful commander in Europe in WWII. He took command of the hapless 90th Infantry Division (when Theodore Roosevelt Jr died of a heart attack before assuming

command) and turned the division into an effective one before being named as Commanding General, 2nd Army before the war ended.

He was not Airborne, but is considered the “grandfather” of the Green Berets and Special Forces. This was due to his activities as Commander of the Military Advisory Group in Greece after WWII where he led advisors who “advised” the Greeks then involved in a war with Bulgarian backed communist forces and he had been successful.

Truman would later say of Van Fleet “He’s the winningest general we’ve got. I sent him to Greece and he won. I sent him to Korea and he won.”

Like Ridgway before him, Van Fleet took command just in time to face a major Chinese offensive.



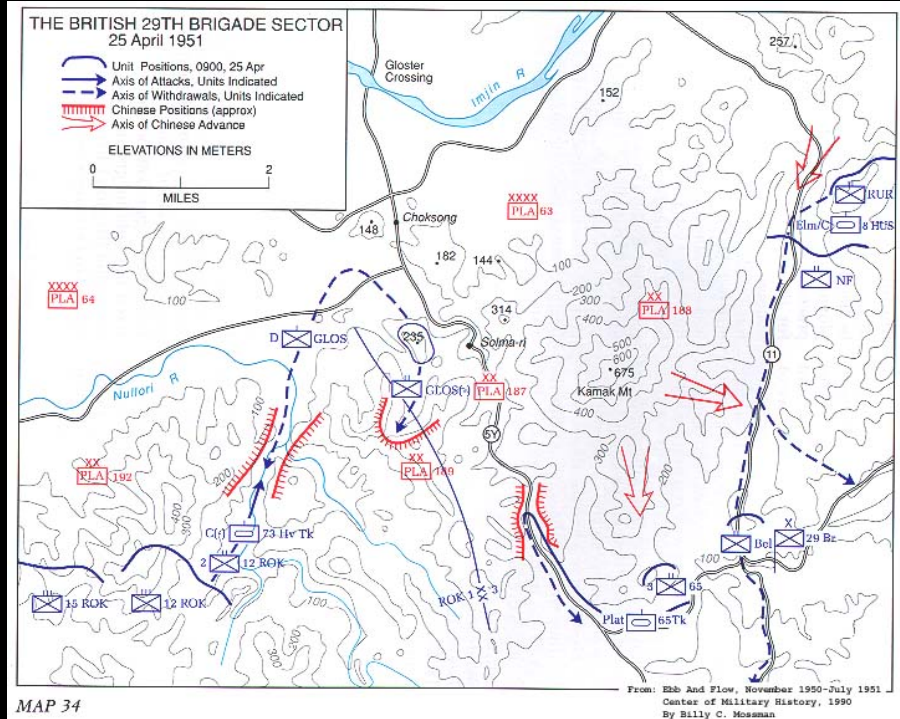
On April 22nd, the Chinese launched their last major offensive of the war. They hoped to force an American withdrawal now that MacArthur was no longer in command. It was also the largest army sent against the UN forces at over 500,000 across the front.

UN forces would be pushed back to just north of Seoul, but the city would not change hands again. The Spring Offensive effectively erased the gains the UN had made in Operation

Ripper, pushing the UN almost back to the start line from early March. But then, the offensive ground to a halt. Supply lines were stretched and under constant attack. Moreover, Chinese casualties had been horrendous.

The Chinese had intervened in part to rally support behind Mao at home. That had been achieved but it could be lost if the army bled to death on Korea. Despite protests from Kim (and Stalin), the Chinese ended the offensive and refused to consider another of such scale now or in the future.

North Korea could not hope to win without Chinese support.



In the opening days of the Chinese Spring Offensive, the British Commonwealth Brigade (Brits and Australians) held key positions defending the Imjin River. Its most critical position – a then unnamed hill, was held by a battalion of the Gloucester Regiment.

They were soon surrounded by upwards of five Chinese divisions.

Despite the overwhelming odds, they held their position, breaking up the main assault in the area until they ran low on ammunition.

