

U.S. NAVY MEDICAL DEPARTMENT ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

REMINISCENCES OF LT ROBERT J. FLEISCHAKER, MC, USN

OFFICE OF MEDICAL HISTORY
BUREAU OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY
SKYLINE COMPLEX, FALLS CHURCH, VIRGINIA

**Reminiscences of LT Robert J. Fleischaker, MC, USN, Third Battalion,
First Marines, USMC**

Orders for duty with the Marines came to me in the latter part of July 1950, when I had nearly completed a second year of residency in general surgery at Naval Hospital Chelsea, MA. On 4 August, at Camp Pendleton, CA, was assigned to the Third Battalion, First Marines. I was then a lieutenant with 5 years of service as a Navy medical officer. Prior to beginning a surgical residency, I had worked in a dispensary at the Naval Air Station, Corpus Christi, TX, and had completed a tour of sea duty on the aircraft carrier USS *Midway* (CVB-41), but I had no training or experience in field medicine. What I came to know about it, I learned while working on the job.

Due to downsizing of the Marine Corps after the end of World War II, the First Marine Regiment had existed only on paper for several years. Then at the end of July 1950, they reassembled it with Marines and Navy personnel hastily gathered from all over the United States. The nucleus of our battalion had been the First Battalion of the Sixth Marines at Camp Lejeune, NC. Consisting of 400 men, this unit traveled by train to Camp Pendleton and was renamed the Third Battalion, First Marines. Hundreds of regular Marines called from numerous shore stations and ships, along with about 250 Marine reservists, fleshed out our battalion to a wartime strength of 1,128 men.

Navy medical personnel assigned to the battalion, and for whom I was responsible, included an assistant battalion medical officer, Lt. George R. Farrell. He was a reservist who had just completed an internship in a civilian hospital. This was his first Navy duty. We had 42 enlisted Navy corpsmen. Thirty-two were assigned to platoons in the combat units; 10 worked with doctors in the battalion aid station. Only nine of the corpsmen had any prior duty with the Marines, but from them, especially Chief hospital corpsman H.B. King, I learned a lot about how things worked. Most of our corpsmen were young fellows who had been yanked abruptly from duty on wards at various naval hospitals.

Camp Pendleton buzzed with activity in August 1950, while old hands put together the First Marine Regiment. During a two-week period they conducted tactical exercises to mold squads, platoons, and companies into a fighting organization. Many of the young Marines had no combat experience, but they had officers and sergeants who had fought through battles of World War II in the Pacific. Those men were professionals who really knew their business. I met and came to have great respect for Col. Lewis B. Puller, our regimental commander, who was already a legend in the Marine Corps. Everyone called him "Chesty"--but not to his

face. He had already earned four Navy Cross medals in combat. He knew how to get things done, and he cared about his men.

Our battalion commander, Lt. Col. Tom Ridge, was a considerate, intellectual man, and an effective leader. Ed Simmons, who later became a brigadier general, was then a major commanding the heavy weapons company of our battalion. He was a fine, competent officer and a good friend. The battalion executive officer, Maj. Reginald Meyers was a good, brave man. The company commanders of our rifle companies--Capt. Carl Sitter, Capt. Clarence Corley, and 1st Lt. Joseph Fisher--were officers of the highest competence and valor. They all proved their personal courage and leadership in battles that followed. During the later combat at Chosin Reservoir, Meyers and Sitter each earned a Medal of Honor.

Medical personnel kept quite busy while at Camp Pendleton doing physical exams and treating minor illnesses and injuries. We inoculated the troops for smallpox, typhoid, and tetanus, and began the series of typhus and cholera vaccines. We stocked up on medical supplies. Field clothing and equipment were issued. We learned that the enemy in Korea did not respect the Geneva Convention, that we would not wear Red Cross emblems on helmets or arm bands. We had orders to bear arms to defend, if need be, our patients and ourselves.

They issued carbines to us, and on one morning doctors and corpsmen of our aid station group went to the rifle range to practice shooting. I guess we didn't perform very well. The old gunnery sergeant in charge of the range moaned and groaned, shook his head in obvious disgust. Finally, he threw up his hands and shouted, "Get out of here, all of you, before someone gets hurt!"

We also went on conditioning hikes, and we took part in a nighttime tactical exercise. Then, on 15 August, at San Diego, men of our battalion boarded the USNS *Simon Bolivar Buckner* (AP-). We sailed the next morning and arrived in Kobe, Japan on 28 August. The next 12 days, which we spent at Camp Otsu, a U.S. Army base near Kyoto, were also a busy time. We gave more shots to the troops, treated various injuries and illnesses, and went on more conditioning hikes. Shortly before we left Japan, the First Marine Division Surgeon, Capt. Eugene "Bud" Hering and Col. Puller briefed medical officers of the First Marine Regiment on the forthcoming invasion at Inchon. Capt. Hering asked how many of the doctors had previously served with Marines and seemed surprised that none of us had done so. "Well," he said, "There's really nothing to it." Then he gave us a 20-minute discourse on field medicine.

We learned that at Inchon, on the west coast of Korea, sea level variation from low to high tide was about 30 feet. Landing craft could get in to the shoreline for perhaps an hour or two, only at high tide. On 15 September, our D-day, this would occur shortly

after sunrise, and just before sunset. At other times, impassable mud flats extended out from the shore for as far as three miles. So, only twice a day would we be able to evacuate casualties from the beach to ships offshore and to receive any reinforcements and supplies. Further complicating the initial invasion was the information that assaulting troops might have to scale a seawall 15 feet high using aluminum ladders when their boats reached the shore. The whole project sounded like storming a medieval castle.

On 9 September we went aboard ships at Kobe, Japan for the trip around the Korean peninsula to Inchon. Our aid station group and the rest of the headquarters section of our battalion were part of 400 men who, along with various vehicles and other equipment, were crammed like sardines in LST-802. This kind of ship, I was told, would in World War II normally have been expected to carry about 150 men into battle. The aging rust bucket was a relic of the Pacific War and had spent several subsequent years leased to an inter-island trading company in Japan. Only a week before we went aboard the vessel, the Navy had reclaimed the craft and manned her with a Navy crew. These men had worked desperately to repair and refurbish the 802, but she still looked like a hunk of floating junk.

Before we set sail from Kobe, our battalion commander said to me, "Doctor, this operation we are about to do will involve one-third of all the men now in the Marine Corps and one-half of all the equipment the Marines own."

The voyage around the Korean peninsula was a rough ride in those flat bottomed LSTs. We went through the tail end of a typhoon. Many men were seasick. Several of the LSTs in the task force, which was designated 92.11, had engine trouble, but fortunately not the old 802. Quarters were tight. The food left much to be desired. The supply of fresh water was severely limited. The only time we were allowed to shower was the evening before we assaulted the beach. Most of the men appeared eager to leave that old ship on 15 September. Going ashore seemed far more attractive than staying on board the craft, even though this meant going into a fight.

