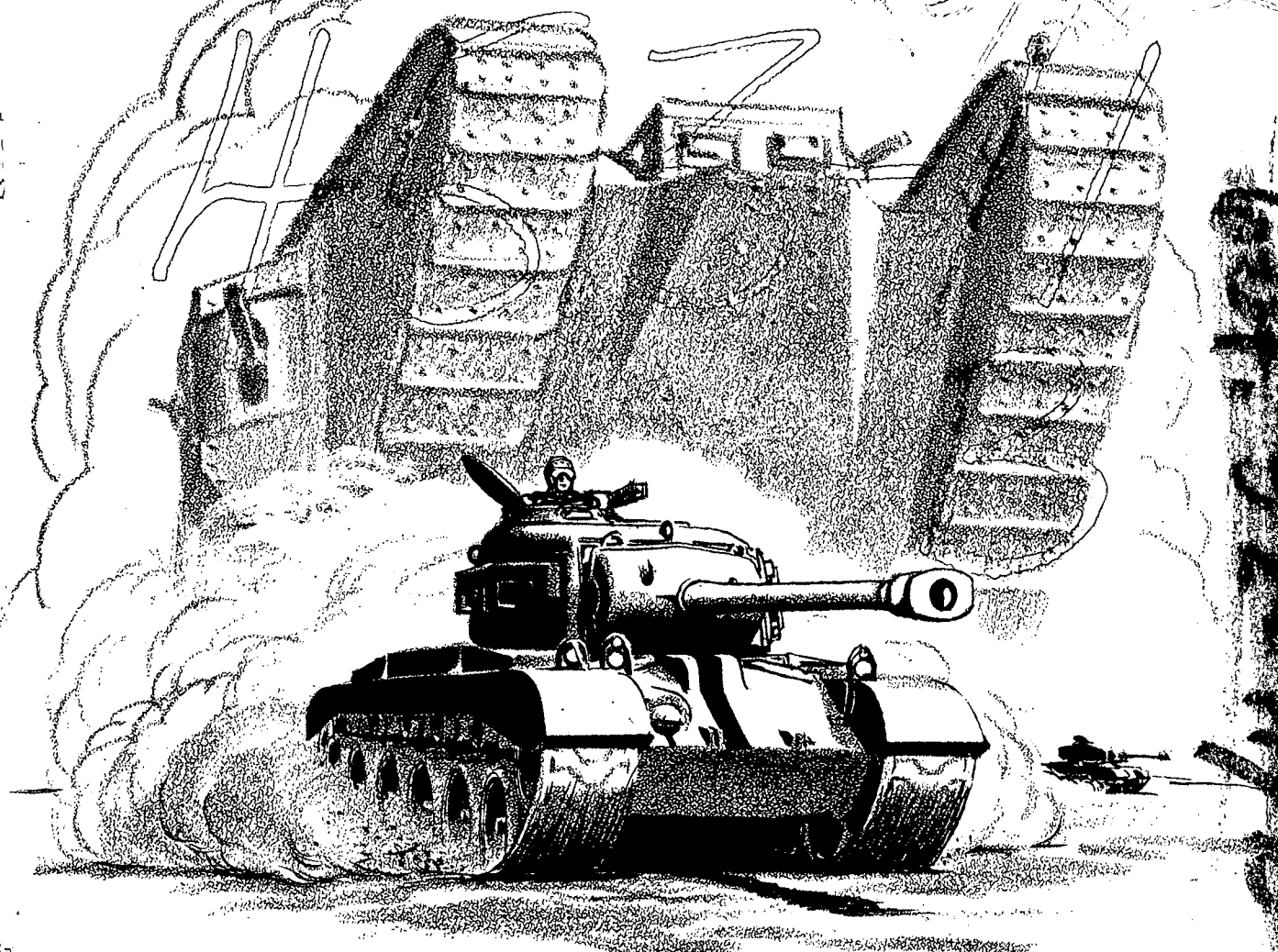


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# Employment of Armor in Korea- The First Year

A/C 5211.52-52

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**A RESEARCH REPORT**  
Prepared at  
**THE ARMORED SCHOOL**  
Fort Knox, Kentucky  
1951-1952

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## CHAPTER 5

### CCF INTERVENTION (3 November 1950 to 24 January 1951)

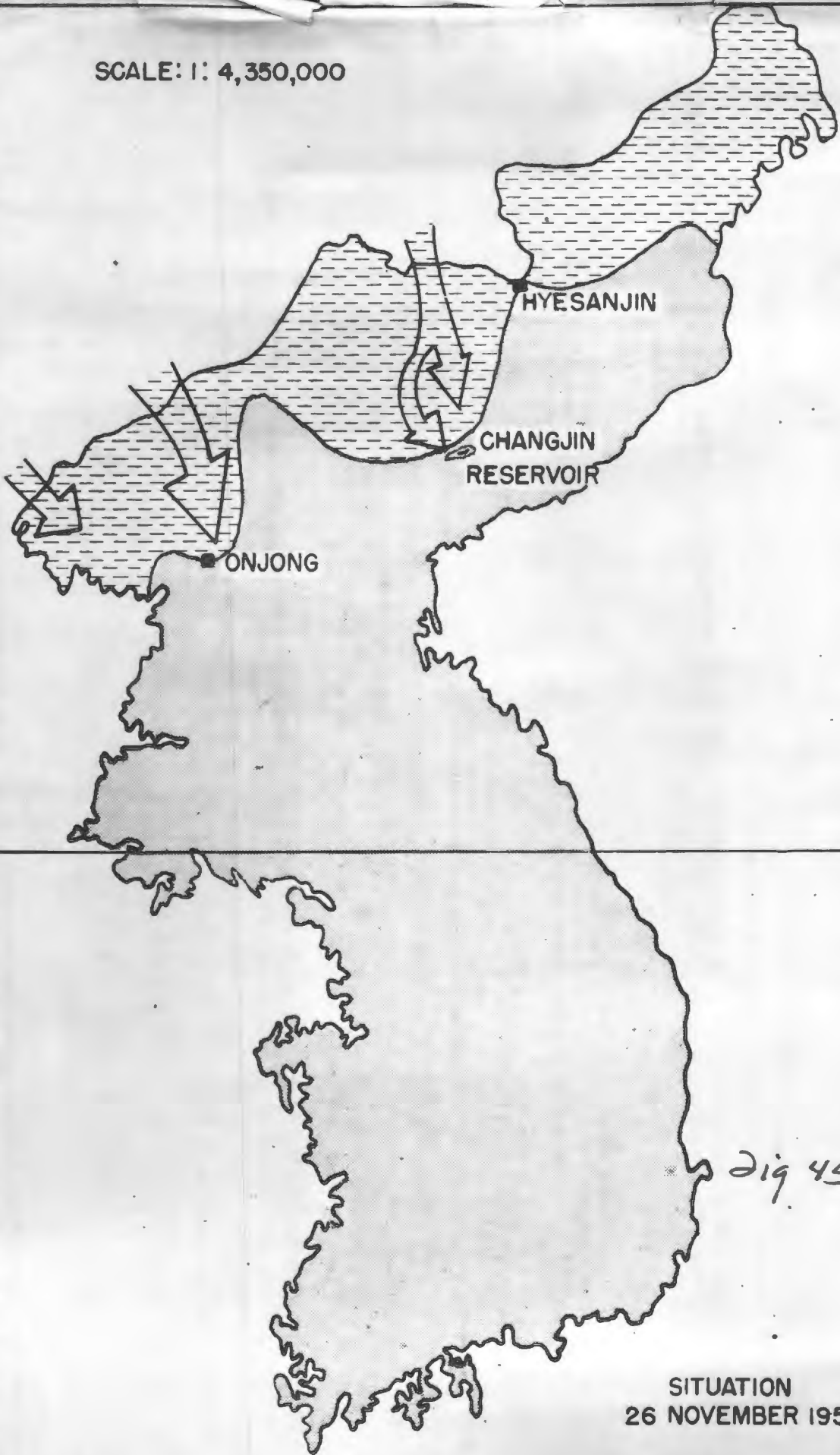
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#### General Conduct of the Campaign

"Seoul City Sue", the North Korean version of "Tokyo Rose", was often an unconscious source of amusement to the UN troops in the early days, with her outrageous lies and heavy handed propaganda. In the days immediately following the INCHON landing, UN troops were particularly amused by her frenzied appeals to the Chinese people for help (in English oddly enough), and a little worried about whether the Chinese would respond or not. Rumors and reports reached the UN troops, placing large Chinese concentrations along the YALU River boundary. As the UN offensive wore on, however, the Chinese made no move to intervene while the North Korean army was rapidly being destroyed. As the pursuit into North Korea progressed, confidence spread that the war was almost over. The possibility of Chinese intervention seemed remote.

The 26-27 October attack by the Chinese at UNSAN and ONJONG was disquieting. The 2 November attack against the 8th Cavalry gave the first hint that large scale Chinese intervention was a definite possibility. The US I and IX Corps promptly disposed themselves to meet an attack by an estimated 12 divisions and five brigades. During the period 3-5 November a line was set up, north

SCALE: 1: 4,350,000



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SITUATION  
26 NOVEMBER 1950

of the CHONGCHON River between KASAN and KUNU-RI, to meet this threat.

On 6 November General MacArthur announced that "a new and fresh army now faces us, backed by a possibility of large alien reserves".

The expected blow did not fall, however. The enemy withdrew almost out of contact in the west and the US X Corps began making substantial advances in the northeast sector.

With the Eighth Army on the left flank braced for an attack that was not materializing, the X Corps and ROK troops continued exploitation up the east coast. On 14 November the ROK Capitol Division, having taken MYONGCHON, had pushed within 90 miles of the SIBERIAN border and was meeting strong North Korean resistance. The 17th Regiment of the 7th Division, advancing against little opposition, reached the YALU River at HYESANJIN.

To the south and west, however, the 1st Marine Division was definitely meeting strong resistance. Fighting up from HUNGNAM against two to three Chinese Divisions, the Marines had pushed past HAGARU and reached the CHOSIN RESERVOIR on 16 November.

With the X Corps making successful advances on its right and the Chinese having withdrawn from their front, the Eighth Army resumed the offensive at 1000 hours 24 November. The line at this time ran east and west through KUJANG, with I Corps on the left and IX Corps in the center, both north of the CHONGCHON; and the ROK II Corps on the right, southeast of the river.

During the 24th and 25th of November, the UN forces advanced against little opposition. Suddenly, on 26 November, the ROK II Corps collapsed under heavy attack. Enemy pressure started all along the line, gradually decreasing to the west near SINANJU where the 24th Division was not in contact.

After shattering the ROK-held portion of the line, the Chinese swung to the southwest on 27 November and started moving down the river line towards ANJU, threatening to turn the flank of IX Corps, held at the time by the 2d Division.

On 28 November General MacArthur announced that "we face an entirely new war". Chinese intervention had become a reality, and the "large alien reserves" had been committed. Estimates of the strength of the Chinese forces thrown into the war at this time vary from 150,000 to 600,000, as opposed to a UN strength of approximately 325,000 (including 100,000 ROKs). It is certain, however, that the Chinese troops were massed in decisive superiority at the UN center.

The ROK II Corps in the center had disintegrated completely and was making futile attempts to establish a defensive line south of PUKCHANG with elements of its 6th Division, while collecting stragglers from the 7th and 8th ROK Divisions.

To protect the open east flank of IX Corps the Turkish Brigade had moved into position east of KUNU-RI, and the 38th Regiment (2d Division) had turned its own flank to the south. From 30 November through 1 December these two units were badly

chewed up by Chinese attacks while protecting the flank of the US I and IX Corps' as they withdrew to form a line south of the CHONGCHON. The 8th Cavalry Regiment similarly took heavy casualties holding their position at UNSAN in order to protect the withdrawal of the 24th Division.

With an estimated six Chinese armies (18 divisions) and four more armies in reserve arrayed against the I and IX Corps' and the right flank exposed by the collapse of the ROKs, the CHONGCHON River line was considered indefensible, and all units were ordered to fall back and delay.

X Corps meanwhile was under attack by an estimated 12 Chinese divisions moving against the Marines. As X Corps started a withdrawal to a beachhead in the HAMHUNG and HUNGNAM areas, the gap in the UN lines became greater. Contact with Eighth Army was lost and the entire Eighth Army right flank exposed, inviting a Chinese flanking movement to cut the escape route to the south. Patrols, air, and naval observation were used to keep the gap to the east under surveillance, while the ROK III Corps moved its 9th Division just northeast of SEOUL to help fill the gap and give depth to the delaying action.

The ensuing fall back of the Eighth Army, more commonly referred to as the "bugout", began with a successful disengagement at the CHONGCHON. The 3d Battalion, 35th Regiment (25th Division) acted as a covering force down the SUNCHON-PYONGYANG road, while the UK 29th Brigade set up positions north of PYONGYANG



911  
Figure 46. Retreat From the CHOSIN RESERVOIR, December 1951.

By LIFE Photographer, David D. Duncan  
(c) Time Inc.

to cover the withdrawal through the city.

At 0630 hours on 5 December the Royal Ulster Rifles crossed the TAEDONG River, completing the evacuation of the North Korean capitol of PYONGYANG. The delaying line at this time arced north from the mouth of the TAEDONG on the left to near KOKSAN on the right, with IX Corps patrolling to the east and I Corps astride the PYONGYANG-SEOUL axis. The fall back continued under medium enemy pressure.

To the north, X Corps was hastily trying to salvage its troops from threatened encirclement and annihilation. The 17th Regiment had been withdrawn from HYESANJIN without meeting major opposition, but the 1st Marine Division was battling its way out of an encirclement in its epic "attack in a different direction". A link-up between the Marines and elements of the 7th Division was made at HAGARU, and together they fought back to a link-up with a battalion task force from the 3d Division north of HAMHUNG.

Covered by the 3d Division, which had been disembarked to hold the perimeter around HUNGNAM, the 1st Marine and 7th Divisions were evacuated by sea, as were the ROK Capitol Division and other ROK units. On 16 December, elements of the Marines and 7th Division were landed at PUSAN, still effective fighting forces but badly chewed up. The ROK Capitol Division was landed on the east coast north of SAMCHOK on 19 December to be recommitted.



X Corps completed the evacuation of the HUNGNAM beachhead on 24 December. 105,000 military personnel, 17,500 vehicles, and 350,000 measurement tons of supplies had been snatched from under the very noses of the Chinese. An additional 91,000 civilian refugees were also evacuated by sea.

Lt General Walton Walker, the commander of the Eighth Army, died in a jeep accident on 23 December, and Lt General Matthew B. Ridgeway assumed command of the still retreating Eighth Army on 26 December. The UN dispositions at the time ran roughly along the 38th Parallel, the west flank fairly well manned with I Corps on the left and IX Corps on the right, and the east flank poorly held by ROK troops. Evacuated X Corps units were brought into the WONJU area to prevent a penetration in that area.

On 27 December a new Chinese attack hit between the ROK 9th and Capitol Divisions in the east central sector and penetrated eight miles.

Four days later the Chinese general offensive began with attacks against the ROK 6th Division south of YONCHON. The ROK troops once again collapsed and the enemy drive began pushing towards HONGCHON and HOENGSONG against the ROK 9th Division without difficulty. Moving to the east through the gap created by the ROKs, the Chinese crossed the IMJIN River and attacked the US I and IX Corps, with greatest pressure on the right flank tapering off to the west where the 25th Division and Turkish Brigade were out of contact. With their east flank again exposed by an enemy

penetration through the ROKs, the I and IX Corps began a general withdrawal, closely followed by the enemy.

A bridgehead defense was established north of SEOUL by the two US corps' to protect their withdrawal across the HAN, only to be penetrated and almost enveloped by enemy foot troops moving over the frozen surface of the river. On 3 January orders were issued to withdraw across the HAN and to abandon SEOUL.

A new UN defense line was established by I and IX Corps with the left flank anchored on the west coast near PYONGTAEK and then running northeast to WONJU. A task force from the 27th Regiment (25th Division) probed to the north and encountered little or no resistance.

In the center, however, the ROK III Corps fell back and the ROK I Corps on its right fell back also to maintain contact. The US X Corps moved into the center to brace the sagging line and to contain the North Korean II Corps, massing north of WONJU.

East of WONJU a strong enemy force, moving south through the undefended mountains, posed a new threat. Unless this movement were countered, the UN forces would be split down the middle and then laterally when the enemy turned west in a pincers movement. The enemy force, estimated at 18,000, began their attempt to divide the UN forces by an attack on WONJU on 7 January.

WONJU, on the 2d Division's right flank, was held by the 23d and 38th Regiments in position on the high ground to the south of the city, and the ROK 8th Division on the left. The enemy

assault began on 7 January with a frontal attack of the city by two divisions while two other divisions moved to envelop the city and cut the roads to the south.

The initial attack was repulsed, but the enemy infiltrated into the city at night and the next day (8 January) was taken up in flushing out the infiltrators. On 9 January the attack was resumed by a reinforced enemy, who besieged WONJU and required the UN troops to fall back a short distance. The 2d Division immediately began probing attacks, and then from 10 to 13 January a series of counterattacks, succeeding on 14 January in breaking up the enemy assault with the help of air support. This last action was particularly bitter in that the temperature fell to 25 below zero during the final counterattack.

The main threat broken, the 2d Division withdrew on 17 January to shorten and strengthen the line. Contact between the US X Corps and the ROK III Corps was re-established in the YONGWOL area on 18 January, and the situation began to stabilize itself.

Infiltrated units and extensive guerrilla activity were a very real source of danger during this period, with guerrillas active in the ANDONG area, as far west as MUNGYONG and as far south as TAEJON. Infiltrated elements of the North Korean II Corps at one time seriously threatened the WONJU-TANYANG-ANDONG road. These behind-the-lines threats were finally brought under control by the action of the 2d and 7th Divisions, 1st Marine Division, and the ROK 3d, 5th and 8th Divisions.