They were told to hold on as relief forces were assembled to break through to their position. The Gloucesters had a priority for close air support and the equivalent of an armored battalion with two infantry battalions in support were trying to break through.

(This force included Centurion Tanks, then arguably the best in the world and still relevant to this day.)





The relief force could come no closer than about 2000m from the Gloucester position. When relief became impossible, soldiers were told to make their own way back to friendly lines. 217 would muster for duty a few days later. 54 were dead. 522 were POW's and most of the rest wounded but returned to UN lines.

The Chinese suffered around 10,000 casualties in its fight with the Commonwealth Brigade.

The result of the Spring Offensive was that the Chinese were willing to seek an armistice. They had achieved their objectives. The country had rallied. And the Army had shown it could fight the Americans and not lose.

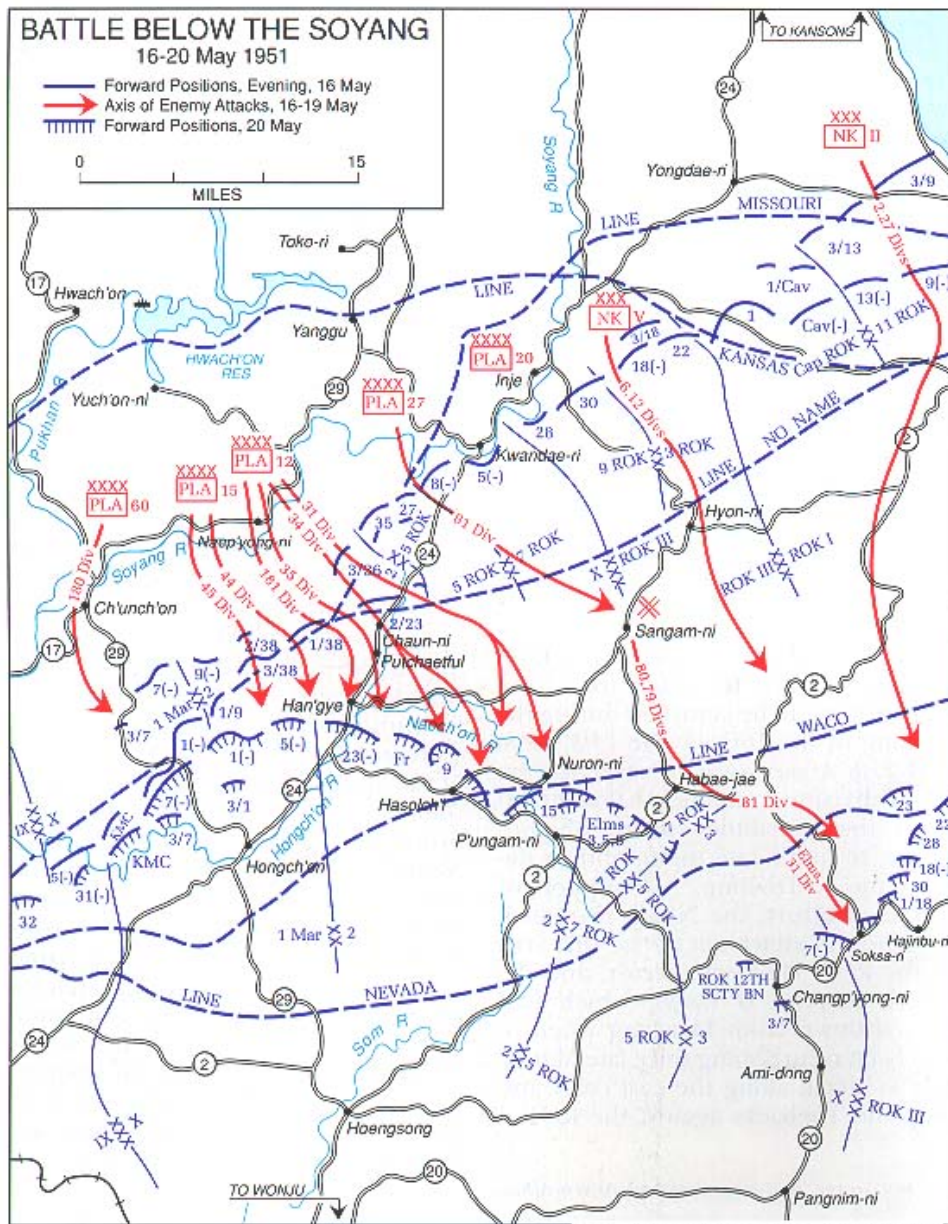
But to continue to bleed as they had would risk everything. Unfortunately, for the time being the North Koreans were in no mood to talk.