Navy ships had bombarded the shore defenses, and Navy and Marine planes flying from aircraft carriers had bombed and strafed enemy positions. The Fifth Marines assaulted the island of Wolmi-do, which guarded the harbor of Inchon early in the morning of 15 September and secured a causeway that led into the city. At about 1530 on that afternoon, we descended into the cargo hold of our LST and climbed into the amphibious tractors carried there. Incidentally, that was the first time I had ever seen one of these amphibious vehicles up close. The front doors of the ship swung open, and tractors in which we rode slipped one by one into the water and began to circle the nearby ships.

The target for the First Marines' assault was a secondary beach in an industrial area to the south of the main part of the city. There was a lot of confusion in that invasion. Our aid station group was scheduled to go to the beach in the sixth wave but, in fact, we reached the shore with the second attack wave. We got lucky, though, for the tractor drivers found a break in the seawall, which allowed them to gain direct access to the beach. We rolled up onto land and they let us out onto dry sand. Bullets flew around the area, but enemy resistance there was light. We moved as quickly as we could across the open ground and into and among some abandoned buildings. That was where we spent our first night in Korea. Total casualties for the battalion in the landing and through that first night were only four killed and 15 wounded.

The following morning eight casualties who had been retained in our aid station overnight were evacuated to the beach. Marines quickly took control of Inchon. Our battalion advanced inland by foot and in the amphibious tractors, which were called LVTs (tracked landing vehicles). Initially, that day, our troops met no resistance. Toward late afternoon the advance continued despite light sniper fire. The aid station group spent the day, divided into two echelons, riding in amphibious tractors along the back roads outside of Inchon. On one road we saw a column of burned out enemy tanks, which Marine Corsairs, flying from an aircraft carrier, had rocketed into burning hulks earlier that day. One of our two echelons came into a small firefight. We treated several casualties at the roadside, then evacuated seven wounded men to the beach.

A large part of the gear belonging to the aid station was scattered in various amphibious tractors that had brought it ashore. Regrettably, the current whereabouts of much of the supplies remained unknown to us. A jeep ambulance belonging to the battalion did come ashore on 16 September and was not available for our use.

That evening our battalion went into regimental reserve status and camped in a cornfield approximately five miles inland and a half mile south of the main Inchon-Seoul highway. Our aid station group reached this assembly area about 2200 hours that night and dug in alongside the rest of the command post group.

On 17 September and in subsequent days the First Marines advanced along the main Inchon-Seoul highway and over adjacent hills and through rice paddies toward the capital city. Also on 17 September, the Fifth Marines captured Kimpo airfield, which was 16 miles inland. On 20 September they crossed the Han River under fire. Battling against stiff enemy resistance, the men of that regiment then continued to advance upon Seoul from the west. The Seventh Marine Regiment, which had been put together from scratch at Camp Pendleton in the last two weeks of August by gathering regular Marines

and reservists from all over the U.S., landed at Inchon on 21 September, crossed the Han River, and advanced on Seoul along the north flank of the Fifth Marines. The Army's Seventh Division, which had landed at Inchon on 17 September, proceeded inland to the south of the First Marines.

On the morning of 17 September two of our corpsmen who had been wounded in the previous day's fighting were evacuated to the beach. HM3 David E. Anderson serving in Company G, had sustained shrapnel wounds of the left ankle and buttock. HM3 Claude DeMoss, serving in H Company, suffered a cerebral concussion from proximity to an exploding shell.

At 1000 that morning, our Company G moved out along the Seoul-Inchon highway, riding in amphibious tractors and supported by tanks. At a defile just west of the town of Sosa, progress came to a halt as a violent firefight erupted. Six of our Marines became casualties. That afternoon our aid station group moved forward along the main highway riding in amphibious trucks called DUKWs. We watched an infantry firefight and saw our Marine Corsairs, which flew from an aircraft carrier offshore, rocket and strafe enemy troops with machine guns. Progress along the road remained slow.

At 2100 our battalion headquarters company left the vehicles and proceeded ahead on foot. They turned onto a side road and set up a command post for the night just off the main highway in an area bounded on both sides by swamp-like rice paddies. Our corpsmen set up the little blackout tent and established a tiny but functional aid station. Within an hour we treated four casualties from our G Company in the tent using flashlights. Unfortunately, these wounds had been caused by short rounds of our own artillery fire.

As midnight approached, we learned that the left flank of the battalion was unprotected and an enemy counterattack was possible. Artillery shells rumbled overhead. The 16-inch guns of the USS *Missouri* (BB-63) offshore had a range of nearly 25 miles. Aimed at enemy positions ahead of us, the big shells sounded like freight trains streaking through the sky above us. Star shells lit up the area every few minutes and, in the distance, on our right, a farmhouse was in flames. However, the night passed without further event.

At 0600 the next morning, 18 September, the battalion moved forward, many riding in amphibious tractors, trucks, and jeeps. The column moved through Sosa and turned left there to occupy high ground in the vicinity of Hill 123. Heavy enemy mortar fire blanketed this area through the late afternoon and evening. In the early afternoon, battalion headquarters men established a command post in the yard outside a large, red brick schoolhouse. The headquarters people decided not to locate inside the schoolhouse itself, feeling it looked like too obvious a target for enemy fire.

Casualties from enemy mortar fire began to flood our aid station, which we set up in the shade of a row of trees west of the schoolhouse. Medical officers and corpsmen belonging to the Second Battalion, First Marines, joined us and helped to treat the arriving casualties. We gave intravenous plasma, cleaned and dressed wounds, and gave morphine to relieve pain. Ambulance jeeps and corpsmen belonging to our group, to the Second Battalion, and to D Medical Company joined to evacuate the wounded men to Division hospital companies, which were now set up ashore at Inchon. Two helicopters, responding to radio messages, landed in the schoolyard to evacuate the most serious of the casualties. During that afternoon the battalion suffered 38 wounded. Two died of wounds and one man was killed in action. Among those wounded and evacuated were two of our hospital corpsmen, HN Milford Gray, Jr., serving in I Company, who suffered multiple wounds, and HN Robert W. Fischer serving in H&S Company, who had multiple wounds of the left arm.

The battalion supply officer finally located our medical gear that had been scattered in various amphibious tractors and had it brought to us. Our corpsmen put up our little blackout tent, and we all dug foxholes. That night our battalion had no physical contact with any other friendly unit, so they set up a 360 degree defense perimeter.