After contact was re-established in the center on 18 January, I and IX Corps' started patrolling to the north, seeking the enemy. Operation Wolfhound was launched north of SUWON as a reconnaissance in force and found that the front opposite I Corps in the west was not heavily manned. Task Force JOHNSON, a similar reconnaissance in force, moved out along the ICHON-YOJU road on 22 January and found that the line in the IX Corps sector was not held in force either.

The first Chinese offensive had spent its momentum.

#### General Comments on Campaign

1. Despite the fact that Chinese forces first entered the war on 26 October, the exact degree of intervention was unknown for some time. The possibility of "large alien reserves" was announced on 6 November, but it would appear that a calculated risk was taken that the Chinese would intervene only with a token force. The abortive "home by Christmas" offensive launched on 24 November would be a logical outcome of such a decision, although the theory has been advanced that the attack was to develop enemy intentions.

2. Regardless of whether or not the 24 November offensive was launched on the basis of a calculated risk, the independent status and operation of X Corps invited disaster. The loss of coordinated action between the right and left wings of the UN forces led to an almost fatal partition of forces when the weak center was crushed. The subsequent fall-back to the HUNGNAM

beachhead by X Corps, while skillfully and successfully carried out, exposed the entire right flank of the Eighth Army and provided the enemy with an unparalleled opportunity to encircle and destroy the bulk of the UN forces in Korea.

3. US forces and their commanders displayed a tendency to see operations as extremes. Over-optimism during the exploitation phase led to long penetrations without adequate flank security or follow-up forces (e.g. the 17th Regiment push to HYESANJIN), and separated pushes against known resistance which were virtually "voluntary encirclements" (e.g. the 1st Marine advance to the Reservoir). Over-pessimism resulted in "bugout fever".

As a corollary to this, however, it must be pointed out that, with the exception of certain ROK divisions, the UN forces fought extremely well in desperate situations and accomplished astonishing feats of "staying power" when required to do so. The astounding success of personal leadership, as exemplified by the change when General Ridgeway assumed command, indicates that much of the blame for over-optimism and over-pessimism and their unfortunate results, may be laid at the door of senior commanders rather than individuals or junior commanders alone.

4. ROK troops again proved unreliable in the face of strong attack.

5. Chinese attacks of fixed positions during this period took the form of a heavy concentration on a narrow front, preferably opposite ROK troops, to effect a penetration. The Chinese

were very adroit in finding the weak points of lines, and the flanks and boundaries of units. Penetrations were often preceded by infiltrations to set up strong points behind the line and cut off the retreat of UN forces.

The Chinese withdrawal after 6 November was calculated to lure the Eighth Army into launching an attack, during which they could be hit while on the move. A multiple point attack was then used, in accordance with Lin Fiao's doctrine: "In attacking an enemy on the march... engage him in frontal attack while the main forces attack his flank. Cut him in two; a strong force should attack the center and another strong force the rear..."<sup>2</sup>

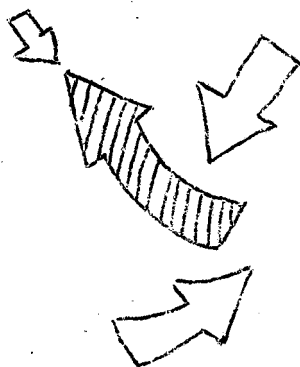


Figure 47

It can readily be seen that adequate flank security or a coordinated advance all along the front would present no such vulnerable flanks to the enemy to permit this maneuver.

6. The enemy preoccupation with seizing WONJU robbed them of the opportunity to bypass the resistance and turn the right flank of the entire Eighth Army. This desire to seize and hold towns and cities is more typical of the North Koreans than of the Communist Chinese, who had defeated the city-bound Nationalists for largely this very reason.

7. The superior mobility of the UN forces permitted a rapid withdrawal from an untenable position and a breathing spell in which to regroup. The Chinese lack of mobility, on the other hand, prevented close pursuit and the full exploitation of their initial surprise. They simply could not move fast enough to take advantage of the Eighth Army's exposed flank, nor could they maintain sufficient pressure on the retreating UN forces to keep the momentum of their advance. Furthermore, the Chinese outran their logistical support in a very short time, a deficiency that was to become even more apparent as the war went on.

8. The value of naval superiority was forcibly brought out by the successful evacuation of the HUNGNAM beachhead and the stability of coastal flanks throughout the period, flanks that were controlled by naval gunfire.

#### Armored Action During Campaign

##### Infantry-Armor Task Force, Offense to Perimeter Defense.

The following narrative deals with small unit actions within a task force, most typical of operations during the CCF intervention

in the Korean conflict. These events comprise not only the actions of a tank company and of infantry companies, but in addition the action of other type units: reconnaissance company of an infantry division; a ranger company; and a combat engineer company, fighting as infantry.

During the latter part of November 1950 in the zone of the US 25th Infantry Division, two of its regiments, the 24th and 35th, were on line in northwest Korea near and south of UNSAN, the site of the overwhelming CCF attack on elements of the 8th Cavalry Regiment and 70th Tank Battalion on 1-2 November 1950. The 24th and 35th Regiments were slowly advancing north but due to terrain limitations a small corridor separated them. This corridor, or gap, was occupied by Task Force DOLVIN, composed of Headquarters, Headquarters and Service Company, and Company B of the 89th Medium Tank Battalion; Company E, 27th Infantry Regiment; Company B, 35th Infantry Regiment; 25th Reconnaissance Company; 25th Ranger Company; and one 105mm howitzer artillery battalion in direct support.<sup>3</sup> This task force was commanded by Lt Col Welborn T. Dolvin, also commanding officer of the 89th Medium Tank Battalion.

The plan of action provided that as the division advanced north, terrain would force the 24th and 35th Regiments together, thereby sandwiching out Task Force DOLVIN. Consequently this Task Force had the mission of a series of limited objective attacks between the 24th and 35th Regiments to secure the gap



existing between the two regiments.

At daybreak on 23 November 1950 Task Force DOLVIN departed YONGPO-DONG and moved north via IPSOK with the mission of seizing and securing a series of hills, A, B, C, D, and E (Figure 48). Company B, 35th Infantry, supported by Company B, 89th Tank Battalion, seized Hill A with little opposition, but very stiff resistance was met before capture of Hill B. By nightfall Task Force DOLVIN was positioned with its forward elements between Hills B and C. During the action on this date, Company B, 65th Engineer Battalion was supporting the Task Force by being responsible for security of the road from YONGPO-DONG to the vicinity of Task Force DOLVIN Command Post and the 25th Reconnaissance Company (Figure 49).

On the morning of 24 November Company B, 35th Infantry attacked and seized Hill C. Hill C being secured, the 25th Ranger Company supported by tank fire of Company B, 89th Tank Battalion attacked Hill E, but met very stiff resistance. Repeated assaults failed to secure the objective, and the attacking force finally was compelled to withdraw. Of the Ranger Company's 70 men in the initial assault that morning, only 13 remained, the others having become casualties. Finally Company E, 27th Infantry passed through the Ranger Company and seized Hill E after fierce fighting.

During the night of 24-25 November the two infantry companies on Hills C and E, respectively, were supported by the

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UNSAN  
1 MILE

KURYONG RIVER

TF ≡ 24

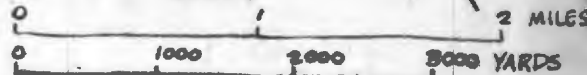
35 ≡ TF

IPSOK

TF DOLVIN

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SCALE



YONGP-O-DONG  
1 MILE

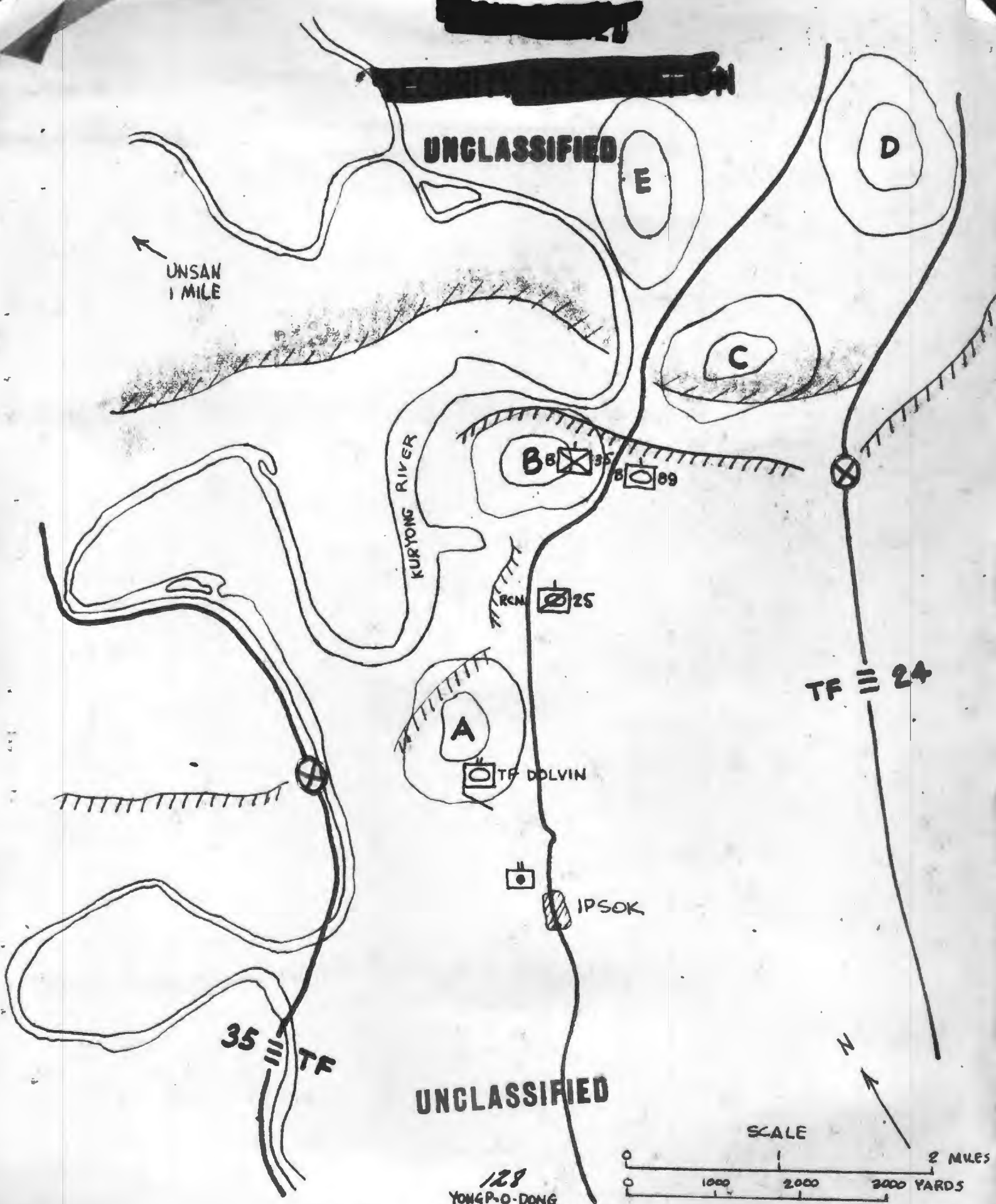
FIGURE 48

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10

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35 TF

TF 24

UNCLASSIFIED

SCALE



128  
YONGP-O-DONG

FIGURE 49

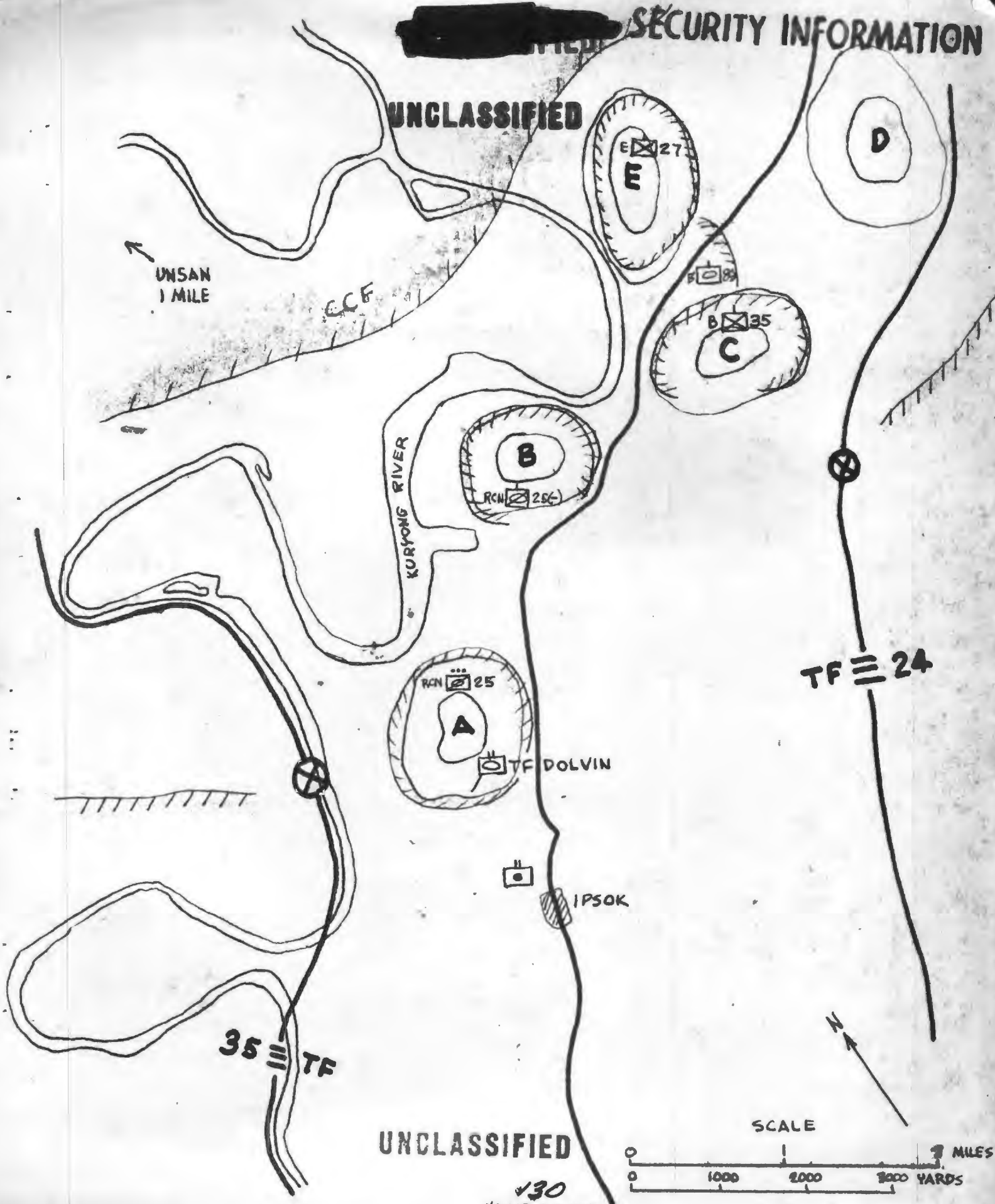
tank company, while the reconnaissance company occupied blocking positions on Hills A and B (Figure 50). Throughout that night there was an almost steady exchange of small arms and mortar fire. Some artillery fire from Task Force DOLVIN was directed at the enemy. In spite of this continuous activity there were no significant changes in the location of any elements of Task Force DOLVIN.

The 25th of November found the positions of the task force fairly stable, although enemy patrols were active in the vicinity of forward elements of the task force.

The 24th Infantry Regiment in its zone on the right of Task Force DOLVIN was meeting stiffening resistance to the point of being hard pressed in some localities.

Task Force DOLVIN was dissolved on 26 November and became a part of Task Force WILSON (Brig Gen WILSON, Assistant Division Commander, 25th Infantry Division). Because of the situation, not only within the Task Force DOLVIN area, but within the 24th Infantry Regiment area, General Wilson decided that the Task Force was overextended. Those elements occupying Hills E and C were withdrawn. Company B, 25th Infantry took positions on the high ground southwest of Hill C while battle-weary Company E, 27th Infantry moved south of Task Force WILSON CP (formerly Task Force DOLVIN CP) where it was fed a hot meal and was supposed to get some much-needed rest. Company B, 65th Engineers (organized as infantry) relieved the 25th Reconnaissance

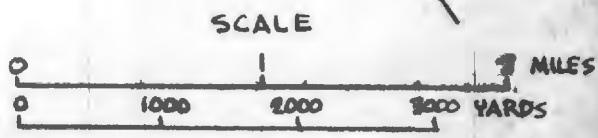
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FIGURE 50

130  
YONGP-O-DONG  
1 MILE



Company on Hill B. The major portion of the reconnaissance company occupied Hill A, while one platoon was deployed nearby on the "Turkey Neck" portion of land formed by the KURYONG River (Figure 51). At about 2330 hours on the 26th the reconnaissance platoon on the "Turkey Neck", west of the main body of the task force, suddenly was attacked by a Chinese Communist Force of at least company size. The outnumbered platoon soon was overrun, a few survivors escaping to rejoin elements of the task force to the east. By midnight the Chinese were attacking on a large scale all along the front of the 25th Division (Figure 52). At that time Company E, 27th Infantry was moved forward from its assembly area to the task force CP area, where it occupied defensive positions in conjunction with the 89th's Reconnaissance and Assault Gun Platoons. This allowed the CP defensive area to be tied in with the 25th Reconnaissance Company to the north on Hill A.