BATTLE BELOW THE SOYANG

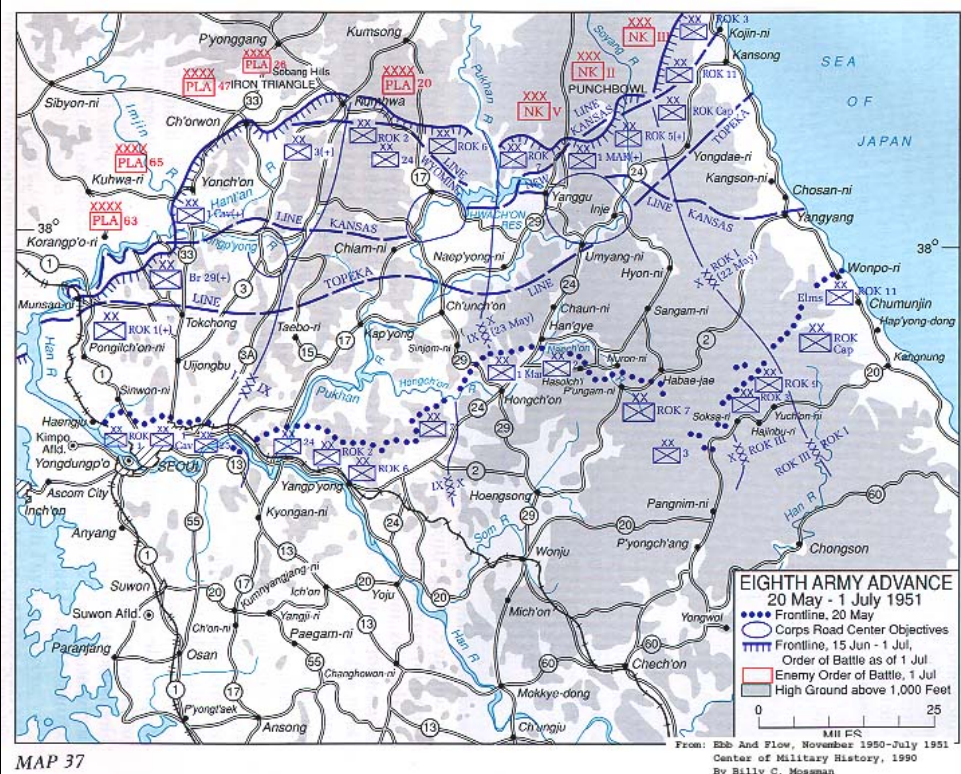
16-20 May 1951

- Forward Positions, Evening, 16 May
- Axis of Enemy Attacks, 16-19 May
- ||||| Forward Positions, 20 May

0 15
MILES



The Chinese Spring Offensive on the Eastern side of the front.



Once the Chinese offensive came to a halt, the UN began a counteroffensive.

There was no break to reorganize and the communists were not set up for defense. For the next month, the UN forces slowly advanced beyond the 38th Parallel towards a line Ridgway had selected as a possible stopping point months earlier. They achieved the line by the end of June and dug in.

The front line at the end of June is roughly where the demilitarized zone exists today.

By this time (beginning of July, 1951) the Chinese had managed to convince Kim and the North Koreans to seek an Armistice by threatening to leave if they did not. As the Soviets were unwilling to do more than they had up to this point, the North Koreans agreed – although they did not agree to make it easy on anyone.

What followed would be two years of nearly static, positional warfare...

As of July, 1951, the Chinese Air Force had yet to make any appearance in the war.