On 19 September our battalion continued to attack, advancing over rugged, hilly terrain against light, but stubborn enemy delaying action. The nature of the terrain made it impossible for vehicles belonging to the battalion to follow us closely. So the men of the battalion, including our aid station group, moved forward on foot, bringing only the supplies and equipment which we could carry on our backs. The rest of our gear remained on the trucks and ambulances some distance behind us. We camped in an open field that night. In the dark the Second Battalion, which was to the right of us, but not in direct contact with our troops, was hit hard by an enemy counterattack. Casualties for our battalion for 19 September were two killed, 15 wounded. Among the wounded in action was one of our aid station corpsmen, HM3 Herman Castle, Jr., who was treated and returned to duty.

On 20 September our battalion remained in position and continued to organize its defenses on ground that dominated the approach to Yong Dong Po-Ri, an industrial suburb, which was 20 miles inland. It was on the south bank of the Han River, across from the capital city. From our location on high ground we could see the destroyed bridges over the river. We recorded no casualties in our battalion that day.

On 21 September the First Regiment assaulted Yong Dong Po-Ri--First Battalion on our left, Second Battalion on our right,

astride the Inchon-Seoul highway. Third Battalion followed in the interval between those two assault battalions. We moved down from high ground and crossed rice paddies to the vicinity of dikes and a water gate just outside Yong Dong Po-Ri. There, an enemy counterattack hit the Second Battalion hard and brought their advance to a halt. Third Battalion was committed to the attack at 1530 hours. Regrettably, no air or artillery support was available.

Our attack angled forward toward the Inchon-Seoul highway, proceeding against stubborn enemy resistance, which included heavy machine gun fire. Our battalion reached the highway and established night defenses along that line at about 1930 hours. Third Battalion casualties were 11 killed, 18 wounded. We treated the casualties in an open field and took care of them through a night without shelter. That was a miserably cold night. We all wore summer field uniforms, and we had with us no sleeping bags or blankets for the patients or for ourselves. It was the next day before we could evacuate the wounded, who included another one of our corpsmen, HN John L. Gorman, serving in G Company. He had multiple wounds of the right ankle.

The attack resumed at 0630, the morning of 22 September. Our men reached their first objective, then reorganized. At 0930 they resumed the assault, advanced to an assigned objective, and halted for the night. The enemy resistance lessened, and we had no casualties that day.

On 23 September our battalion continued in the attack. Companies G and I advanced against light resistance. They now had the support of extensive artillery and mortar fire. By noon they reached their objective, which was a height dominating the damaged railroad and highway bridges crossing the Han River into Seoul. Our casualties were one killed, 7 wounded. Among those wounded in action and evacuated to the division hospital in Inchon was another of our corpsmen, HM3 W.L. Tompkins, serving in G Company.

On 24 September we remained in position on Hill 108 until 1530, when we received orders to cross the Han River and assemble in a new area. We rode across the river in DUKWs, which were amphibious trucks. I Company took Hill 105 in a brief, vicious firefight, during which one of our men was killed and two wounded. We spent the night camped just outside the capital city near some high radio towers.

On 25 September the First and Fifth Marines assaulted the city of Seoul. It was a long day of vicious, close in street fighting. While Fifth Marines attacked through the city on our left flank, our battalion advanced along the main Ma Po Boulevard and two parallel streets. Command post people and the aid station group followed along the boulevard, only a block or two behind our assault companies. We set up an aid station in a bank building for a while. Then as

our men routed out enemy soldiers, going building to building, we followed about a block behind the front line action.

I recall one instance when several corpsmen, George Farrell, and I were on the sidewalk crouched beside jeeps and trucks that were stalled at the curb. Our troops battled with snipers in buildings a block ahead and an occasional bullet whizzed near us. A Marine tank was stationed at the cross street intersection ahead of us. Suddenly, we could hardly believe our eyes. Chesty Puller walked down the middle of the boulevard, puffing on a pipe, and appeared as casual as if he were on a Sunday stroll in the park. He stopped at the street intersection and carried on a leisurely chat with an officer in the turret of the tank. The colonel turned around and walked calmly back along the street, seeming to ignore bullets that, every few minutes, zinged through the air.

Late that afternoon, the men of our command post and the aid station set up shop for the night in a prison on the east side of the boulevard. Apparently the enemy had hastily abandoned that facility; no prisoners were left in it. A high brick wall surrounded the compound. It looked like a secure place, but that proved to be an illusion. Early in the evening an enemy mortar round exploded inside the compound to wound a number of headquarters men with shrapnel. All through that day our battalion had paid dearly for our progress through the streets. We had 15 men dead, 77 wounded during the fighting.

Despite the darkness of the night, the Marines planned to resume the attack at 0200 of 26 September. However, the North Koreans launched a major counterattack at 0145. Spearheading their assault, a column of T-34 tanks clanked down the Ma Po Boulevard, accompanied by self-propelled artillery and a large number of infantry. As they approached a roadblock manned by our heavy weapons company, a violent firefight developed. Marines and corpsmen lugged ammunition forward to the front line troops who fought about 200 yards ahead of the Third Battalion's command post. On their return trip, the same men brought our wounded to the aid station.

At some distance behind us five battalions of Marine artillery had set up to provide an opening fire for our attack. Now, as requested by the front line troops, Marine 105 and 155 howitzers opened up a massive barrage against the attacking North Koreans. Fighting reached its height at 0250 then slowly subsided. Yet the battle continued until 0530. Artillery fire controllers attached to our front line troops called in devastating rounds that landed as close as 30 yards in front of our troops. Marine howitzers fired about 2000 rounds, which nearly depleted the stores of artillery ammunition which they had thus far brought ashore. Shells from our big guns converted the column of North Korean tanks and

self-propelled artillery pieces into twisted, smoking junk and killed hundreds of their soldiers. The barrage broke the back of the enemy attack and started the North Koreans on a retreat to the north. The battle also caused significant damage to the capitol building of the Republic of Korea, which was located in that area, beside the Ma Po Boulevard.

In the night's fight our battalion's casualties were two killed 40 wounded. At 0700 our battalion went into regimental reserve status. Second Battalion took over the assault role in continuing the advance through the city. There was some sniper fire, but little further organized resistance by the enemy, who basically were on the run toward the north.

On the next day we advanced farther to the north in the city, with only one man in our battalion being wounded. Our command post and aid station group spend the night of 28 September camping in the house and on the grounds of the U.S. Embassy at Seoul. Mr. [John J.] Muccio, the U.S. ambassador, of course, was not there. I doubt that he ever knew that several of us slept on the floor of the dining room in his house.

On 29 September our battalion, along with four other Marine battalions, deployed to provide security a block away from the Ma Po Boulevard on each side of it. The occasion was the arrival of Gen. MacArthur and Mr. Syngman Rhee, the President of South Korea, as they rode along the boulevard to the capitol building. There, in a ceremony, they officially restored control of the capital city to the South Korean government. We secured from that detail at 1500 and our battalion moved to the northern outskirts of the city. Over the next two days we moved in short stages to the north along the Seoul-Pyongyang highway without incurring any further casualties.