By 0230 27 November CCF elements had broken through the 25th Division positions in the vicinity of both boundaries of Task Force WILSON—between the 35th Infantry and the task force on the left, and between the task force and the 24th Infantry on the right. A column of "thin skinned" vehicles with about 50 wounded attempted to leave the task force area for the safety of the rear but encountered an enemy road block in the vicinity of SANGGWAN-DONG, approximately 1000 yards south of the task force CP. The wheeled vehicles were caught in the withering fire of the automatic weapons of the Chinese, and most of the 50 wounded plus many of the drivers

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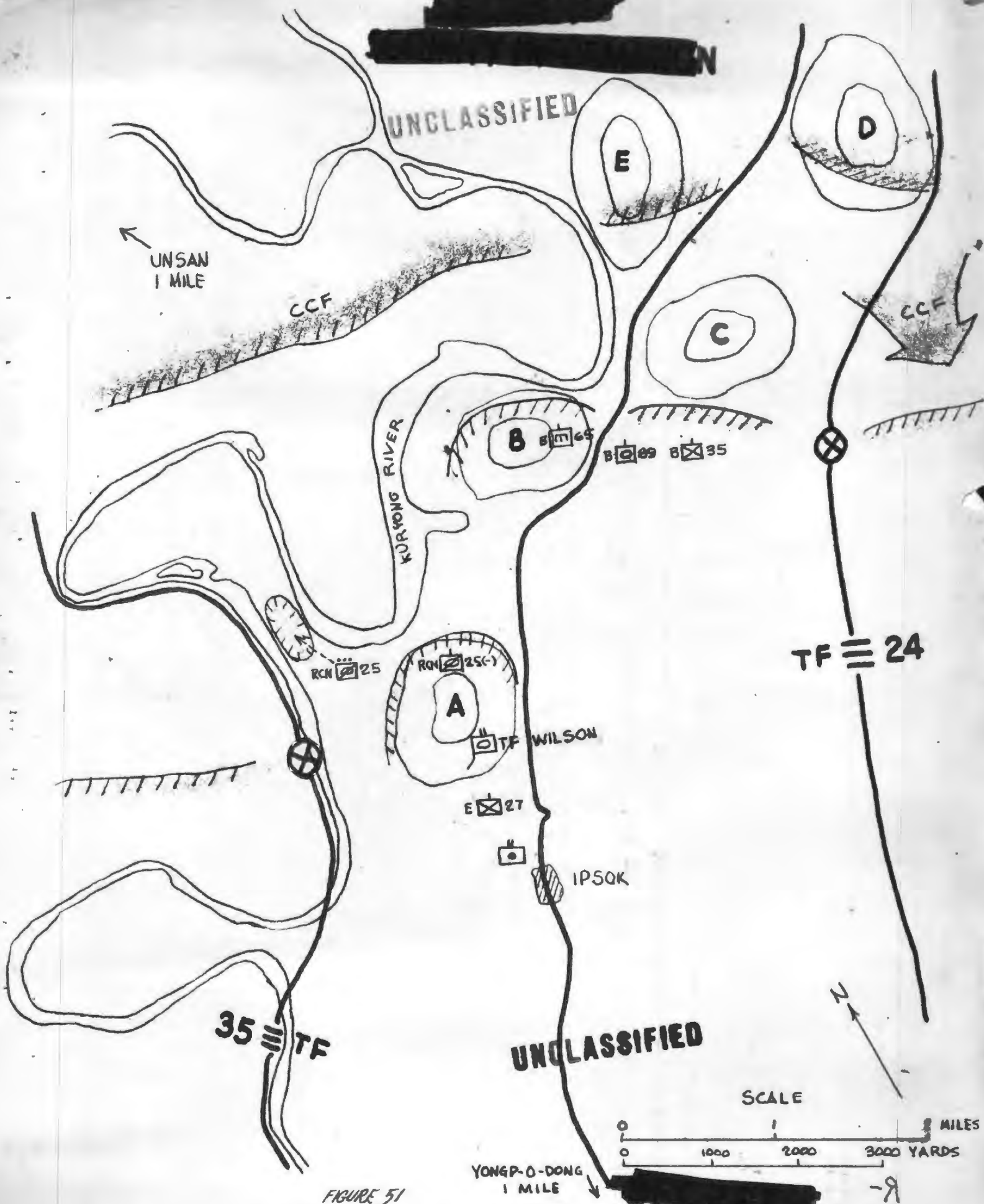


FIGURE 51

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SECURITY INFORMATION

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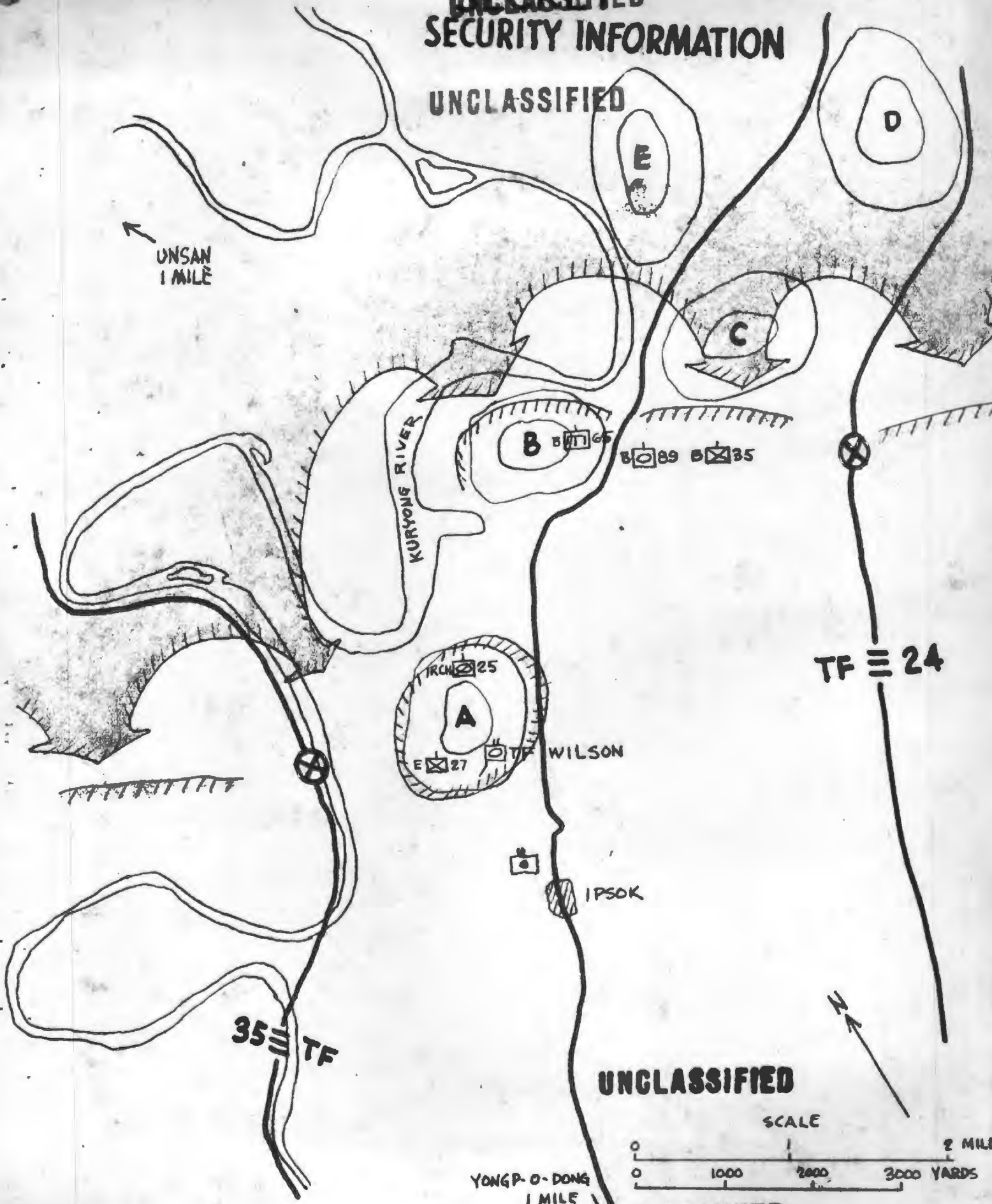


FIGURE 52

~~SECRET~~

133 SECURITY INFORMATION

-9

113



were killed. The few survivors escaped in the darkness. The artillery battalion had been in position northwest of IPSOK approximately 500 yards southwest of the roadblock but had displaced to the rear without incident, just prior to the ambush of the vehicles carrying wounded. (Figure 53).

At dawn on 27 November the 25th Reconnaissance Company moved from its position on Hill A to reduce the roadblock. The roadblock was neutralized and the reconnaissance company was passing through that area to the south when reconstituted enemy elements established another roadblock in that general vicinity, separating the southbound company from its last platoon. Within a short time the 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry arrived from the south and enveloped and destroyed the roadblock, thereby relieving some of the pressure on the task force (Figure 54). With the enemy situation relatively calm, and the friendly lines having been restored somewhat, the relief battalion then occupied blocking positions north of the roadblock, allowing the battered task force to withdraw south and regroup, in preparation for early recommitment (Figure 55).

#### Limited Objective Attacks—Infantry Reinforced with Armor.

By mid-January 1951 the UN forces in western Korea were actively patrolling with armored task forces to seek out the enemy, disrupt his concentrations, and inflict maximum destruction of personnel and materiel. Whenever possible tactical air was coordinated into these armored patrols, or raids, to great advantage.

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UNSAN  
1 MILE

KURYONG RIVER

TF ≡ 24

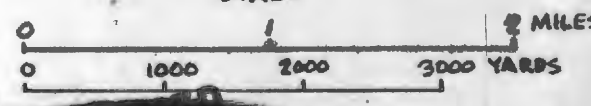
WILSON

IPSOK

35 ≡ TF

UNCLASSIFIED

SCALE

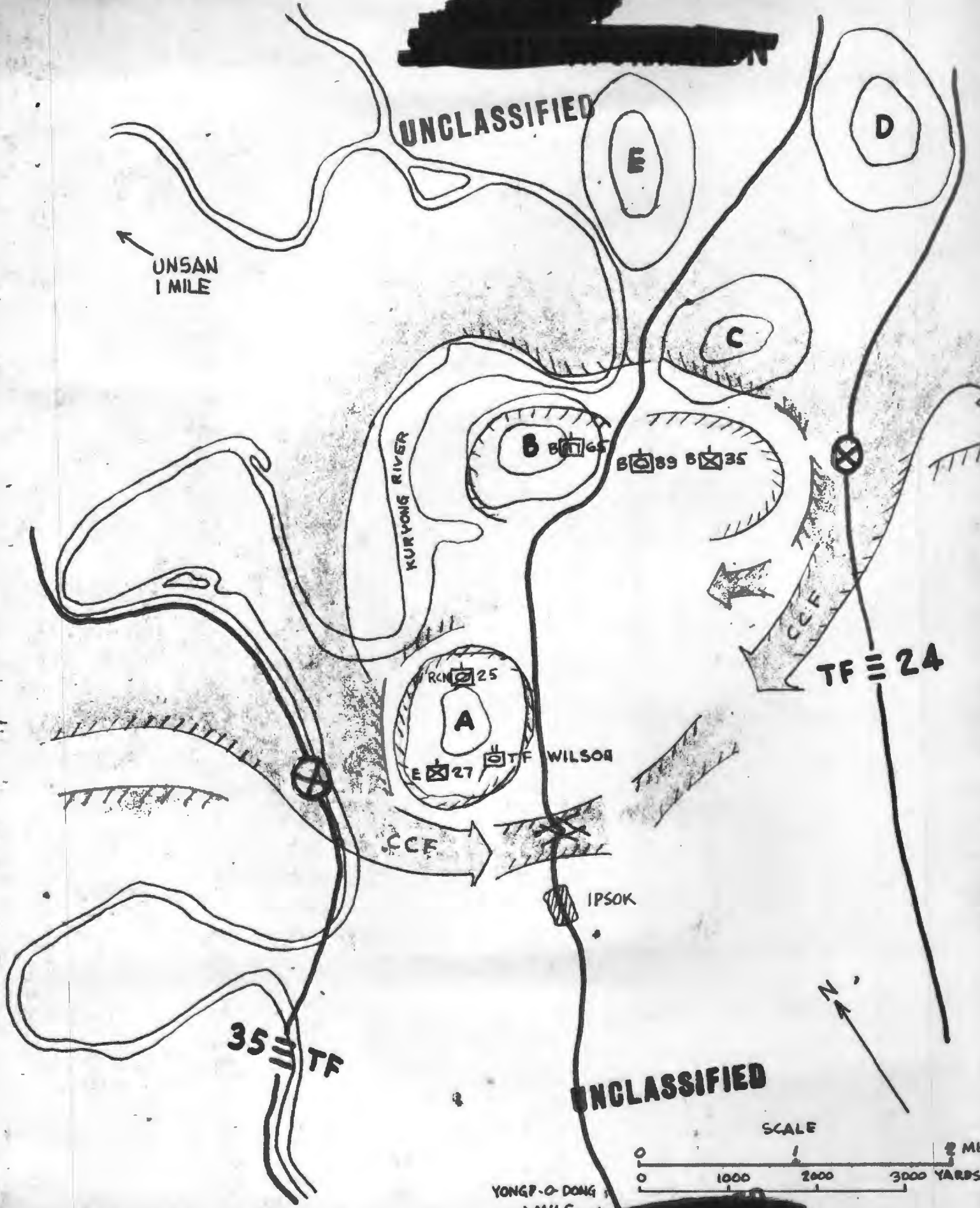


YONGP-O-DONG  
1 MILE

FIGURE 53

135

-9



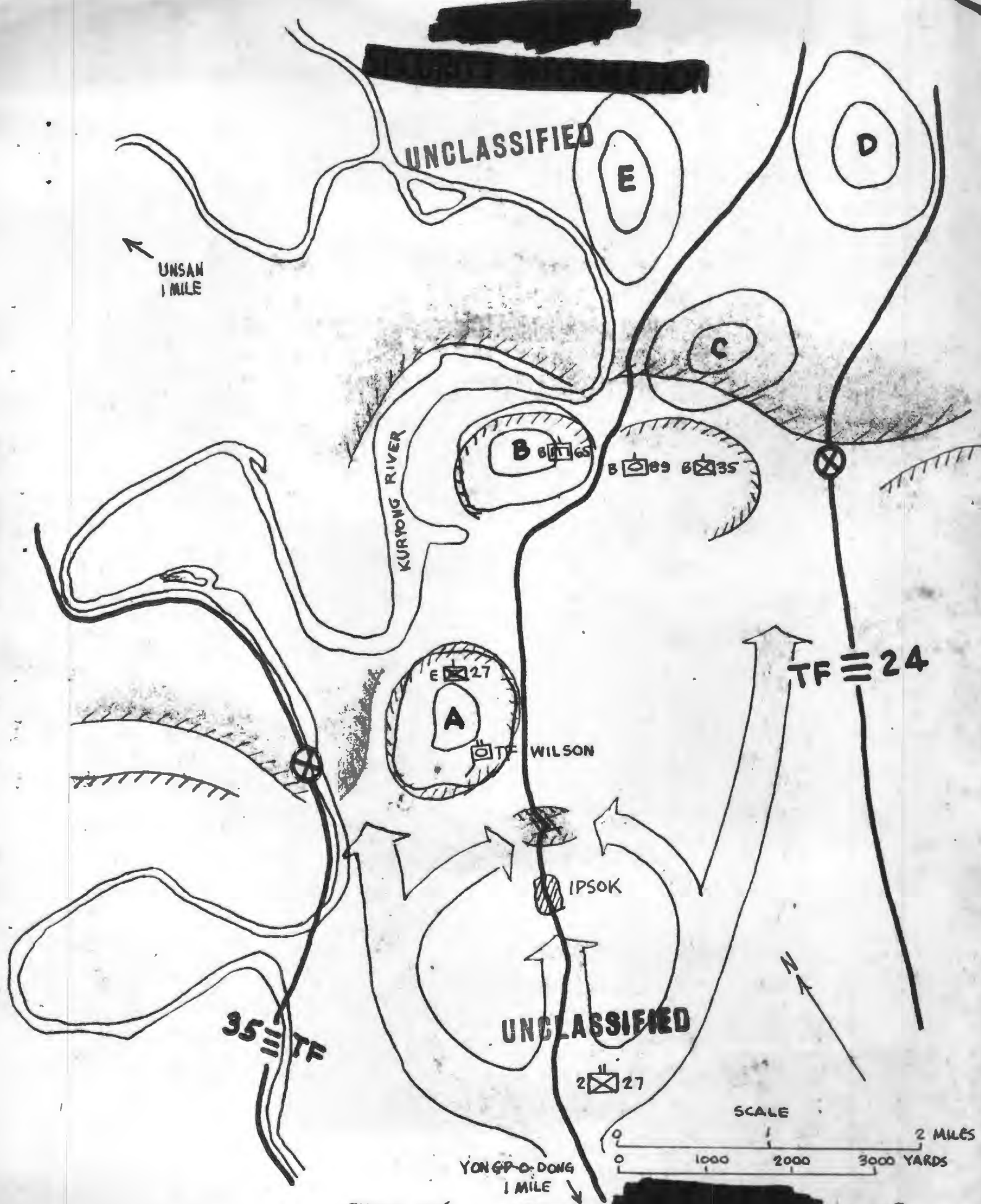


FIGURE 54  
136

UNCLASSIFIED

UNSAN  
1 MILE

KURYONG RIVER

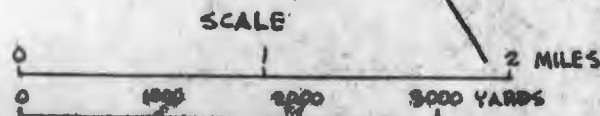
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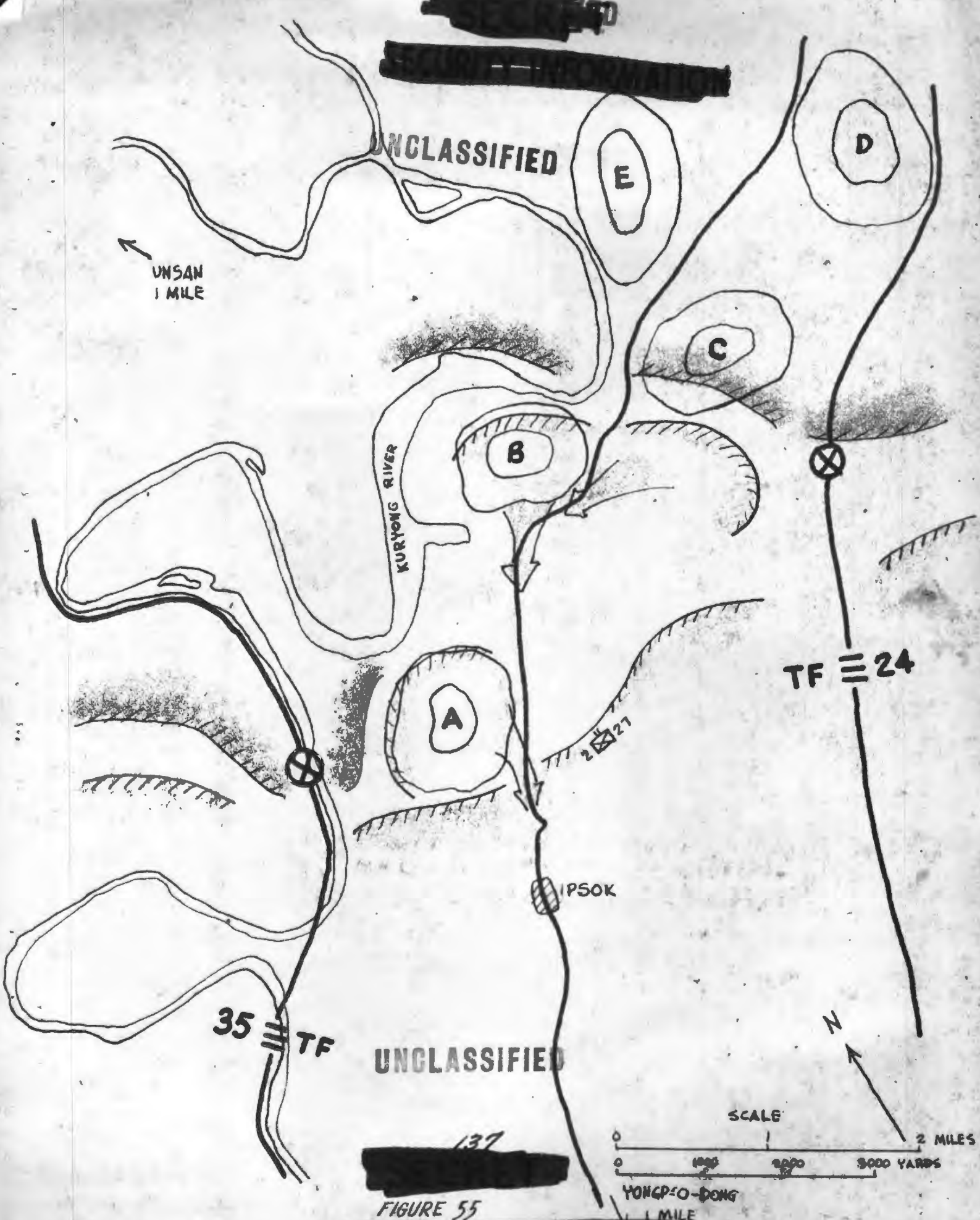
137

FIGURE 55



YONGPŌ-DONG  
1 MILE

R-117



Such an infantry-armor patrol was planned for the 27th Regimental Combat Team to execute on 15 January 1951. The 27th RCT was located in area A, south of OSAN on the night of 14-15 January (Figures 56 & 57). The mission of the 27th RCT was to attack to the front in its zone on 15 January with strong armor task forces to disrupt enemy concentrations and inflict maximum destruction on the enemy in the OSAN-SUWON area.

For the operation three task forces were organized within the RCT as follows:<sup>4</sup>

Task Force ABLE:

- 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry
- Company C, 89th Tank Battalion
- Company D, 89th Tank Battalion
- Battery A, 8th Field Artillery Battalion
- 1 Platoon, Engineers
- 1 Platoon, 25th Reconnaissance Company
- Tactical Air Control Party

Task Force BAKER:

- 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry
- Company B, 89th Tank Battalion

Task Force CHARLIE:

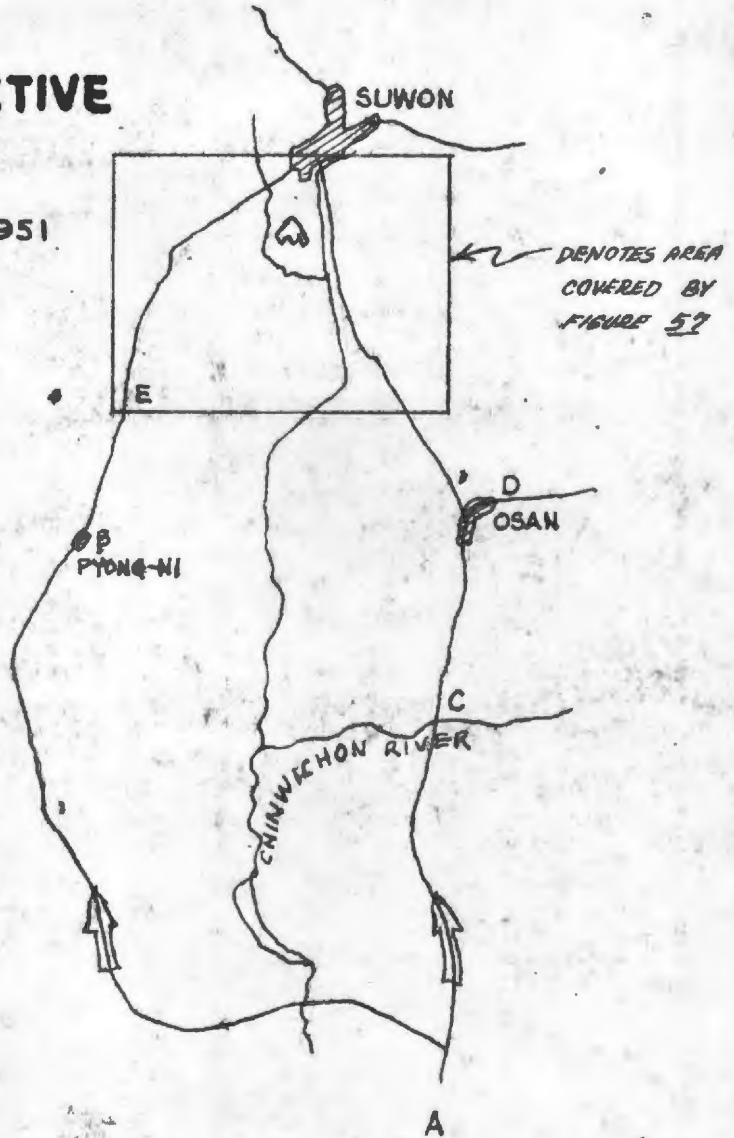
- 3d Battalion, 27th Infantry
- Company A, 89th Tank Battalion
- Company, Engineers (-1 platoon)

At 0710 hours on the 15th, Task Force ABLE attacked west

**UNCLASSIFIED**

# LIMITED OBJECTIVE ATTACK

15-16 JANUARY 1951



SCALE

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 MILES

**UNCLASSIFIED**

FIGURE 56

139

-9  
124

# LIMITED OBJECTIVE ATTACK

15-16 JANUARY 1951

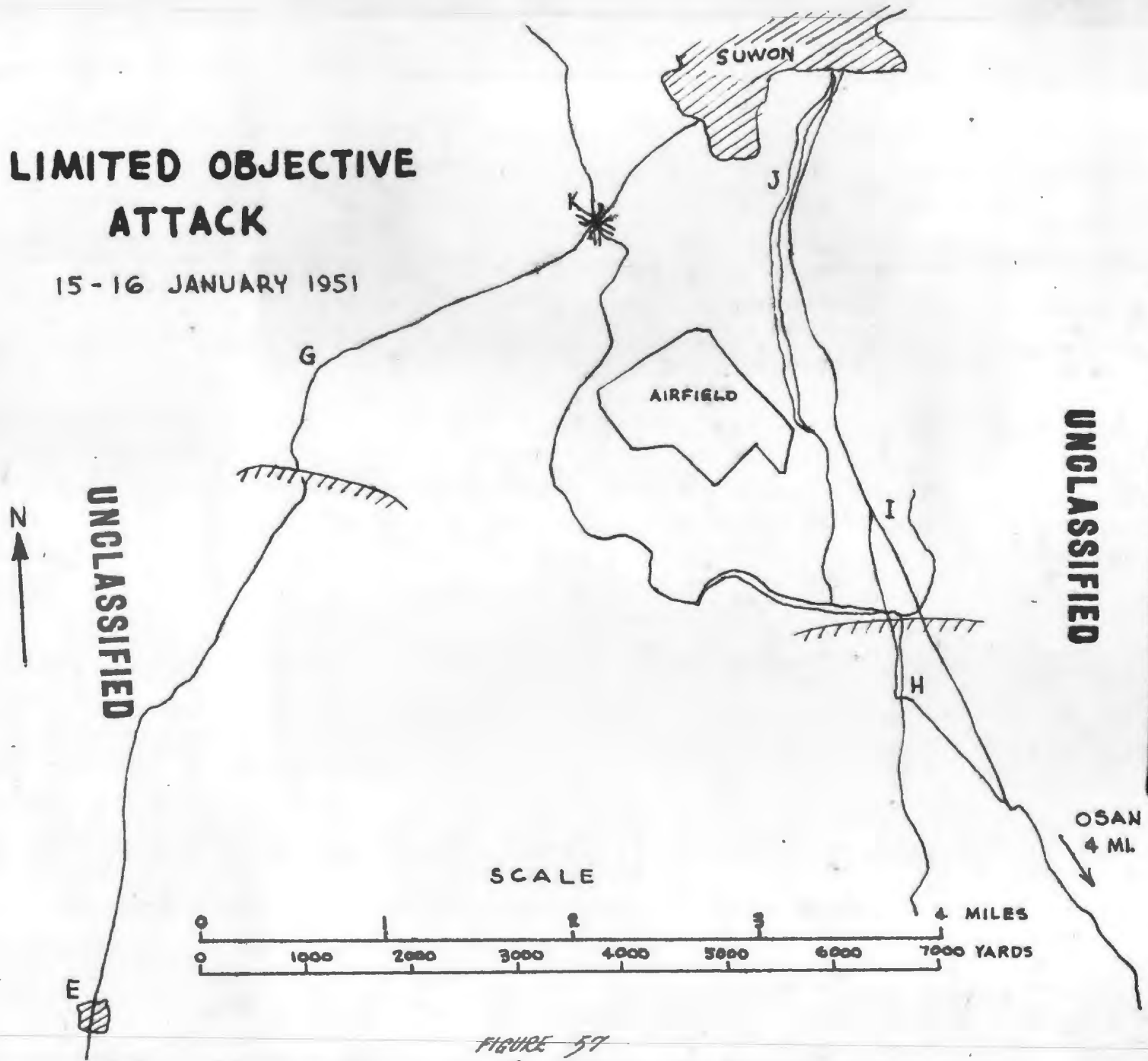


FIGURE 57

140  
UNCLASSIFIED

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123  
8-9

and then north to secure the left flank of the 27th RCT. By 1600 the task force had arrived at POYANG-NI (Point B). A perimeter defense for the night had been established by 1820 hours.

Task Force CHARLIE jumped off at 0700 on the 15th, Task Force BAKER following CHARLIE at 0900. At 0820 Task Force CHARLIE encountered a blown bridge over the CHINWI-CHON River at Point C, and the vehicular movement of the task force was delayed until 1030 while the engineers constructed a bypass. Patrols had reached the outskirts of OSAN by 1145; by 1300 the remainder of Task Force CHARLIE had arrived there. The task force pushed its infantrymen across the river at OSAN, secured a bridgehead, patrolled in all directions, and established contact with the 65th Infantry (part of the 3d Infantry Division) on the right. By 1730 the bridge at Point D had been repaired, permitting the tanks to cross and join the task force in its defensive positions north of OSAN. Task Force BAKER established defensive positions just to the south of OSAN, tying in with the defense of the 65th Infantry and maintaining the security of the crossing site.

Early on the morning of 16 January, while Task Force ABIE in the west continued its attack toward SUWON, Task Force BAKER passed through Task Force CHARLIE and attacked to the north. Task Force ABIE dispatched a team consisting of Company D, 89th Tank Battalion and Company B, 27th Infantry to seize Point E which it successfully completed by 1100 hours.



At this time the main body of Task Force BAKER was at Point H while a team from BAKER (consisting of Company G, 27th Infantry and Company B, 89th Tank Battalion) was at Point I. Leading elements of Task Force BAKER then advanced rapidly, reaching unoccupied enemy positions (vicinity Point J) some 500 yards south of SUWON before receiving enemy fire. Due to the extreme cold weather, the bulk of the CCF troops were in the houses in SUWON, some of them at a considerable distance from their battle positions. The team from Point I (G-27 Inf, B-89 Tk), having moved forward, deployed and engaged the completely surprised CCF troops with tank, mortar, machine gun, and small arms fire, inflicting an estimated 200 casualties. The suddenness of the attack by Task Force BAKER caught the enemy with a large portion of his defensive positions unoccupied. As a result the Chinese were forced to scurry back to their battle stations under the withering fires of the attacking force.

Task Force ABLE passed a team, consisting of Company C, 27th Infantry and Company C, 89th Tank Battalion, through its other elements and by 1500 had secured one of ABLE'S objectives, a river crossing at Point K. The tanks of the task force were held up by a demolished bridge, but foot elements pushed to the southwestern edge of SUWON.

Withdrawal from SUWON was initiated by Task Forces ABLE and BAKER at 161600. Artillery fire and air strikes on the town itself, and to the southwest and southeast of SUWON covered the withdrawal.

While withdrawing, Task Force BAKER engaged an estimated 100 enemy east of the SUWON airfield. By 1800 hours the withdrawing forces had established perimeters for the night, preparatory to engaging in a coordinated occupation of SUWON proper, the following day.

Almost without exception the condition of the terrain confined both wheeled and tracked vehicular movement to the available road net. The weather was cold and the ground covered by snow. The road network of the east column was limited. Friendly demolitions carried out in that area during a previous withdrawal hampered the advance. The road of the west column was poor, but supported tanks with difficulty. Lateral routes throughout the area of operations were of little value at this time.

Aerial visibility was good on 15 January, but difficult until midmorning on 16th due to ground haze and fog. Forty-one flights with a total of 201 sorties were flown in support of the operation on the first day and 27 flights of 107 sorties on the second. Results on both days were excellent and totalled an estimated 950 enemy casualties.

Communications from the 25th Infantry Division Tactical CP to forward elements of the 27th RCT were augmented so as to insure positive control at all times. This precaution resulted in continuous communications at all times during this operation.

Enemy in large numbers were not encountered until SUWON was approached on 16 January. An estimated minimum of one Chinese regiment was dug in around the south edge of SUWON. Approximately

200 enemy took attacking UN forces under fire from the roofs of buildings. The suddenness of the attack, plus the "flushing" effect on the Chinese forces scattered within the buildings created an ideal situation for both ground and air attackers. Estimated total enemy casualties were 1150, while total friendly casualties for the entire operation were one killed and one wounded.<sup>5</sup>

Reconnaissance in Force—Reinforced Tank Battalion.

Throughout the Korean operations it had been a basic element in enemy tactics to feel out the United Nations lines until a weak point could be found prior to an attack. Normally, the point selected was in a ROK unit's sector. Because of this usual enemy practice, the US IX Corps on 20 January 1951 directed that the US 1st Cavalry Division conduct a reconnaissance in force in the general area north of the ROK 6th Division sector. The mission was multiple: to develop the enemy situation in the area; disrupt enemy attack preparations and destroy maximum enemy personnel and materiel; and to demonstrate the presence of tanks in the area. Withdrawal was to be effected before becoming heavily engaged. The task force for the operation was to include one tank battalion reinforced with infantry, artillery, and engineers.

The 70th Tank Battalion at that time was under operational control of IX Corps and was located at CHINCHON, approximately 30 miles southwest of the forward elements of the ROK 6th Division.

That battalion was released to the 1st Cavalry Division for this particular operation.

Major General Gay, Commanding General, 1st Cavalry Division, decided to employ the division's organic army aircraft to cover the entire operation, reinforced by "Mosquito" spotter planes, and all tactical air support available. It was further decided that the operation would be initiated only in clear weather, in order to make maximum use of all available aircraft, of all types.<sup>6</sup>

General Gay requested that Colonel Rodgers, an Eighth Army Armor Officer (formerly commanding 70th Tank Battalion), be placed in command of the task force since the operation was primarily one of armor.<sup>7</sup> His request was not favorably considered, consequently Lt Col Johnson, Infantry, Regimental Commander, 8th Cavalry, was announced as commander of the task force, which was later to be designated Task Force JOHNSON.

On 20 January, only tentative plans were discussed concerning Task Force JOHNSON. It was expected that on 21 January, more complete information would be available on the approaches to and the area of the intended reconnaissance.

Supplies had become critical due to a supply train having been wrecked in the south. However, the division had received 40,000 gallons of gasoline and it was expected that the entire Division would be supplied within 48 hours.

An air drop supplied some of the rations, gas, and oil;

but it was not an entirely satisfactory source, because of the immense effort required by both the Air Force and the receiving group. The drop caused much damage to the supplies, not to mention the fact that on the average one parachute in each plane did not open, normally resulting in the total destruction of that package.<sup>8</sup>

On 21 January, in accordance with the IX Corps directive, the 1st Cavalry Division issued orders to effect the accomplishment of Task Force JOHNSON.

Elements comprising Task Force JOHNSON were the 70th Tank Battalion; 3d Battalion, 8th Cavalry; Battery C, 99th Field Artillery Battalion; 1 platoon of Company C, 8th Engineer Battalion; 3d platoon of Heavy Mortar Company, 8th Cavalry; and medical support from Medical Company, 8th Cavalry. The task force was to be assisted by divisional organic aircraft, Mosquito observation planes, and a flight of tactical air support.