The Seventh Marines advanced ahead of us along the same highway for a few miles to capture two important towns. On 2 October we were dug in beside that highway. Our troops manned a roadblock and conducted patrols in the nearby hills. We treated two men wounded by snipers. On 3 October an H Company patrol, consisting of a reinforced platoon, was caught in an ambush in the hills. They battled with North Koreans who fought fiercely. Eight of our men were wounded in the fight, before our patrol withdrew from the hills. Active patrolling continued on 4 and 5 October, but with no further casualties. The enemy appeared to have withdrawn farther to the north.

On 6 October our battalion and the rest of the First Marines were relieved of outpost duty. We rode trucks back through Seoul, crossed a pontoon bridge that Army engineers had constructed to span the Han River and proceeded on to Inchon, where we encamped for the next eight days. On 9 October HN Ray D. Brickey was transferred to

division hospital at Inchon.

On 14 October we loaded aboard ships and sailed for Wonsan, a city on the east coast of North Korea. This time our battalion headquarters people and the aid station group rode in a far more comfortable, shipshape LST. I don't recall its number, but do remember the food was good, far better than field rations. The trip turned out to be an unexpectedly long voyage, due as I later learned, to the necessity for the Navy to clear mines from the harbor and approaches to Wonsan.

On 26 October we went ashore at Wonsan in an unopposed, administrative landing. South Korean troops advancing overland had already taken the city. Our battalion hiked 11 miles inland that day. Doctors and corpsmen set up the aid station in a schoolhouse. On 28 October our battalion, reinforced by artillery and engineering units, rode westward in trucks on a narrow, winding dirt road that rose rapidly from the narrow coastal plain through a mountain pass at 3,000 feet elevation, then dropped several hundred feet into a picturesque Y-shaped valley. This was a country of deciduous trees in full autumn color and of clear mountain streams. Our destination, which we reached late that afternoon, was a crossroads village called Majon-ni. There, 28 miles west of Wonsan, the battalion headquarters men and the aid station group set up shop in a one-story, wooden schoolhouse, atop which rose a Russian style, onion-domed spire, a reminder that following World War II this part of Korea had been occupied by the Soviets. Our troops set up roadblocks and dug defense positions in a 360 degree perimeter around the village.

Our battalion's mission at Majon-ni was to block North Korean army units which had been defeated in the south from escaping to the north. We were also to act as a western outpost of our forces at Wonsan. Engineers set to work with a bulldozer to scrape out a short runway for light observation aircraft. For the first 2 of the 17 days we spent at Majon-ni, truck convoys made the trip back and forth to Wonsan without enemy interference. Our troops stopped and detained young transient native men who were suspected of being North Korean soldiers, while allowing civilian refugees to pass peacefully along the roads. Guerrilla attacks on our outposts began and grew increasingly heavy in the nights that followed. Truck convoys trying to negotiate the winding mountain road from Wonsan to Majon-ni came under heavy, vicious fire from enemy troops, who infiltrated that wooded area and gradually accumulated in larger and larger numbers.

On the afternoon of 2 November a reinforced platoon of H Company was ambushed in a narrow defile several miles southwest of Majon-ni. The rest of H Company went to their rescue and a heavy firefight developed near a hamlet called Yohae-ri. In that fight 16 of our

men were killed and 26 wounded. An enlisted Marine pilot landed an OY light observation plane on our little airstrip after dark and managed to take off with one of our most severely wounded men. Forty-five minutes later that man was in surgery aboard the hospital ship, USS Consolation (AH-15) at anchor in Wonsan harbor.

Also, that evening, a native woman brought her very sick, eight-year-old son to the battalion aid station. With sign language and physical examination, we concluded that he obviously had acute appendicitis. There was no way we could have transported him to a hospital. As soon as an interpreter could be found, I explained to the child's mother that the boy desperately needed surgery, even though that involved a considerable risk. This was the backwoods of North Korea. When I advised surgery I fully expected the mother to freak out. On the contrary, she replied through the interpreter, "Yes, I know. That is why I brought him here. What are you waiting for?"

That was a lucky operation for the boy and for us. Our facilities for surgery were primitive. The corpsmen had nailed scrap lumber together to make the table. Gasoline lanterns provided light, such as it was, for our work. Since the weather had become bitterly cold, a gasoline stove, situated only a few feet away, provided necessary warmth for the room. In our equipment we had a roll of surgical instruments and a number of ampules containing silk and gut suture material. By soaking them in alcohol, we tried to sterilize instruments, rubber gloves, and the towels which we used for surgical drapes.

I administered a spinal anesthetic, but it did not prove adequate for the operation. So, Dr. Farrell, who was to have assisted with the surgery, administered drop ether to our patient. Fortunately, we had some corpsmen who were trained operating room technicians. One assisted at the surgery; another acted as scrub nurse. I removed an obstructed, grossly inflamed appendix. The operation went amazingly well, and his postoperative course was entirely uneventful. When he had recovered enough to go home, his mother expressed her gratitude by giving us two bantam chickens--a little rooster and a hen. I hesitated to accept the chickens since the villagers were so obviously poor. Frankly, I don't know what they had to eat. However, our interpreter said that we would insult the woman gravely if we did not accept her gift. So a few days later, at Sunday dinner, the doctors and corpsmen in the aid station ate fried chicken.

On 3 November our corpsman HN Ray D. Brickey, who had been operated on at division hospital in Inchon, returned to duty with our battalion.

Evacuating wounded to hospital facilities in Wonsan became

increasingly difficult as every truck convoy came under attack. Larger and larger units of Marine riflemen were required to accompany and protect the supply columns. Helicopters were used to evacuate several of the more severely wounded.

On 6 November a medical officer and several corpsmen accompanied a motorized combat patrol that consisted of a reinforced company. It swept along a road for several miles to the west of Majon-ni. The patrol met no organized resistance. However, evidence of an increasingly large buildup of North Korean army forces became evident from information provided by local civilians. On the night of 7-8 November the enemy force, which appeared to be of division size, made an all-out attack upon our troops. Fighting began at 0130 of 8 November and continued until dawn.

During the day of 8 November an H Company patrol came under attack in an isolated area. Additional troops rescued it. In the fight one man was killed; 10 were wounded.

On 10 November the cooks prepared a special meal, including a cake, to celebrate the Marine Corps birthday. On the same day a supply column, along with a battalion of Korean Marine Corps troops, made its way from Wonsan. These South Koreans were put into the defense line with our troops.