Organization of Task Force JOHNSON was as follows:<sup>9</sup>

Team A - Lt Col Jennings, Commanding

Company I, 8th Cavalry

Company A, 70th Tank Battalion

Command Group, Headquarters 3d Battalion, 8th  
Cavalry

Team B - Capt Fraser, Commanding

Company B, 70th Tank Battalion

Company K, 8th Cavalry

UNCLASSIFIED

# TASK FORCE JOHNSON

22 JANUARY 1951

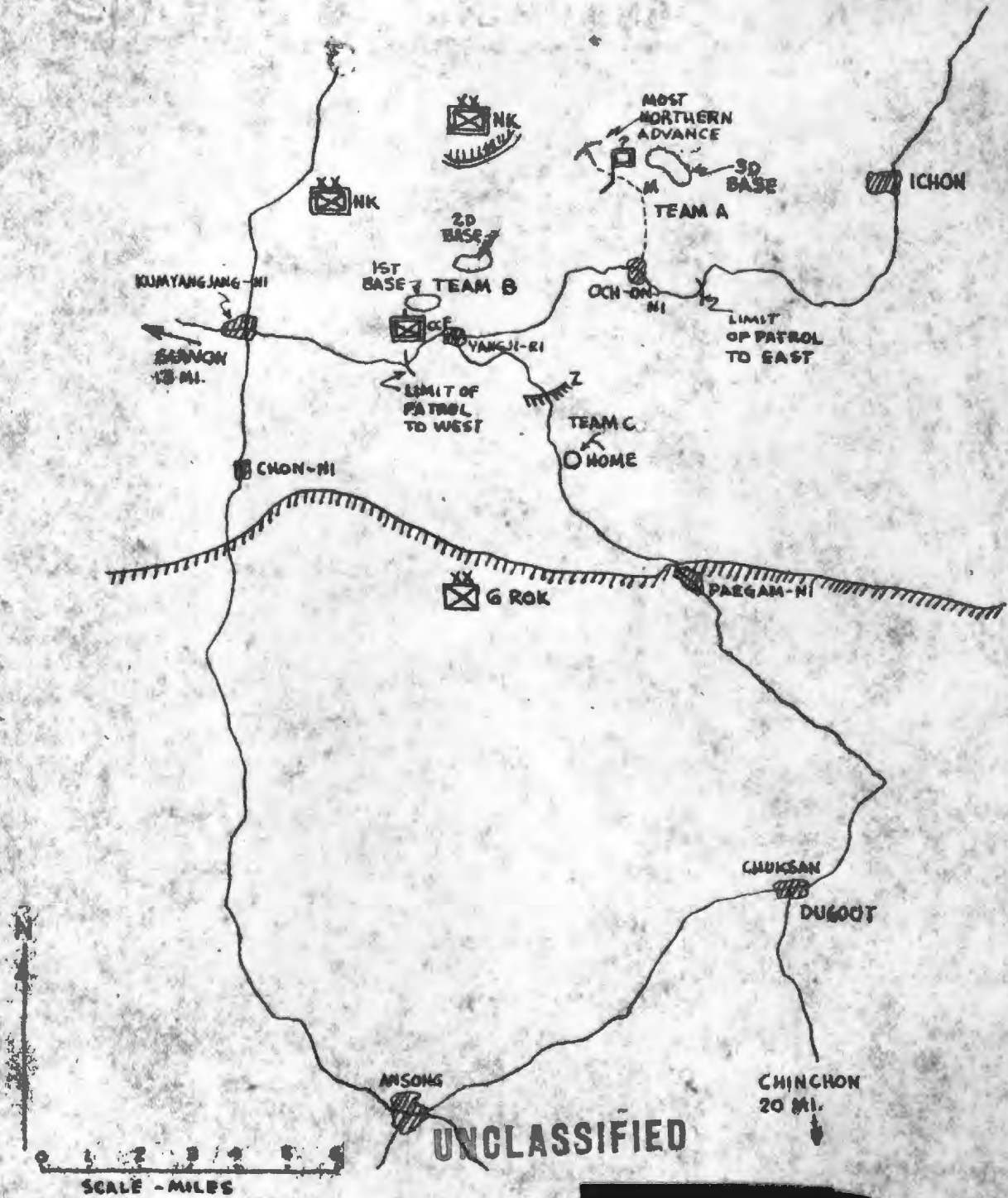


FIGURE 5B

81mm Mortar Platoon, Company M, 8th Cavalry

Team C - Lt Col Ziein, Commanding

Company C, 70th Tank Battalion

Company L, 8th Cavalry

Battery C, 99th Field Artillery Battalion

Reconnaissance Platoon, 70th Tank Battalion

75mm Recoilless Rifle Platoon, Company M, 8th

Cavalry

3d Platoon, Heavy Mortar Company, 8th Cavalry

1 Platoon, Company C, 8th Engineer Battalion

Lt Col Johnson was directed to assemble his task force at DUGOUF south of CHUKSAN, on the night of 21 January.

From that point, it was to jump off at 220700 and proceed along the river road (reference points along route were designated for reporting progress).

The point marked HOME was designated as a reserve area and artillery position area. Team C was directed to remain at this point with the mission of providing security for the artillery. It was also ordered to be prepared to assume blocking positions in the vicinity of the pass approximately 2,500 yards north of HOME and to cover the withdrawal of Teams A and B.

The mission of Team B was to proceed to 1ST BASE and 2D BASE and to then dispatch patrols, blocking toward the north and west.

Team A was to proceed northeast toward 3D BASE as far as

possible; and to return, even if its objective had not been reached, at 221500. Team A was instructed to return along its route of advance. Team B was to follow Team A, and the withdrawal of both units was to be covered by Team C.

For the infantry portion of the task force General Gay deliberately selected the 3d Battalion, 8th Cavalry (the unit that suffered heavy casualties at UNSAN, 1 November 1950). It was hoped that this unit would be able to "flush out" the enemy in order to allow the Air Force to demolish them.

Intelligence reported that two North Korean divisions were located north and east of KUMYANGJANG-NI (this town was two or three miles west of the left boundary of Task Force JOHNSON). Reports further listed a CCF company, armed with automatic weapons, situated four miles east of KUMYANGJANG-NI. Three enemy regiments were reported by a POW to be located in the area of the proposed reconnaissance. This last report had been corroborated by ROK patrols and civilians (Figure 58).

All elements of Task Force JOHNSON were assembled in the task force assembly area DUGOUT (at CHUKSAN) by 212140 January.

Task Force JOHNSON jumped off at 220700, as scheduled. Order of march was Team B, Team A, Reconnaissance Platoon, 70th Tank Battalion, Battery C, 99th Field Artillery Battalion, and Team C.

Mission of Team B was sweeping from HOME to 1ST BASE and 2D BASE, establishing blocking positions to the west and covering



movement of Team A to the west.

Mission of Team A was to sweep from HOME to 3D BASE and patrol aggressively until 221430.

Mission of Team C was initially in reserve, to provide security for artillery and to be prepared to assume blocking positions in vicinity of Z and to cover withdrawal of Teams A and B.

Team B crossed the IP at DUGOUT at 220700, proceeded directly to HOME through a battalion of the ROK 6th Division at PAEGAM-NI. From HOME the advance was slowed, but continued steadily to YANGJI-RI. The village was cleared and secured. Foot elements were dispatched to 1ST BASE and 2D BASE while elements of the Team proceeded to the west a distance of approximately 1,500 yards. The foot patrol that was dispatched to 2D BASE was ambushed at about 221115 by concealed machine guns, resulting in two killed and three wounded. The patrol had passed machine gun positions without seeing them, as the emplacements were completely covered. As friendly troops passed, the occupants raised the cover of the foxhole, fired a short burst, and withdrew into the hole.<sup>10</sup> The patrol was unable to dislodge the enemy so it withdrew to the main force where they reported the location of the machine gun positions. Tanks engaged the reported locations. Enemy troops in the vicinity of 1ST BASE permitted leading elements of the Team to pass before opening fire, and then only on light vehicles returning to the rear. The enemy positions were engaged by tanks, machine guns and mortars. Positions examined near the lead elements

of Team B, showed deep emplacements, well spread, just above the level of the road. Patrols were not dispatched to the top of the hill in this area. Friendly air reported a relatively heavy defense position on the reverse slope of 1ST BASE. Three separate strikes were placed on those positions and villages in the ravines to the northeast, followed by heavy artillery concentrations. Results were reported as excellent.

Team A followed Team B from HOME 30 minutes later in order to permit Team B to clear and secure the town of YANGJI-RI. An air strike was requested on a village on the right flank of the route of advance of Team A. Artillery concentrations on the route of advance were planned but not executed, when communications failed between the forward observer with the team and the firing battery. The first observer had a 1:250,000 map, which was practically useless. This deficiency was corrected when the second observer arrived with a 1:50,000 map.<sup>11</sup> When Team A reached OCHON-NI foot patrols were dispatched to the east where ROK elements had reported one enemy company. As Team A reached M foot patrols were dispatched northeast to 3D BASE. There was no evidence of enemy, but there were a few civilians in the area. Civilians reported that a mixed force of 1,200 North Koreans and CCF had gone through the town of OCHON-NI on the night of 20 January, stopping only long enough to eat. This force was reported as bound for WONJU (30 miles east of ICHON). The road surface was such that there was little indication of heavy traffic, virtually no vehicular traffic,

and the paths leading to villages near the road indicated only the normal traffic of the few civilians still in the area. Team A was ordered to withdraw at 221305 when Team B reported that the enemy was capable of flanking its position and interfering with the withdrawal of Team A. This report was based on the frequency of air strikes and the varied spots at which they were hitting. However, the nature of the route of withdrawal was such that it was imperative that as much daylight as possible be available for the movement of tanks. Snow and ice on the narrow roads were a serious impediment to tank movement.

Team B continued to engage in intermittent fire fights with the enemy until 221510. In addition to small arms and machine guns, a few rounds of mortar (estimated as 60mm and 82mm) fell with no apparent target or pattern, a total of nine rounds. As the team coiled up, preparatory to withdrawing, 12 more mortar rounds fell 100 yards west of the road junction at YANGJI-RI. The mortar positions were never located. All commanders were queried and they reported that they were unable to hear the sound of mortar firing, observing the rounds only as they fell. As Team B cleared YANGJI-RI, they received small arms, machine gun, and one hand grenade, indicating that the enemy was moving in to establish a roadblock. No casualties resulted in this action.

Estimates of ground troops in the Team B area varied from 12 to 15 enemy observed. The infantry company commander estimated that 15 enemy were killed by ground fire and two machine guns knock-

ed out. Despite prior coordination and the agreement that no ROK patrols would work north of the 18 grid line, one patrol from the ROK 19th Regiment was picked up in YANGJI-RI, at about 221145.

The artillery air observer reported what he believed to be an enemy CP at N. Artillery fire resulted in a hasty abandonment of the largest building in the village. Precision fire on the building and subsequent artillery fire in the area resulted in at least five enemy killed. Other villages in the zone of operation were taken under artillery fire and left burning.

Team C disposed one tank platoon in the pass north of HOME to cover the withdrawal of advance elements through this bottleneck. The 70th Tank Battalion, Reconnaissance Platoon, patrolled with tanks between Teams A and B, and by vehicle from YANGJI-RI to HOME to keep the road open. No enemy contact was reported at any time during its patrols.

All elements of Task Force JOHNSON returned to DUGOUT (at CHUKSAN) on 22 January without further incident except for the tremendous difficulties in movement of the vehicles over the ice-coated roads. In many instances straw mats had to be placed on the road in order to gain traction on the icy roads.

Throughout the daylight hours of the operation army aircraft was overhead, overwatching the task force. This prevented ambushes, reconnoitered routes, and greatly expedited the movement of the various elements of the task force.<sup>12</sup>

Comments on Armored Action

1. Infantry - Armor Task Force, Offense to Perimeter Defense.

a. Conclusions:

(1) Infantry-heavy task force was suitable for the mountainous terrain involved in this action.

(2) Units of different types (in this action, rifle, tank, ranger, reconnaissance, and engineer companies) require most careful and coordinated employment in order to obtain maximum advantage from their capabilities, and to minimize adverse effects of their limitations.

(3) Proficiency in perimeter defense is essential for combating an enemy such as the CCF.

(4) Loss of the wounded at the roadblock might have been prevented if armored personnel carriers had been available and employed.

b. Recommendations:

(1) Coordinated training of different arms must be conducted at all unit levels. We must not confine our training to desirable or "typical" situations. Commanders at all levels must know the capabilities and limitations of other units, in addition to those of their own.

(2) In training, each individual must be made to realize that war is not always victory, but most victories are preceded by some reverses. Every attempt must be made, through

prior training, to minimize the results of these reverses. Training in perimeter defense is a must.

(3) A study should be conducted to determine the feasibility of employment of an armored carrier for transporting wounded, not only for armored units, but for infantry units as well. A wounded man cannot protect himself, by "taking to the ditch", for example, as readily as other personnel.

2. Limited Objective Attacks - Infantry Reinforced with Armor.

a. Conclusions:

(1) Well-planned and violently executed operations will pay off. That is shown by the comparison of friendly and enemy casualties in this operation.

(2) The "flushing" of the enemy by the ground forces presented the tactical aircraft with an ideal situation.

b. Recommendations:

(1) Leaders must be made to realize the advantage, in many instances, of well-planned but violently executed operations as opposed to over-cautious, slow-moving operations that often reveal intentions to the enemy and allow him to prepare for every friendly move.

(2) Ground commanders should use tactical air support at every opportunity to aid in exploiting the slightest opportunity. Success is easier through operations employing coordinated teamwork of ground and air arms, than if the infantry,

tanks, artillery, and tactical aircraft all fight isolated, individual battles.

3. Reconnaissance in Force - Reinforced Tank Battalion.

a. Conclusions:

(1) Even though the task force was not heavily engaged during the operation, it must be considered as being successful in accomplishment of its multiple mission, in developing the enemy situation in the area, disrupting enemy attack preparations and destruction of enemy personnel and materiel, and the demonstration of the presence of tanks in the area.

(2) Composition of the task force and of the teams was tactically sound, when due consideration is given to the mission, and to the terrain and condition thereof. Even though the tanks experienced difficulty in negotiating some of the icy slopes, the advantages of their armor and fire power outweigh the trafficability restrictions.

(3) Continuous overwatching of the operation by army aircraft renders invaluable assistance to the units on the ground, particularly in such mountainous terrain with the additional limitation of a limited road net. Also, one must consider the additional confidence instilled in the ground unit, knowing that their "eyes" are searching ahead for routes, bypasses, obstacles and minefields, suspected ambush areas, and most of all, the enemy.

(4) This action clearly reveals the inherent flexibility of a tank battalion. One must remember that this was the

same tank battalion that usually was apportioned out to the three regiments of the 1st Cavalry Division, thence down to battalions and company sized infantry units for tactical operations.

b. Recommendations:

Trafficability of tanks on icy slopes must be improved to enable our forces to have so-called "all weather" capabilities. The placing of straw mats in front of the tank on the ice by dismounted troops is not a feasible solution, especially if the tanks are receiving enemy fire, of any type.

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NOTES FOR CHAPTER 5

<sup>1</sup>General MacArthur's communique of 28 November 1950 includes the comment that the Chinese attack "has shattered the high hopes that we had entertained that the intervention of the Chinese was only of a token nature..."

<sup>2</sup>Lieutenant Colonel Rigg, Robert B, Red China's Fighting Hordes, (Harrisburg, Pa., Military Service Publishing Co., 1951), p 206.

<sup>3</sup>Interview with Captain Robert W. Harrington, Commanding, 25th Reconnaissance Company, period 23-27 November 1950.

<sup>4</sup>"Outstanding Limited Objective Attack", Armor Combat Lesson Bulletin No. 16, Headquarters I US Corps, 1 April 1951 p 1.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid, p 2.

<sup>6</sup>War Diary, 1st Cavalry Division, 20 January 1951.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.



<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 21 January 1951.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 22 January 1951.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Interview with Lt Colonel Jack R. Metzdorf, then Major,  
Executive Officer, 70th Tank Battalion, period 21-22 January 1951.

## CHAPTER 6

### FIRST UN COUNTEROFFENSIVE (25 JANUARY TO 21 APRIL 1951)

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#### General conduct of the campaign

The initial Chinese offensive had ground to a halt and the United Nations forces in Korea were just recovering from a severe attack of "bugout fever". The fever had not done as much physical damage as had been feared at first, but the patients' self confidence had been shaken. There was little enthusiasm for the prospect of pushing back up the peninsula to seize the ground just recently abandoned, in the pursuit of what seemed to be an unattainable objective --- an end to the Korean war. Even if all the Chinese were driven out of Korea, there would be no end. Short of clearing the entire land mass of Asia, how could any decision be reached? The doubts of the Eighth Army were soon resolved, however, when they received a mission that they could understand and appreciate --- to kill Chinese.

To the UN soldier the war assumed a very personal and satisfying basis when General Ridgeway announced, "We are not interested in real estate. We are interested only in inflicting maximum casualties upon the enemy with minimum losses to ourselves. To do this we must wage a war of maneuver --- slashing

at the enemy when he withdraws and fighting delaying actions when he attacks." At last the individual had a definite objective, to kill as many of the enemy as he could, and a mission which would provide tangible results.

The first move towards accomplishing this new mission was Operation Thunderbolt, launched on 25 January. A limited offensive with emphasis on lateral security, Thunderbolt differed from previous UN offensives in that the advance was purposely slow and methodical. Ground was taken, but this was incidental to the annihilation of the enemy. A limited objective was assigned and taken, then the advance stopped until the re-taken ground was thoroughly "digested". Rear areas were carefully cleared. Advancing troops organized one position before preparing an attack to take the next. Exploitation was abandoned entirely, and pursuit of the enemy was conducted only to maintain contact. Right and left flanks were carefully tied in to adjacent units, and no unit was permitted to race ahead of adjoining units to create a vulnerable salient. All around security was stressed.

Another innovation was the use of armored raids to push to close-in objectives (communication and supply centers), harassing the enemy and destroying supplies, and then returning to the UN lines before nightfall. To the tankers, this was a welcome change from the days of fighting into an encirclement by the enemy and then fighting out again.

Operation Thunderbolt began primarily as a reconnaissance in force, with I Corps on the left led by the 25th Division and Turkish Brigade and IX Corps on the right led by the 1st Cavalry Division and 3d Division. The operation slowly assumed the role of a full scale attack, until at the end of eighteen days the Eighth Army had regained the line of the HAN River and inflicted the larger part of 70,000 casualties upon the enemy.