On the night of 12-13 November the North Koreans again launched a major attack, trying to take the village. Our troops beat back the attack in a fight that lasted most of the night. Korean Marine casualties were two killed, four wounded. U.S. Marine casualties were two killed, two wounded.

On 13 November the First Battalion, 15th Infantry of the U.S. Army's 3rd Division arrived at Majon-ni, to take over the duty of defending this outpost. The next day, 14 November, our battalion rode trucks down the narrow, winding road to Wonsan without encountering any enemy resistance. Later, on 14 November, at Wonsan, 11 new corpsmen who had come to Korea in a replacement draft, were assigned to our battalion.

On 17 November our battalion traveled by train and by truck north to Chigyong, a town near Hamhung. There, for the next eight days, we camped in a quiet wooded area beside a school and a little creek. I believe it was during that time that we acquired tents, winter clothing, and shoe pacs. On 23 November we ate turkey for Thanksgiving dinner.

On 26 November our battalion, minus G Company, traveled by truck through Hamhung north through Chinhung-ni up and over the Funchilin Pass, which rose to 7,000 feet above sea level. We continued through Koto-ri and on another 11 miles to Hagaru-ri. This village, at 4,000 feet above sea level, lay in a broad plain near the south end of the Chosin Reservoir. The narrow dirt road, which we had traveled from

the coastal plain, was the main, and only, supply road for the Marine division and Army troops in this area. It split at Hagaru-ru. One branch went north along the east coast of the Reservoir; the other angled westward, then northwest for about seven miles. It rose sharply to 7,000 feet elevation as it passed through the Toktong pass. Then it descended as it continued north another seven miles to the village of Yudam-ni, which was on the west bank of the Chosin Reservoir. We set up our tents at the north edge of Hagaru-ri.

The Communist Chinese Army had entered the war in late October. In November the Seventh Marine Regiment had fought its way to the Chosin Reservoir. In a major battle near Chinhung-ni, south of the Funchilin Mountain pass, the Seventh Marines had destroyed the 124th Chicom Division. The Seventh Marines continued to advance northward, taking Koto-ri, then Hagaru-ri, and then, moving steadily forward, took control of Yudam-ni. The Fifth Marines followed, and initially advanced more than 15 miles along the east coast of the Chosin Reservoir. Then, as two infantry battalion and an artillery battalion of the U.S. Army's Seventh Division relieved Marines on the east coast of the Reservoir, the Fifth Marines moved over to Yudam-ni on the Reservoir's west coast.

In October and November the Eighth Army had advanced steadily northward along the west coast of the Korean peninsula. Gen. MacArthur's staff in Tokyo planned for the Eighth Army to mount a final offensive in late November to push to the northern border of Korea. Meanwhile, in Northeast Korea, the Marine Division was to spearhead an advance of the Tenth Corps, which also included the U.S. Army's Third and Seventh Divisions. The plan was for Marines to push westward from Yudam-ni for 55 miles over the Taebaek Mountains to a junction with the Eighth Army and to trap between them the Chinese army in North Korea.

In this bold plan the Fifth Marines were scheduled to lead the advance westward from Yudam-ni. The Seventh Marines would follow and support them. The First Marines were to guard the supply route, with their First Battalion at Chinhung-ni below the south end of the Funchilin Pass, their Second Battalion at Koto-ri, and their Third Battalion at Hagaru-ri.

In early November the weather had turned bitterly cold, with daily subzero temperatures. Snow covered the ground throughout the area. Hagaru-ri was a collection of rough wood buildings and mud huts. By the time we arrived there, American military units had erected a suburb of tents. Various supply, communications, and other support groups, both Army and Marine, were there. In all, they numbered about 2,000 men.

Hagaru-ri was designated to be a critical supply, communications, and command center. The Marine Division

Headquarters people were in the process of moving there, and the Tenth Corps Headquarters planned to locate there, too. Engineers worked busily with bulldozers to carve an airstrip from frozen ground just to the west of the village.

Due to a shortage of trucks, our G Company remained in the Hamhung area. Nevertheless, on 27 November the Third Battalion, First Marines was assigned tactical responsibility for the defense of Hagaru-ri. On that afternoon Company F of the Seventh Marines left Hagaru-ri and moved to a hill beside the Toktong Pass to guard that vital road. The other two rifle companies of the Second Battalion, Seventh Marines were already at Yudam-ni, and the last units of the Fifth Marines completed their move from the east coast of the Reservoir to the Yudam-ni area.

Troops in the field seldom know what is happening in other areas, and those of us in lower echelons at Hagaru-ri knew little or nothing of the events that occurred at Yudam-ni or elsewhere in Korea on 27-28 November. But as I later learned, we were all in big trouble. On the west coast of Korea, a huge Chinese army assaulted the U.S. Eighth Army, ripping huge holes in their lines and forcing a rapid retreat to the south. The Communist Chinese had another eight to ten divisions stealthily deployed in northeast Korea to attack the advance units of the Tenth Corps. Apparently, their leaders especially wanted to destroy the Marine Division.

When the Second Battalion, Fifth Marines began their attack westward from Yudam-ni on 27 November, they quickly came up against large units of Chinese. The attack ground to a quick halt and became a desperate defense. On that night of 27-28 November the Chinese violently assaulted the entire Marine defense perimeter at Yudam-ni. A bitter battle with enormous casualties on both sides raged throughout that night. Also that night, Chinese attacked the F Company, Seventh Marines who, at great cost, successfully defended their position on the hill beside the Toktong Pass. Also that night, a Chinese division attacked the 2,500 Army troops, who were divided into two units several miles apart on the east coast of the Reservoir.

At Hagaru-ri, on 28 November, our troops hastily dug deeper foxholes, strung barbed wire, and planted mines in front of their positions along the perimeter. Cooks, clerks, truck drivers, and all sorts of other support personnel were formed into impromptu units and assigned defensive positions on the front lines. That night a full Chinese division made a major effort to take Hagaru-ri. Mortar and rifle fire was intense. Chinese assaulted with massive waves of men. They broke through a part of our line in a sector defended by our H Company. Bitter hand to hand fighting ensued with bayonets, rifle butts, knives, and rocks. With reinforcements from the village, the H company men finally restored the defense line. I

Company held like a rock against similar massive Chinese assaults. On East Hill, a prominent height rising to about 600 feet above the village, Army support troops were driven from the summit. Major Meyers, the executive officer of our battalion, led a motley group of clerks, truck drivers, etc. in an assault back up that hill. They regained the crest at enormous cost, but were later driven part way back down the icy slope. There, they continued to resist stubbornly as the enemy persisted in his attacks. Finally, as daylight returned, Marine Corsairs returned to the air in this area and dealt severe punishment to the enemy troops. The Chinese withdrew to siege positions encircling the encampment.