On 5 February X Corps launched a similar offensive in conjunction with the ROK I and III Corps. Operation Roundup, as it was called, was aimed at inflicting maximum casualties on the North Korean II and V Corps. One significant difference between Roundup and Thunderbolt, however, was the emphasis on tying in flanks. X Corps had little contact on its west flank west of HOENGSONG and bad weather seriously curtailed aerial observation. Roundup's advance was slowed by the difficult terrain; and on 10 February, when the weather cleared, aerial observers reported that the enemy was moving southeast into the X Corps sector.

The air reports received prompt confirmation the next day when three Chinese divisions struck the ROK 8th Division nine miles northwest of HOENGSONG and routed it. At the same time WONJU was threatened from the north and northwest.

On 12 February the 38th Regiment (2d Division) was hit just north of HOENGSONG and surrounded. The regiment, with the aid of the Netherlands Battalion, fought its way out of the encirclement by mid-afternoon and withdrew towards WONJU. An

attempt at counterattack by the ROK 3d and 5th Divisions failed, and by 13 February WONJU itself was under attack.

WONJU was defended by a strong UN force (187th RCT, Netherlands Battalion, two battalions of ROKs, the 9th Regiment, and the 38th Regiment), but the 2d Division's third regiment, the 23d (with the French Battalion attached), was conducting an isolated defense of CHIPYONG. By mid-morning of 14 February the 23d Regiment was surrounded and under attack by three Chinese divisions. The regiment held the city until 15 February when a tank-infantry team of the 5th Cavalry Regiment broke through the encirclement and raised the siege of CHIPYONG. The Chinese withdrew.

East of WONJU in the mountains, the North Koreans had pushed to within seven miles of CHECHON and had turned the X Corps flank. To re-establish the line, the Eighth Army launched Operation Killer on 21 February. With more emphasis on lateral security and depth, Killer fared much more successfully than Roundup. The advance was intentionally a slow one, but in three days the 7th Division had taken PANGNI and the 2d Division was overlooking the PANGNI-WONJU road.

The immediate enemy reaction was a penetration between the ROK 7th and 9th Divisions in the ROK III Corps sector. The gap was plugged rapidly, if only partially, by the ROK Capitol Division. The advance was resumed and the 1st Marine Division neared HOEONGSONG.

All three US Corps' began a coordinated advance on 7 March, as Operation Ripper got under way. The immediate objective of Ripper was again to inflict maximum casualties on the enemy, and thereby also to maintain constant pressure upon him. Secondary, or "real estate", objectives were to outflank SEOUL and force its evacuation, and to seize or render untenable the supply center of CHUNCHON.

With X Corps meeting the most resistance, Ripper moved slowly and steadily north, until by mid-March the line had advanced fifteen miles to a position running east and west through HONGCHON.

Patrols of the ROK 15th Regiment (1st ROK Division) re-entered SEOUL on 15 March and the entire left flank of I Corps was brought up the next day.

One week later, on 22 March, the 8th Cavalry Regiment entered CHUNCHON. On 23 March an airborne drop was made at MUNSAN by the 187th RCT in hopes of cutting the escape route of a sizeable number of enemy. Most of the enemy escaped the trap, and a link-up with the airborne troops was made without difficulty by troops of the 7th Regiment and the 6th Tank Battalion.

The enemy's main force had largely disappeared, but there were indications that a counterattack was building up in the CHORWON area. In order to have as short and defensible a line as possible, the Eighth Army was ordered to a line on

the high ground north of the 38th Parallel. The new line was 116 miles long, with 14 miles of tidal flat on the left flank, 12 miles of the HWACHON RESERVOIR in the center, and rugged and roadless terrain on the right flank. UN dispositions at this time were, from left to right: I Corps (ROK 1st, US 3d, 25th and 24th Divisions), IX Corps (UK 27th Brigade, ROK 6th division, 1st Cavalry Division, and 1st Marine Division in reserve), X Corps (US 2d and 7th Divisions, ROK 5th Division), and on the east coast the ROK I and III Corps in column of divisions for security and depth.

The advance to the new line was slow, with the 7th Division and ROK 5th Division meeting stiff resistance in the CHOYANG River area. With the capture of the HWACHON RESERVOIR and the establishment of the line, a drive towards CHORWON was undertaken, with the intention of exerting pressure on the force building up there.

Enemy reaction became stronger and stronger.

General comments on campaign

1. The methodical advances of Thunderbolt, Killer and Ripper restored the confidence and morale of the Eighth Army in addition to accomplishing their mission of killing Chinese. The acquisition of "real estate" was incidental, although definite objectives were assigned. The pressure maintained on build-up areas and supply centers served to keep the enemy off balance.

The failure of Roundup was due primarily to a failure to tie in flanks. The subsequent success of Killer demonstrated that disposition in depth and prompt reaction to enemy efforts could minimize the effects of an enemy penetration.

2. The Chinese again proved themselves adept at finding weak spots in the UN lines and taking advantage of them. Exposed flanks were particularly vulnerable.

The movement of the North Koreans through the mountains to turn the flank of X Corps again pointed up the fallacy of relying on terrain obstacles to prevent the movement of what was essentially an army of foot troops.

3. The enemy lost his chance for decisive action when he failed to by-pass WONJU and CHIPYONG, instead of trying to reduce the two cities... a flagrant violation of the principle of the objective. There is good reason to believe that the inflexibility of the North Korean and Chinese Armies is such that a large attack, once launched, cannot be altered in sufficient time to exploit an unexpected situation. Such may have been the cause for the fruitless attempts to take WONJU and CHIPYONG when the real change for success lay elsewhere.

#### Armored action during Campaign

Armored operations during this period were for the most part characterized by the use of tanks in the infantry concept of sustained defense or as overwatching fire for the infantry on limited objective attacks.



There are four instances in which tanks were used which bring out some very important points. These will be covered in detail in this chapter.

The first of these is Operation PUNCH, which is an excellent example of the use of armored task forces in the so-called "killer" operation.

The second is Task Force CROMBEZ which shows the use of armor to break through to an encircled friendly unit.

The third is Task Force GROWDON which is an excellent example of the use of an armored task force in a link up operation with an airborne drop.

The fourth is an example of the use of tanks both in a direct and indirect fire role in support of a river crossing.

It is believed that these operations, although by no means the only operations in which tanks were used during this period, will best bring out the points to be learned concerning armored operations during the period.

Operation PUNCH. Operation PUNCH is one of the better examples of a completely integrated team of armor and infantry working together.

During the early part of February 1951, the 25th Infantry Division had its command post in the town of SUWON along with the command post of I Corps. At this time the enemy held the high ground to the north of the town and was well dug in and organized on this ground. I Corps issued an

operations order for what was to be called Operation PUNCH. This order called for the infantry to seize and secure the high hill mass at Hills 440 and 431 by direct assault. At the same time the armor was given the mission of attacking into the enemy flanks and rear in order to disorganize and disrupt the enemy and to inflict maximum casualties upon him. Two armored task forces were organized for this operation. The first of these was Task Force BARTLETT which was composed of the following units:

- 64th Medium Tank Battalion (- Company C)
- 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment
- 1 platoon of M-16s (quad cal. .50 machine guns)
- 1 platoon, Company A, 65th Engineer Combat Battalion
- Medical and Signal Detachments, 25th Infantry Division
- TACP

The second task force was Task Force DOLVIN which was composed of the following units:

- 89th Medium Tank Battalion (- Companies A, C, and D)
- Company C, 64th Medium Tank Battalion
- 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment
- 1 platoon of M-16s (quad cal. .50 machine guns)
- 1 Platoon, Company A, 65th Engineer Combat Battalion
- Medical and Signal Detachments, 25th Infantry Division
- TACP

The plan for the utilization of these two task forces, as envisioned by the 25th Infantry Division, was for Task Force BARTLETT to attack along the left road toward MOKKAM-NI and then east in the direction of ANYANG-NI. Task Force DOLVIN was to attack along the main supply route leading through ANYANG-NI to YONGDUNGPO. Upon reaching ANYANG-NI they were to turn west and continue the attack until effecting a junction with Task Force

BARTLETT. It must be remembered that the objective for these attacks was to inflict maximum casualties on the enemy and not to gain ground or seize definite terrain objectives.

On 3 February both task forces moved into assembly areas in the vicinity of SUWON. Here they began their preparations for the coming operation.

On 5 February at 0745 hours Task Force BARTLETT crossed the line of departure. The objective for this day, as set down by the battalion commander as a means of control, was the ridge line in the vicinity of MOKKAM-NI. The column advanced through moderate to heavy resistance and secured the objective by 1525 hours. During the advance they ran into several mine fields besides the resistance offered by enemy infantry. Upon reaching their assigned objective and notifying the Division Commander of the 25th Infantry Division of that fact, they were ordered to return to their original assembly area. The task force retraced its path and arrived in the vicinity of SUWON prior to dark.

On the same day, 5 February, Task Force DOLVIN crossed the line of departure at 0700 hours. The objective which this battalion established for the day was the high ground to the east of ANYANG-NI and the eastern portion of the town. The column advanced without any great difficulty and secured the objectives by 1250. It was also ordered to return to its assembly area and succeeded in closing into the area prior to darkness.



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Figure 59. A View of Eastern Portion of ANYANG-N, Showing Destructive Power of UN Combined Arms.

By LIFE Photographer, John Dominis  
(c) Time Inc.

These withdrawals back to the assembly areas were not included in the original operation plan but were made necessary because the flanks of the two penetrations had not been secured and it was feared that the columns would be very vulnerable to infiltration attacks during the night. Another consideration in this matter was the expectation that these withdrawals would cause the enemy to reoccupy those positions from which he had been expelled. It was felt at this time that this action on the part of the enemy would be very favorable to the accomplishment of the mission, which was to inflict maximum casualties upon him. In other words, the division was attempting to fight the enemy on ground which we had chosen.

At this time the plan for the two task forces to join east of ANYANG-NI was changed by the division commander to a more ambitious plan, which called for the junction to be made in the vicinity of YOUSEN, which is north of the main YONGDUNGPO-INCHON highway.

Task Force BARTLETT again crossed the line of departure at 0720 on 6 February. The task force crossed with two teams abreast and advanced approximately 2000 yards beyond the previous day's advance. The enemy resistance on this day increased considerably over that of the previous day. This may be attributed in part to the lessening of the element of surprise. It was also found that roads which had been cleared of mines the previous day had been re-mined to a great extent. Although this caused



Figure 60. Tanks of Task Force DOLVIN on the Road.

By LIFE Photographer, John Dominis  
(c) Time Inc.

no material damage, it did slow the advance materially. At 1205 hours the team was ordered to again return to the assembly area.

On this day, Task Force DOLVIN crossed the line of departure at 0745 hours. By 1400 hours it had reached a point about 1000 yards further than the limit of advance of the previous day. It sent a patrol along the MSR to a point about 3000 yards north of ANYANG-NI. At 1420 hours this patrol had become heavily engaged and was forced to return to the task force. At this time the task force commander received orders to return to the assembly area. As was discovered in the zone of Task Force BARTLETT, it was found that enemy resistance was considerably greater and that the roads in the area had been re-mined.

On 7 February both task forces crossed their respective lines of departure at 0700 hours. Both task forces advanced through moderate to heavy resistance during the morning and early afternoon. By 1430 hours Task Force DOLVIN had reached a position about 2000 yards north of ANYANG-NI. Here it was relieved by the 2nd Battalion of the 35th Infantry Regiment. Upon completion of the relief the task force returned to an assembly area in blocking position behind the main line of resistance. By 1500 hours Task Force BARTLETT had reached the same east-west line as that attained by Task Force DOLVIN on this day. It was relieved in this position by the Turkish Armed Force Command and also re-

turned to an assembly area in a blocking position behind the MLR. This is the first time that the gains made by either of the task forces had not been relinquished to the enemy in the early afternoon. By this time the 25th Infantry Division had been able to clear the enemy from the area between the roads and was able to effect the relief without fear of creating dangerously exposed salients into the enemy lines.

During the relief of Task Force DOLVIN on 7 February, troops of the task force observed troops on a hill to the southwest of the task force. Not knowing whether these observed troops were enemy or friendly, they contacted task force headquarters. They were informed that there were no friendly troops in the area so they proceeded to take the troops under fire with small arms. Artillery was called for on the target by the team commander. Before the artillery was able to bring these troops under fire the task force informed the team commander that the supposed enemy troops they had observed were friendly elements of the relieving force. Fortunately no casualties were suffered through this mistake in identity. This brings out the point that task forces must work in very close coordination with friendly units in the rear and on both flanks, and insure that communication and liaison are established with these units if possible.

On 8 and 9 February the two task forces continued their advance and by 1500 hours on 9 February both were in a position where they could fire their tank cannon into the



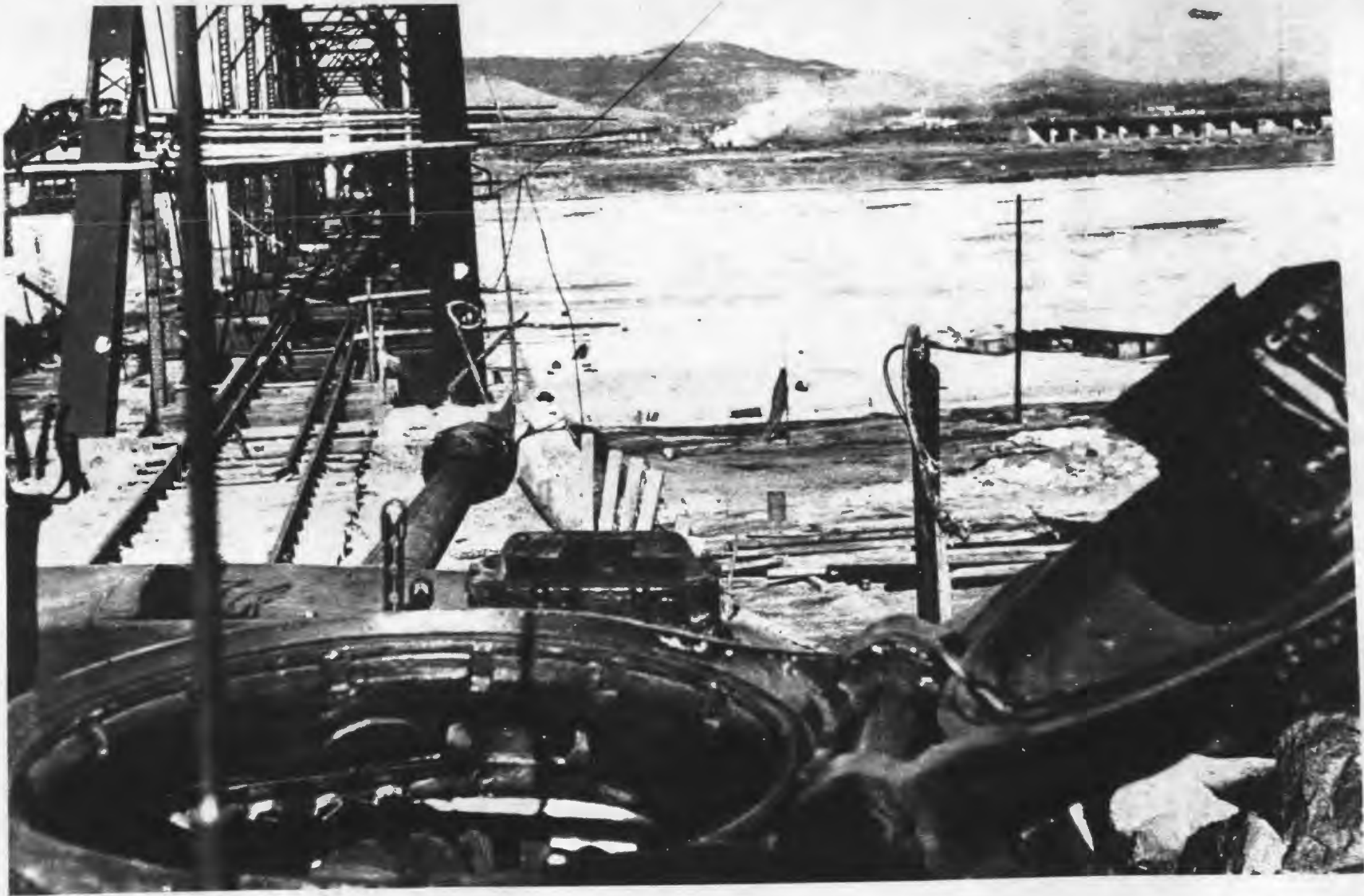


Figure 61. An American M4 Tank Firing Across the HAN RIVER  
in Vicinity of YONGDUNGPO.

By LIFE Photographer, John Dominis  
(c) Time Inc.

city of YONGDUNGPO. Both task forces were dissolved that night and replaced by Task Force ALLEN, which was to operate directly under I Corps control. The mission of this task force was to inflict maximum casualties on the enemy and to clear the zone south of the HAN River.

In this operation the original order did not specify the tactics to be adopted by the task forces. The division commander of the 25th Infantry Division made the decision to withdraw the two task forces each night. This decision was made on a daily basis about 1200 hours each day.

The method of operation adopted by both task forces is worthy of notice. Each tank company was teamed with an infantry company. The infantry and tank company commanders were together continuously, with the infantryman riding on the rear deck of the tank company commander's tank. The infantry commander actually ordered the halt of the column when encountering resistance as well as directing their fire and deployment. No tank guns were fired while infantry was mounted on the tanks. The M-16s were split into two sections and each lead team was given one of these sections. Air and artillery support were used at every opportunity and their fire was very effective.

At the completion of the operation a total of 4,251 enemy dead were counted while the United Nations forces casualties totaled less than 100.<sup>1</sup>

Lt Col DOLVIN had this to say of the operation:

"The complete success of the operation was due to the complete integration of the two staffs. We thought and acted not as tankers and as infantrymen, but as men confronted with a single problem ... and I'll add that the quad .50s are an extremely effective weapon in this type of operation."<sup>2</sup>

Task Force CROMBEZ. On 14 February 1951, the 5th Cavalry Regiment of the 1st Cavalry Division received an alert order to cross the HAN River and move to a position in the vicinity of HUPO-RI in preparation to move north to relieve the 23d Infantry Regiment in the vicinity of CHIPYONG-NI. The 23d Infantry Regimental Combat Team, complete with a battalion of artillery, had become surrounded and cut off from overland support by a greatly numerically superior enemy force. At this time the 5th Cavalry Regiment was the reserve regiment for the 1st Cavalry Division.

This alert order was accomplished during the night of 14-15 February without incident. The regiment moved into an assembly area in the vicinity of HUPO-RI prior to dawn on the morning of the 15th.

At 0700 hours 15 February the regiment moved out of the assembly area and started its advance to relieve the beleaguered 23d RCT. The 1st Battalion led the advance and moved without resistance to the vicinity of Hill 143 where it established contact with the enemy at 1005 hours. This enemy force numbered an estimated 300-600, employing small arms, automatic weapons and mortars. The 1st Battalion was forced to deploy but con-

[REDACTED]

HAN RIVER

UNCLASSIFIED

YOSEN

SEOUL

YONGDUNGPO

SOSA-RI

INCHON

ANYANG-NI

MOKKAM-NI

ROUTE OF TASK FORCE DOLVIN

GUWON

ROUTE OF TASK FORCE BARTLETT

YELLOW SEA

SCALE 1:250,000

LEGEND UNCLASSIFIED

PRIMARY HIGHWAYS  
IMPROVED ROADS  
UNIMPROVED ROADS

—  
- - -  
—

LIMITS OF ADVANCE

5 FEBRUARY 1951 - - -  
6 FEBRUARY 1951 -X-X-  
7 FEBRUARY 1951 -O-O-  
8 FEBRUARY 1951 -X-X-  
9 FEBRUARY 1951 -O-O-

FIGURE 62

UNCLASSIFIED

[REDACTED]

tinued the advance and at 1640 hours they had reached Hill 152. The 2d Battalion was committed on the west side of the KOKSU-RI--CHIPYONG-NI road at 1300 hours. By 1600 hours they had secured Hill 143. At this point both battalions dug in for the night.

Task Force CROMBEZ was formed during the day with the following units:

Company D, 6th Medium Tank Battalion  
2 platoons of Company A, 70th Medium Tank Battalion  
Company L, 5th Cavalry Regiment

The task force was given the mission of making an armored thrust through the enemy positions in order to establish a link up with the 23d RCT. The supply train and ambulances of the 23d RCT were to follow the task force through to CHIPYONG-NI.

At 1545 hours the task force left the 5th Cavalry positions and started their drive northward. Shortly after crossing their line of departure the task force ran into heavy enemy machine gun fire from strongly dug-in positions. This machine gun fire caught the infantrymen riding on the rear decks of the tanks and inflicted a considerable number of casualties on them before they could dismount.

As the task force continued the advance, the enemy fire became more intensive. 2.36" and 3.5" rocket launchers were firing on the tanks from the adjacent hills at this time. Since the road leading from KOKSU-RI to CHIPYONG-NI led through some very narrow defiles there was no way that the tanks or the infantry

could escape this withering fire once they were in these defiles. The enemy had held their fire until the tanks entered the defiles. Those infantrymen that were not shot off of the tanks by the enemy fire either jumped off into the ditches or were knocked off by the turrets as the crews tried to traverse them in order to bring the enemy under fire. Those that were lucky enough to escape injury were left behind by the task force.

At 1700 hours the task force effected the link with the 23d RCT in the vicinity of CHIPYONG-NI. The link-up came at a very opportune time as it coincided with the launching of an enemy attack on the positions of the 23d RCT. This threw the enemy attack off balance.

The task force stayed with the RCT overnight and returned the next morning. On the route back there was no evidence of the enemy, and it was evident that the enemy had completely withdrawn from the area.

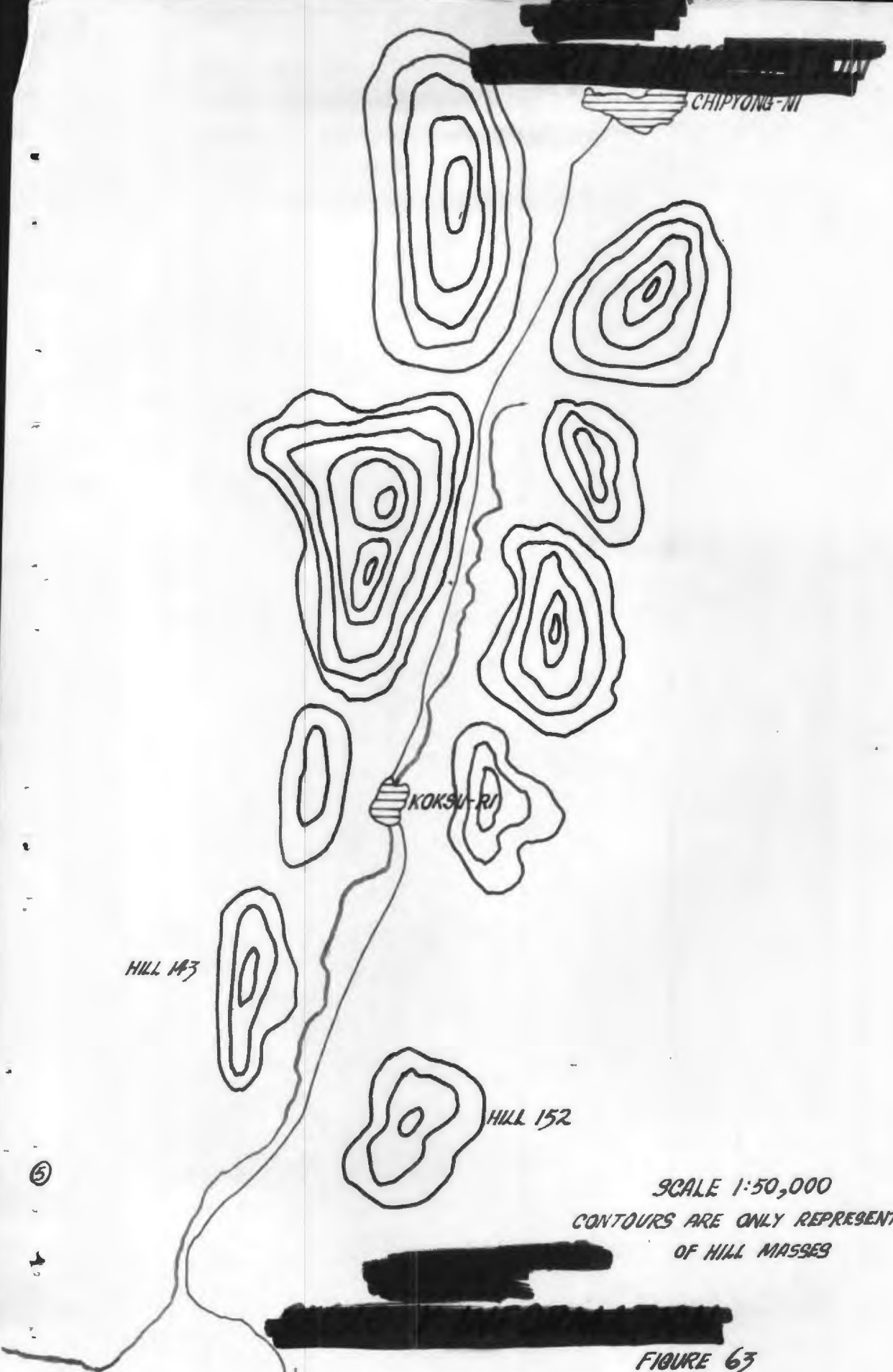
This is probably the best example of the need for armored personnel carriers in the Korean campaigns. One full company of infantry had started with the task force but only eight men arrived at the objective unwounded.<sup>3</sup> The rest of the company had been caught in a completely exposed position, riding on the rear decks of the tanks, and had either been shot off of the tanks by machine gun fire or had jumped into the ditches and been left behind by the task force.

It is questionable that the use or inclusion of an

infantry company on this operation was necessary or desirable. Since there was no protection for the men while going through the defiles, it became what might be called a suicide mission, as it was known that the enemy was strongly dug-in and organized on these positions. In a case such as this if the infantry was to be used with the task force they should have been dismounted prior to entering the defiles and sent around to the flanks in an attempt to clear the hills overlooking the roads. As this was not done by the task force commander it may be assumed that speed was of the essence and that the infantry was only along for the ride. There was no need for the infantry on the objective because the 23d RCT was there in force.

Although the mission of linking up with the surrounded regimental combat team was accomplished it is believed that a needless loss of life was exhibited.

Task Force GROWDON (Armored Link-up With Airborne Drop)  
On 21 March 1951 the 6th Medium Tank Battalion started preparing plans for an armored task force link-up with the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team which was to drop at MUNSAN-NI on 23 March. This armored task force was to be known as Task Force GROWDON, named after the battalion commander of the 6th Medium Tank Battalion, and was to be composed of units as follows:



CHIPYONG-RI

KOKSU-RI

HILL 143

HILL 152

SCALE 1:50,000

CONTOURS ARE ONLY REPRESENTATIVE  
OF HILL MASSES

HUPO-RI 1000 YARDS

FIGURE 63

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6th Medium Tank Battalion  
2d Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment (mounted on M-39  
Personnel Carriers provided by 3d Inf Div)  
58th Armored Field Artillery Battalion (-1 Battery)  
1 Battery, 999th Armored Field Artillery Battalion  
(155 mm)  
Company A, 14th Engineer Combat Battalion  
2 bridge-laying tanks from the 29th British Independent  
Brigade

---

The task organization was as follows:

TEAM A  
Co A, 6th Med Tank Bn  
1 plat, Co E, 7th Inf Regt  
1 plat, Co A, 14th Eng C Bn

TEAM B  
Co B, 6th Med Tank Bn  
1 plat, Co E, 7th Inf Regt

TEAM C  
Co D, 6th Med Tank Bn  
1 plat, Co E, 7th Inf Regt

TEAM D  
2nd Bn, 7th Inf Regt (-3 plats)  
Co C, 6th Med Tank Bn  
1 plat, Co A, 14th Eng C Bn  
TACP

TASK FORCE CONTROL  
Command Group  
Headquarters Tank Section  
Reconnaissance Platoon  
58th Armored Field Artillery Battalion (-)  
Co A, 14th Engineer Combat Battalion (-)  
TACP  
1 Battery, 999th Armored Field Artillery Battalion

On the morning of 22 March the battalion commander and staff reported to I Corps Headquarters for a joint planning meeting to include the commanders and their staffs of the 187th RCT. The Corps G-3 issued Operations Order "TOMAHAWK" and briefly outlined the plans. He then called on the unit commanders to present their detailed plans for the operation.

Lt. Col. CROWDON'S plan for the operation was to penetrate the enemy defensive shell with a tank heavy team. His infantry heavy team was then to be committed to clear the route

of enemy infantry. After this was accomplished, his tank heavy teams would again lead the attack to the link-up area in the vicinity of MUNSAN-NI. The axis of advance was to be along the SEOUL-MUNSAN main supply route. After each commander had outlined his plans the staffs assembled in small groups and worked out the various coordinating details necessary.

At 1400 hours 23 March Lt. Col. GROWDON reassembled his staff at SEOUL and together with the team commanders issued his attack order verbally. At 1830 hours that evening the battalion received orders to execute Operation TOMAHAWK crossing the line of departure at 0630 hours 24 March.

The LD was crossed on 230630 March as planned under a continuous canopy of air cover which lasted throughout the daylight hours of 23 March. Shortly after crossing the LD one of the leading tanks was disabled by an enemy mine while trying to by-pass a blown bridge. It was then discovered that the roads and by-passes were mined to the greatest extent found up to that time in the Korean Theater. The mine field was composed of both anti-tank mines and buried mortar rounds. It was also found that the greater majority of these mines were booby-trapped, necessitating their removal by ropes. This caused considerable delay in the advance so that a total of only five miles was covered during the first four hours. In this first five miles four M-46 tanks, one  $\frac{1}{2}$ -ton truck, and one British armored car were disabled by mines. Since the

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Figure 64. An American M46 Tank of Task Force GROWDON  
After Hitting Enemy Mine.

By LIFE Photographer, Joe Scherschel  
(c) Time Inc.



Figure 65. Enemy metallic mine. H. H. Braunstein



Figure 66. Enemy box-type mine. H. H. Braunstein

[REDACTED]

task force had 24 hours in which to affect the link-up, the breaching of these mines was slow and cautious to minimize losses.

During the breaching of these mine fields two attempts were made to advance over other routes. The first of these came when Lt. Col. GROWDON ordered a tank platoon from the lead company to advance up a river bed. Approximately 2000 yards from where it had entered the river bed the lead tank hit a mine which blew off one of its tracks. Since this route was impassable for wheeled vehicles, no further effort was made in this direction and the platoon was withdrawn to rejoin its parent team. The second attempt was made about 1145 hours when the battalion commander directed Team D to by-pass the main route to the west and attempt to advance along the secondary roads west of the MSR. After approximately three hours Team D reported that every route in that sector was as heavily mined as the main route so that it was directed to return to the column.

The column advanced without opposition other than the mine fields until it reached Check Point 62. Here it came under small arms fire which it did not return because the area was supposedly occupied by ROK units. The column continued the advance northward to Check Point 68 just south of MUNSAN-NI. Here it encountered another blown bridge and was forced to make another by-pass. Meanwhile, enemy mortar and artillery fire which had been registered on this point began falling at regular intervals, and before the column could advance beyond the

concentration area two tanks received direct hits and were disabled while a third was disabled by another mine. The rest of the task force succeeded in by-passing these disabled tanks and continued the advance northward.

---

The actual link-up with the 187th RCT was accomplished at 1830 hours 23 March, exactly 12 hours after the task force had crossed the line of departure and  $9\frac{1}{2}$  hours after the RCT had landed at MUNSAM-NI. The last vehicle of the column closed into the assembly area at 0650 hours 24 March.

On the morning of 24 March, Teams A, B, and C were assigned patrolling missions to the northwest, east and northeast respectively. Team A advanced to the IJIN River in the vicinity of Check Point 70 but was unable to establish contact with the enemy in that sector. Team B advanced to the vicinity of Check Point 75 where it took up a blocking position. During its advance it captured one 57mm gun.

Team C was the only team which encountered difficulty in its patrolling mission. After advancing to Check Point 73 the lead tank ran over a mine which blew off a track and one of the road wheels. At this time the team came under small arms and mortar fire. While this fire was being returned by the tanks with an assist from air strikes called on the enemy position, crews made an attempt to repair the tank. Since there were no spare road wheels available, an attempt was made to tow the tank but this was unsuccessful. Finally it was decided to remove all parts possible from the vehicle and then destroy it.



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Figure 67. Actual Link-up of Task Force GORDON  
with 187th Airborne RCT in Vicinity of MUNSAN-RI.

By LIFE Photographer, John Dominis  
(c) Time Inc.

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Figure 68. Armored Assembly Area in Vicinity of  
MUNSAN-N After Link-up.

By LIFE Photographer, Joe Scherschel  
(c) Time Inc.



This was done just at darkness. While these attempts at repair were taking place, the remainder of the team had succeeded in capturing 22 prisoners and destroying one 57mm gun.<sup>4</sup>

The 187th RCT received a new mission which was to advance to and secure the high ground at Check Point 80 north of UJONGBU.

The plan for the attack called for what was to be referred to as Task Force KOBEE to form the spearhead of the attack and lead the way for the combat team. This task force was organized as follows:

- Co C, 6th Med Tank Bn
- Battery C, 58th Armored FA Bn
- 2d Ranger Company
- 1 plat, Co A, 14th Eng C Bn

After leading the attack for  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles it was found that the tanks would be unable to continue because of the poor roads which would not support them. It was then decided that the 6th Medium Tank Battalion would be detached. It was to proceed to Check Point 80 by way of SEOUL and UJONGBU. This was accomplished and the battalion reverted to 24th Infantry Division control in the vicinity of Check Point 80.