All through the night of 28-29 November a flood of casualties descended upon the battalion aid station of Third Battalion, First. We treated the patients as quickly as we could, cleaning and dressing wounds, stopping hemorrhage, giving plasma and IV saline and dextrose solutions, giving morphine for pain, and administering antibiotics. We recorded the treatment on tags tied to wrists or ankles. Putting patients on canvas stretchers and covering them with blankets, the corpsmen moved the patients into one tent after another until we had taken over most of the tents belonging to our battalion headquarters people. Then, as hours passed, designated corpsmen went from tent to tent, checking on the condition of the patients, and giving more morphine and antibiotics as needed. It was midafternoon of 29 November before bleary eyed doctors and corpsmen could wash the blood off themselves, and interrupt work for a bite to eat. It was not until then that we noticed that during the night several bullets had passed through the upper part of our aid station tent.

The doctors and corpsmen in other medical units in Hagaru-ri also worked busily all through the night of 28-29 November and the subsequent day to care for the huge volume of casualties they received. E Medical Company operated a field hospital in a wooden building in the village. C Medical Company did the same in a wooden school house situated across the airfield from the village. The C Medical was only about 200 yards behind a sector of front line, manned by Company I of the Third Battalion. During the night's combat, numerous bullets zinged through the flimsy wood walls of their little hospital, fortunately without causing further casualties.

Chinese had also surrounded the town of Koto-ri, 11 miles south of Hagaru-ri, and aviators reported that the enemy had set up numerous road blocks on the road between the two towns. On 28 November a truck convoy had successfully come up through the Funchilin Pass to Koto-ri, bearing G Company of Third Battalion, First, a company of British Royal Marines, a U.S. Army infantry company, and several small units of support personnel. On 29 September men of this convoy, consisting of over 900 men and hundreds of vehicles, fought

a continuing battle as they tried to travel north to Hagaru-ri. Despite the support of Marine Corsairs in the air, tanks with the column, and artillery at Koto-ri firing as requested by the advancing troops, progress was painfully slow. In the late afternoon, Chinese forced the convoy to a halt south of a blown bridge on the twisting road at a place the Marines later called "Hellfire Valley."

Receiving orders to push through to Hagaru-ri at any cost, a group of tanks led the way, while the G Company Marines forced passage around the blown bridge and dashed northward. They overcame a number of additional roadblocks and managed to reach Hagaru-ri that evening. Later in the evening, the company of British Marines also managed to break through an encirclement and to push on to Hagaru-ri. Each of those two companies sustained over 30 percent casualties in the fighting. Back at the ambush site, Chinese continued to fragment the encircled defenders. A few of the Americans managed to fight their way back to Koto-ri. The rest either died in the battle or became prisoners of war.

Fortunately for us, the Chinese did not mount any serious attack upon Hagaru-ri on the night of 29-30 November, partly I think, because the weather then was so severely cold.

Both our G Company and the British Marines brought nearly all their wounded to Hagaru-ri, where the medical companies treated them. Both companies remained very effective combat units. On 30 November, after a night's sleep and a hot breakfast, the men of G Company relieved the ragtag group of Marines with whom Maj. Meyers had defended East Hill. Reinforced with engineers and artillerymen, who suddenly became infantrymen, G Company advanced up East Hill and succeeded in retaking part of its western slope. The British Marines, for whom our men developed a deep respect and admiration, proved themselves to be magnificent fighters. During the rest of the siege of Hagaru-ri, they became a ready reserve, called upon repeatedly to back up beleaguered frontline troops in trouble.

On the night of 30 November-1 December, the Chinese launched another maximum effort to take Hagaru-ri. They assaulted I Company of our battalion in strength. The battle was bloody and bitter, but our company again held like a rock and slaughtered huge numbers of the enemy in the fight. The other major effort of the Chinese was on East Hill. Capt. Carl Sitter, who commanded G Company, had shown great valor and leadership in the bloody battle up the road from Koto-ri on 29 November. Again this night, despite being wounded, he refused evacuation. The enemy pushed his unit back part way down the hill, but they didn't break through that company.

During that night many of the Chinese did penetrate down the west slope of East Hill, to the north of G Company, but service troops at a supply dump who included even the division band repulsed them.

Artillery and tanks ripped invading enemy formations to shreds. British Marines coming to reinforce this area went on the attack and regained much of the lost portion of the slope.

That night of 30 November-1 December was another busy time for all the medical units at Hagaru-ri, including our battalion aid station. East Hill was covered with ice and snow. It was steep and a treacherous climb and descent for litter bearers and for corpsmen going to the aid of wounded men. Our corpsmen displayed almost unbelievable bravery and dedication in the efforts they made to aid the wounded under horrible, deepfreeze conditions.

Although not completed, and with the runway only 2,900 feet long, the airfield at Hagaru-ri became operational on the afternoon of 1 December. Two C-47 aircraft landed and took off loaded with casualties, who were flown to Yonpo airport near Hungnam. There the patients were treated in the Marine division hospital, in an Army field hospital, or on board the USS *Consolation* at anchor in the nearby harbor. A third C-47 wrecked its landing gear while landing at Hagaru-ri, but no one on board was hurt. Then, late that afternoon, a four-engine Navy cargo plane called a 5RD landed and successfully took off laden with casualties. That was the one and only time a four-engine plane landed or took off at that little airport. The engineers continued to lengthen the runway to 3200 feet, and they widened it. During the next four days in daylight hours planes continued to land, bringing equipment and supplies, and to take off laden with patients whom they flew to hospitals at Hungnam or Japan. In all, 4,200 were evacuated by air from Hagaru-ri. Only two cargo planes had accidents; no patients or crew members were killed or suffered any significant injury.

At Hagaru-ri we in lower echelons continued to learn almost nothing about how the war was going in other areas. Yet on 1 December the Fifth and Seventh Marines began a fighting withdrawal to Hagaru-ri. Beleaguered Army troops on the east coast of the Reservoir also tried to fight their way back toward us, but their convoys crumbled under repeated enemy attacks. Hundreds of soldiers escaped individually and in small groups to make their way onto the ice covering the Reservoir or along the shore to our lines at Hagaru-ri. On 2 December, and again on 3 December, the commander of the First Marine Transport Battalion, Lt. Col. [Olin]Beall, led Marines and corpsmen out onto the ice of the Reservoir to search for and rescue hundreds of sick and wounded soldiers. He even ventured onto the east shore of the Reservoir in enemy territory to search for wounded men in need of rescue.

All the medical facilities at Hagaru-ri, including our Third Battalion aid station, treated and cared for wounded and frostbitten Army men and Marines. Frostbite, which became a major problem for

both the Marines and the Army soldiers, is a weak word that does not convey the severity of the injury that the cold weather inflicted upon so many men. In our time at the Chosin Reservoir and in the subsequent trip back to the sea, cold weather inflicted at least as much damage upon our men as did the enemy weapons. Men lost toes, feet, fingers, hands, noses, ears. Many who did not lose extremities had sensory changes of numbness and burning pain that continued to plague them for years.

Although surrounded by several divisions of Chinese troops who fought desperately to prevent their withdrawal, the Fifth and Seventh Marines repeatedly attacked enemy blocking the narrow road and the ones entrenched on adjacent hills. Despite heavy losses of men, those two Marine regiments fought through 14 miles to reach Hagaru-ri. On the way, they joined and rescued the F Company, Seventh Marines, who had successfully fought off nightly attacks. The men of that company defended their position on the hill above the Toktong Pass from 27 November until the First Battalion, Seventh, hiked and fought across rough, mountainous country to reach them on 2 December. The commander of F Company, Capt. William Barber, sustained severe wounds to his right thigh on the night of 29 November, yet he continued actively to direct his men in their fight. He crawled up and down that hill to inspect defense positions. On 27 November when F Company came to the hill at Toktong Pass, they were seven officers and 233 enlisted Marines. On 3 December, when the rest of the Fifth and Seventh Marines completed juncture with First Battalion, Seventh, and with F Company, Seventh, and F Company came off that hill, six of the seven officers had been wounded. Only 82 of the men of that company were still physically able to march and fight as they joined in the rest of the hike to Hagaru-ri.

Excitement swept through the men at Hagaru-ri late in the afternoon of 3 December. We could hear artillery fire in the distance. Marine Corsairs dived repeatedly to strafe enemy soldiers in the distance toward the northwest. We knew that the Fifth and Seventh Marines were on their way toward us. A task force of our Marine tanks and riflemen and British Royal Marines pushed out from the Hagaru-ri defense perimeter and advanced for about a mile up the road to the northwest. There they met the vanguard of the First Battalion, Seventh Marines. At about 1930 hours the Seventh Marines began to come through our lines at Hagaru-ri. Many of us went out to watch from the roadside. It was a truly awe inspiring sight. First Battalion, Seventh, had halted several hundred yards outside our line. They formed up in columns and marched into Hagaru-ri to a parade cadence. Ragged, dirty, they looked magnificent to us. Vehicles that followed carried the wounded and the dead. Stretchers were strapped across hoods of jeeps and artillery gun carriages.

Trucks filled with casualties proceeded to the two field hospitals with their human cargo. Men at Hagaru-ri had readied tents for the new arrivals; cooks had hot food ready to feed them.

Fifth and Seventh Marines continued to reach our lines all through the night and through more than half of the following day, even though some of the units still on the road continued to fight off attacking Chinese. By 1330 on 4 December the last of the units of the Fifth Marines and an artillery battalion had made it to Hagaru-ri. At our aid station and in the field hospitals, doctors and corpsmen kept busy, but we all felt much more secure now that most of the division was once again together.

The regular air evacuation of casualties from Hagaru-ri concluded late on the afternoon of 5 December. Plans were to start the attack toward the sea on the morning of 6 December. The one supply road from the coast had been cut in numerous places to the south of us. Both Hagaru-ri and Koto-ri were surrounded by vastly larger enemy forces. Marine and Air Force cargo planes by air drops and by direct delivery had done a magnificent job of bringing supplies and equipment to us and in evacuating casualties. Yet, they could deliver only a fraction of the supplies our forces would need in a prolonged siege. Intelligence information suggested that even more Chinese troops were on the way from Manchuria. Military logic dictated this further withdrawal.

On 5 December Lt. Col. Raymond Murray, commander of the Fifth Marines, was assigned tactical control of the defense at Hagaru-ri, and the Third Battalion, First, and the British Marines were attached to his regiment. The Second Battalion, Fifth Marines relieved G Company, First Marines, and took over the responsibility for East Hill on the afternoon of 5 December. First Battalion, Fifth Marines took over the part of the perimeter defense north of East Hill. H and I Companies of Third Battalion, First, continued to defend their usual sectors of the front line.

Early in the morning of 6 December units of the Seventh Marines and a provisional Army company left Hagaru-ri and began the attack to the south. Rifle companies advanced over high ground on each side of the road as other combat units advanced along the road supported by tanks, by Marine and Navy planes, and by artillery batteries still at Hagaru-ri. A long convoy of trucks, jeeps, and ambulances followed the leading companies of riflemen. Various supply and support troops marched along the road beside the vehicles to protect the convoy. Numerous firefights developed along the way; the advance continued to be slow and intermittent.

Also on that morning of 6 December the Second Battalion, Fifth Marines launched an attack to seize control of all of the crest of East Hill. In a bloody, difficult battle they succeeded in doing

that and established defensive positions.

At around 1800 that afternoon we took down our aid station tent and joined other men of the headquarters section of our battalion in standing beside vehicles on the road, but still inside the defense perimeter of Hagaru-ri. And that is as far as we moved all through that night. The air was freezing.

As that night, 6 December, progressed, the Chinese launched a major attack on the defenses of Hagaru-ri. They dislodged a platoon of Second Battalion, Fifth, from part of the crest of East Hill but did not succeed in driving them from a key area of that crest. To the north of East Hill other Chinese units launched repeated mass wave attacks against the First Battalion, Fifth Marines. The slaughter of attacking Chinese was enormous as the Marine units held doggedly to their ground and were supported by tanks firing their 90 millimeter guns point blank into the charging enemy troops.

Standing at the roadside, beside trucks and ambulances, doctors and corpsmen of our aid station heard the war going on at the perimeter of the Hagaru-ri defenses, but could only guess at what was happening. To absorb a little warmth, we huddled near a 55 gallon oil drum in which someone had built a fire. Once in a while, a bullet or two would zing through the air nearby, and men would back away from the fire into the surrounding darkness. But the subzero air was so miserable that after a little while men would again inch back toward the fire. Rather than endure the cold, it seemed better to gain a little warmth, even though that meant being silhouetted by light of the fire and possibly becoming a target for a sniper.

We knew nothing of the attacks which the enemy carried out that night on parts of the convoy along the road between Hagaru-ri and Koto-ri, but they were vicious. When daylight returned the next morning, 7 December, we moved out from Hagaru-ri as part of the second convoy. Tanks and units of the Fifth Marines led the way down the road. Our combat troops of Third Battalion, First Marines, the British Marines, and other units of the Fifth Marines seized and held high ground on each side of the road as we passed by. Besides the drivers, the only ones who rode in the vehicles were either casualties or the dead. The rest of us walked beside the trucks, ambulances, and jeeps. Progress was slow and intermittent. We saw and heard firefights on the hills above us, and many of us took part in an exchange of fire with enemy on a hill to the east of the road. Marine and Navy Corsairs patrolled the sky above us and above the hills to the right and left of the road. Repeatedly, we saw planes dive, rocket, and strafe enemy on land beyond the ridge lines near the road. For the most part, during daylight hours, the planes kept enemy troops well away from us.

By early evening we reached Koto-ri. Artillery units followed

us, and finally the Second Battalion, Fifth Marines, marched down the road as rear guard. The last units came within the defense perimeter at Koto-ri late that evening. There, we had hot chow and the chance to sleep in tents. Our group had a relatively easy hike to Koto-ri. We treated only a few casualties on the road.

The Seventh Marines and other units had come down the road on 6 December and had spent the night of 6-7 December out in the open. They experienced much rougher conditions and suffered far greater losses. Total Marine and Navy casualties for 6 and 7 December, including the battle on East Hill and the fighting trip to Koto-ri, were 83 killed in action, 20 who died of wounds, 7 missing in action, and 506 wounded in action.

All I remember of 8 December while our battalion remained at Koto-ri was that it snowed heavily most of the day. Much more than that occurred, however. The Seventh Marines led a new attack to the south of Koto-ri. The First Battalion, First Marines, left Chinhung-ni, at the foot of the mountain chain in the wee hours of that morning. They marched up the road through the Funchilin Pass to attack a large force of enemy troops who were entrenched on a mountain that dominated a vital part of that pass. This high ground called Hill 1081 overlooked a section of road and a vital bridge which the enemy had blown up. In an incredible feat of mountain climbing and fighting during a snow storm, this Marine battalion gained control of part of the slope on 8 December, and on 9 December completely eliminated the enemy force that had held it. On 9 December units of the Seventh Marines captured the damaged bridge and a power plant beside it. Engineers repaired the bridge using prefabricated steel bridging sections that had been parachuted to the Marines at Koto-ri on 7 December and were then trucked to the bridge site.

Our battalion moved south on the afternoon of 9 December to take over defensive positions on high ground on each side of the road, about a mile to a mile and a half south of Koto-ri. We set up our aid station tent beside the road after sunset. That was the coldest night I have ever experienced. Temperatures fell to 30 degrees below zero. Our rifle companies were out in the snow on the hills above us. I really don't know how they survived. And yet, at around 0300 in the early darkness of 10 December, enemy troops attacked one of our rifle companies. Our men beat back the attack, suffering a few casualties, whom we treated and kept in the tent.

All through the day of 10 December, trucks and other vehicles went south along the road in front of our aid tent. Units at Koto-ri broke camp and headed south. Our Third Battalion, First was scheduled to bring up the rear of the convoy. Then the tanks were to cross the repaired bridge guarded only by the Division

Reconnaissance Company.

About 2100 that evening our aid station group rode vehicles to the south. Two corpsmen, a Marine driver, Dr. Farrell, and I rode in a field ambulance, along with two wounded men whom we had treated. I don't remember crossing the repaired bridge. At about 0200 the ambulance skidded on the icy road south of the bridge and slid into a ditch. An Army lieutenant ran over to the ambulance screaming that we had to get out of there in a hurry. The Chinese were close behind us. The Army officer was commander of a tank, and by now the tanks were the only vehicles in the area. "Climb up on our tanks!" he yelled.

Doctors and corpsmen helped patients up and climbed onto the rear decks of two tanks. The tanks clanked on down the road a few hundred yards then stopped for a while. The stop and go routine repeated itself all through the rest of the night. As daylight returned, we could see 10 more tanks behind the ones on which we rode. Beyond that last tank there was only an empty, winding road. A few Marines walked along the road near the tanks and had no trouble keeping pace with them. These Marines, I believe, were men of the Reconnaissance Company and some engineers who had blown up the bridge after the last of our tanks crossed it.

Slow progress down the mountain road continued all morning. At about 1130 enemy on a mountain east of the road took a few shots at us. An Army sergeant climbed out of the turret of the tank on which we rode, mounted a machine gun on a bracket, and chewed up the vegetation on the hillside above our position. I don't know if he hit any Chinese, but they didn't fire any more bullets in our direction.

At about 1300 on 10 December we came down the mountain, passed through the town of Chinhung-ni, and continued on a much better, two-lane gravel road toward the south. We rode the tanks all the way to Hungnam, where we rejoined our battalion. We camped there for the next two days. We broke camp in the early evening of 13 December, loaded into LSU landing craft at 2000 hours. We rode out to the anchorage area and sat there freezing and bobbing around on the waves. Finally they took us aboard the transport, *General E.T. Collins* (AP-147) at 0300 of 14 December. The ship normally would have carried about 1800 troops, but on this occasion over 8,000 Marines came on board. We sailed that morning and arrived in Pusan at 1330 of 15 December. We remained on board until the next morning. Then we loaded aboard a train that took us about 30 miles west to the town of Masan. There, in beanfields beside a former Japanese military base, we camped in tents for about the next three weeks.

Doctors of C Company of the Division's Medical Battalion had come to Korea with the Brigade in early August, 1950. They were the

first doctors to be rotated back to duty in the States. It was at that time that I was transferred from Third Battalion, First Marines, to C Medical Company. I worked in this company from mid January to April. We ran a collecting and clearing hospital in tents or in Quonset huts when we found them. Our unit followed closely behind the operations of the Fifth Marines, and they evacuated casualties to us. We had an anesthesia doctor, had blood available, and had an electrical generator. We did emergency surgery, set fractures, applied plaster casts, and cared for serious cases until we could evacuate them further to the rear area hospitals. Theoretically, we had personnel and supplies to care for about 60 patients. At times the flood of casualties that came to us far exceeded that number. We had no x-ray or laboratory facilities, so made diagnoses on clinical and physical examinations. At times we were very busy.

In mid April I was transferred back to division hospital at Masan to await further orders. On 27 April I was one of several doctors, who with orders back to Stateside duty, flew to Japan. From there we flew to California. On reporting at Camp Pendleton, I was detached from the Marines, given 30 days leave, and orders to report for duty at Naval Hospital San Diego, California.

Real war is hell. I was very lucky in my brief experience with it. I never suffered a scratch and had very few real hardships. Yet, I believe I understand better what combat can do to those intimately involved in it. Working and fighting in the field, especially in the winter in mountainous country, can require enormous physical exertions for Marines and Soldiers and can be a severe strain on mental stability. I gained an enormous respect and admiration for our Navy hospital corpsmen who served in the field with the Marines. With almost no training for the situations they faced, our corpsmen performed their duties with remarkable bravery and dedication. I also have a deep admiration and respect for the Marines, both officers and enlisted. I'll never forget the ones with whom I served. They truly exemplified the motto "Semper Fidelis."