This operation was very successful and was accomplished with a minimum loss of personnel and equipment. It had traversed the most extensively mined areas yet encountered in Korea and still had lost only 2 killed and 8 wounded, and had captured 22 prisoners. Vehicle losses were 1 tank destroyed, 3 tanks disabled, 1  $\frac{1}{4}$  ton truck disabled and 1 British armored car disabled. The use of makeshift armored infantry (mounting the

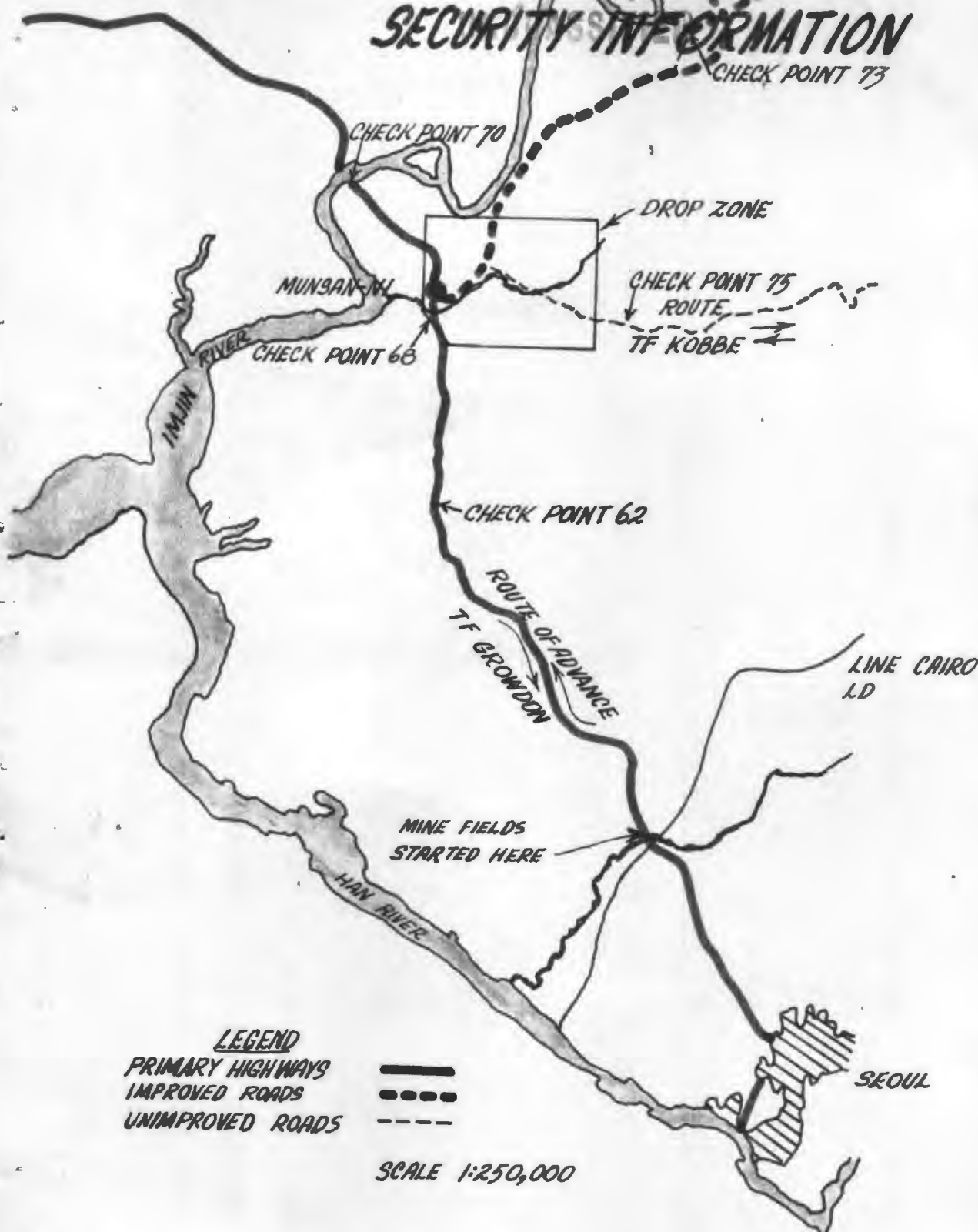
battalion of the 7th Infantry Regiment in M-39 personnel carriers) was very effective and enabled the column to advance at a high rate of speed when not hampered by the mine fields. The surprisingly small amount of time that was required to establish the link-up even through heavy enemy mine fields may be attributed in part to the greater mobility of the infantry which these personnel carriers afforded. Air cover was used very effectively in reconnoitering for routes, locations of blown bridges, locations of enemy positions, and in several instances locations of mine fields which were visible from the air.

The battalion S-3 of the 6th Medium Tank Battalion credits the British bridge laying tanks for the successful withdrawal from MUNSAN-NI to SEOUL after the operation.<sup>5</sup> During the operation there were heavy rains and the stream at Check Point 68 was swollen and had become unfordable. These British tanks were used at this point and enabled the battalion to proceed to the south.

Armor Support of River Crossing. The 2d Battalion of the 24th Infantry Regiment, 3d Infantry Division, was given the mission of crossing the HAN River in the vicinity of TONGHAK-DONG at 0615 hours 7 March 1951. It was to be supported on this operation by the following units:

Company A, 64th Medium Tank Battalion  
1 platoon of Company B, 64th Medium Tank Battalion  
Company A, 79th Tank Battalion  
Company B, 89th Medium Tank Battalion

**SECRET**  
**SECURITY INFORMATION**



**LEGEND**  
PRIMARY HIGHWAYS  
IMPROVED ROADS  
UNIMPROVED ROADS

—  
- - -  
- - -

SCALE 1:250,000

FIGURE 69  
**UNCLASSIFIED**

As was planned, the battalion started the crossing at 0615. The tanks initially supported the crossing operation by fire from the south bank of the river. As soon as the lead elements of the battalion had successfully crossed the river, ~~one platoon of tanks forded the river at the~~ crossing site in order to give close support to the infantry elements. Since most of the enemy fire was coming from Hills 568 and 683 the remainder of the tanks were used to bring these positions under fire. The platoon that crossed the river with the infantry was used to close on the town of TONGMAK-DONG and keep the enemy in the town under fire while the infantry closed and routed them out of these positions. This plan for enlarging the bridgehead was very effective and the infantry was enabled to move on the town and clear it of enemy with very little resistance.

Meanwhile the remainder of the tanks were used to isolate the bridgehead from positions on the south bank of the river. Company A, 64th Tank Battalion was in position to the north of the crossing site. Company B, 89th Tank Battalion, was in positions on the south part of the island south of the crossing site. One platoon of Company A, 79th Tank Battalion was in position on the island directly behind the crossing site.

The platoon of Company B, 64th Tank Battalion was used in an indirect fire role from their positions in the vicinity

of HAECHON during the entire operation. This indirect fire was controlled by Division Artillery of the 3rd Infantry Division. It is believed that this was an improper mission for this unit at this time. There was no enemy artillery opposing the river crossing at this time, and since this position was from 3000-4000 yards behind the river line there was no opposition which would necessitate the use of these tanks in a defilade position. Had they been allowed to move about 50 yards they would have been able to support the crossing by direct fire. The fire missions which were assigned this platoon called for the firing of 10 rounds per minute per gun. This was later changed to  $7\frac{1}{2}$  rounds per minute. This is far in excess of the capabilities of both the crew and the weapon. No consideration was given to the fact that as soon as the ammunition in the ready racks was used the crew would have to take time to replenish this ammunition. Also this rate of fire did not allow the guns the necessary cooling time between rounds in sustained fire. A total of 900 rounds was fired by the platoon in four hours. At the end of this firing it was found that the paint was burned off of all gun tubes. One tank's gun mantlet cover had been burned off. The barrels were too hot to be cleaned one hour after the firing was completed. Several days later these guns underwent an inspection by Ordnance personnel. Two of the guns were found to be unserviceable due to burned out gun tubes. This necessitated evacuating the tanks to a base

UNCLASSIFIED

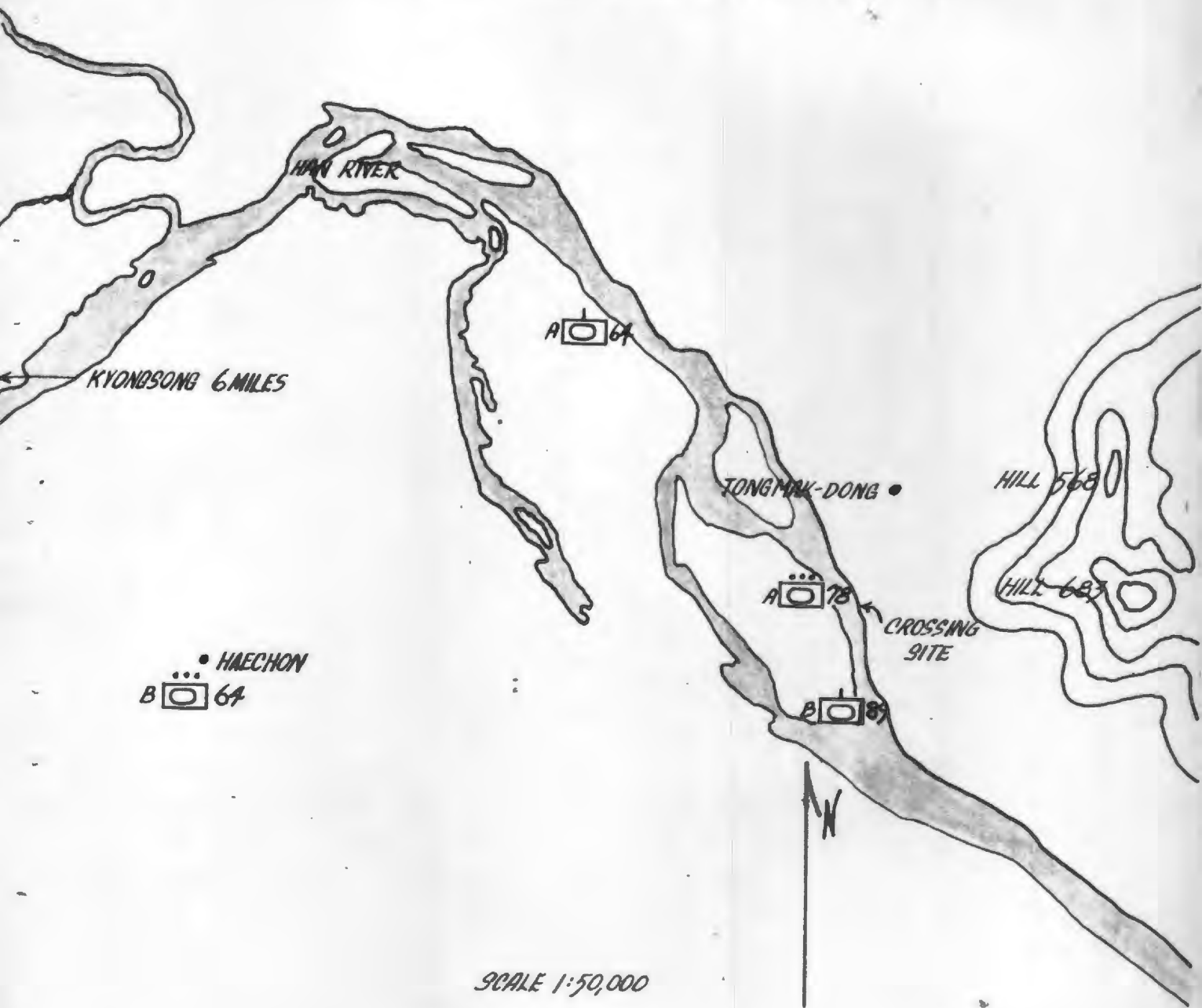


FIGURE 70

[REDACTED]

ordnance shop in PUSAN, causing their loss for one month.<sup>6</sup>

This operation shows an excellent use of tanks in support of a river crossing as well as a very improper use of tanks.

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Comments on armored action

1. The decision to pull the tanks back at night during Operation PUNCH points out the fact that tanks are extremely vulnerable to enemy infiltration during darkness.

2. The tank-infantry cooperation and mutual understanding of the each others problems was extremely effective during Operation PUNCH.

3. The extreme casualties suffered by the infantry in Task Force CROMBEZ may be attributed to the fact that the infantry was riding the tanks when contact with the enemy was imminent.

4. Task Force CROMBEZ points out the fact that defiles must be cleared regardless of the apparent tactical situation.

5. The use of armored personnel carriers in Task Force GROWDON points out the value and need of higher mobility of infantry when operating with armored units.

6. In the tank support of a river crossing it is to be noted that the artillery did not have a proper appreciation of the capabilities and limitations of tanks in the indirect fire role.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER V:

- 1 Employment of Armored Units in Korea, ORO, GHQ, FEC, 1951, p 179.
- 2 Ibid, p 179.
- 3 Armored Combat Lessons Bulletin Number 7, Headquarters I Corps, 7 March 1951.
- 4 Armor Combat Lessons Bulletin Number 18, Headquarters I Corps.
- 5 Opinion of Major Joseph F Landers given during personal interview.
- 6 Armor Combat Lessons Bulletin Number 9, Headquarters I Corps, 11 March 1951.



## CHAPTER 7

### THE CCF SPRING OFFENSIVE (22 APRIL 1951 - 25 JUNE 1951)

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#### General Conduct of the Campaign

The Eighth Army faced another Red offensive with renewed confidence. Operations Thunderbolt, Killer, and Ripper had shown that modern firepower and an integrated offensive could succeed against an enemy who relied primarily upon manpower and not equipment. Some of the glaring weaknesses of the Chinese Army had been exposed -- most important of which was its logistical insufficiency. A Chinese offensive simply ran out of steam after an initial advance. The question that remained was whether or not the initial advance could be contained sufficiently to prevent a real tactical advantage being gained by the enemy. The inevitable logistical breakdown would then leave the enemy weaker than ever and provide the opportunity for counterattack and counteroffensive.

The Red attack was not long in coming. On 22 April the attack that had been building up in the CHORWON area struck the 1st Cavalry Division near the HWACHON RESERVOIR. There was no doubt about its being full scale attack. Crossing the IMJIN River on a 15 mile front, the Chinese and North Koreans were making an all-out effort.

In 12 hours the attack had spread along 50 miles of front, in 24 hours across a 100 miles. In the extreme west, UN forces were driven back 12 miles. By 25 April a Chinese Division, with some cavalry, had penetrated south of KUMVHA. By 2 May CHUNCHON, UIJONGBU and MUNSAN had fallen. The enemy was nearing SEOUL and the UN forces were again preparing the defense of the HAN River.

The spring advance of the Chinese Army did not resemble their previous advances against UN forces. This time they had met the full firepower of a modern army disposed for defense. Their advance was made through curtains of fire that cost them thousands of casualties. Sacrificing men for ground, the Chinese poured in unit after unit in attempts to overwhelm positions by sheer weight of numbers. Heedless of losses, the assaulting hordes swept through to the UN position -- only to find the defenders had withdrawn to previously prepared defenses to the rear. The heavy sacrifices must be made again, and again, and again.

The Chinese force that launched the spring offensive contained an estimated 30 to 40 divisions. From 22 April to 2 May, this force suffered an estimated 90,000 casualties -- approximately 13 divisions.

Finding the west flank of the UN line too hard a nut to crack, the Chinese abandoned their frontal attack of I and IX Corps and slid to the left to attack the X Corps.

X Corps was disposed along the high ground west of HONGCHON and northeast to INJE, a front of approximately 60 kilometers. On the left flank of the 1st Marine Division held positions south and southeast of the CHUNCHON PLAIN. On the Marines' right, the 2d Division held a 25-kilometer front of well entrenched positions. To the 2d Division's right, the ROK 5th Division was disposed along the high ground west of the HOENGSONG-INJE axis, while the ROK 7th Division was squarely astride the axis.

NONAME Line, as it was called, was organized in depth, with successive defensive lines to which the UN troops could fall back and defend. It was further tied in to the natural obstacle presented by the SOYANG River, which ran roughly parallel to the line and 10 kilometers to its front, except where it turned south and approached the ROK 7th Division's front very closely.

Well outposted, the SOYANG River was a major obstacle. The enemy took four days to establish a bridgehead across it, harassed by artillery and aircraft all the while.

On 16 May the Chinese "2d Step, 5th Phase" offensive hit X Corps. The enemy force was estimated at 137,000 Chinese (five corps!) and 38,000 North Koreans (two corps!). Driving heavily at the X Corps right flank, the enemy drove in the outposts and smashed at NONAME Line.

On 17 May the 3d Division was taken from Eighth Army reserve and moved into the area of X Corps. The corps boundary

was shifted to the right, IX Corps assuming responsibility for the 1st Marine Division sector, and X Corps assuming responsibility for the ROK III sector to its right.

The Chinese offensive again encountered the massed fires of an integrated defensive position, and moved forward only at enormous cost. Pivoting on its left flank, X Corps rolled its right flank with the blow, punishing the Reds heavily for every bit of ground taken.

The attack slowed and faltered. By 21 May the enemy pressure had largely ceased, and the time for counterattack had come. X Corps immediately launched the 1st Marine Division on the left towards YANGGU, while the 2d Division (with the 187th RCT attached) moved to secure a bridgehead across the SOYANG.

On the west coast the 64th Tank Battalion moved to UIJONGBU in a reconnaissance in force and found little resistance. A general counterattack began, in accordance with the statement of General Van Fleet, Eighth Army's new commander: "The Eighth Army will go wherever the situation dictates in hot pursuit of the enemy. We intend to exploit every advantage in carrying out our objective to find and kill him."

Troops reaching HWACHON and INJE cut off an estimated 60,000 enemy, most of whom escaped over the hills after abandoning their equipment. By 25 May the line was restored and UN troops were entering a counteroffensive. The "IRON TRIANGLE" (KUMWHA-CHORWON-PYONGGANG), the build-up area for the Chinese spring

offensive was taken and the enemy forced to shift his main supply base to KUMSONG.

By 11 June the war had entered a stage of "fluid stalemate". Activity along the front died down with the beginning of the peace talks at KAESONG. The battles of HEARTBREAK RIDGE and the PUNCH BOWL were to be fought later, but these were to be more in the nature of adjustments in the line, rather than major offensives.

The end of one year of war in Korea found a UN army with confidence in its self and confidence in its ability to hold indefinitely, disposed along a line just north of the 38th Parallel, dipping only slightly below it on the west coast.

Historically, it is still too early to draw any conclusions as to the results of the first year of the Korean war. Militarily, it may be said that the Eighth Army learned much that was new; and probably of more importance, had re-learned much that was basic and which had been forgotten.

#### General Comments on the Campaign

1. The Chinese frontal and "human sea" attacks against modern firepower achieved little success if the position were organized in depth. "Rolling with the punch" became a popular term for a defense that fell back on successive positions, inflicting maximum casualties on the enemy while sustaining minimum casualties of its own. In such a defense, flanks must be tied in at all times.

2. Experience proved that Chinese offensives lost their momentum rapidly in the face of such a defense. Heavy casualties, coupled with low mobility and logistical inadequacy, caused early breakdown.

3. Determined counterattack at the moment of the enemy's logistical collapse prevented re-grouping, exploited his weakened potential, regained the lost ground, and set the stage for a counteroffensive.

4. Encircling movements by UN forces captured supplies, but enemy personnel were able to escape in every case. Vertical envelopments by airborne units did not destroy enemy personnel, but may have been instrumental in gaining ground rapidly.

#### Armored Action During Campaign

89th Tank Battalion. During the period 23 April 1951 to 30 June 1951 the 89th Tank Battalion was attached to the 25th U.S. Infantry Division. Company A of the 79th Heavy Tank Battalion was attached to the 89th Tank Battalion. The 89th was organized under the medium tank battalion T/O&E, being equipped with M4A3E8 Tanks mounting the 76mm cannon.

The normal attachments of the 89th during this period were: Company A to the 35th Regiment, Company B to the 24th Regiment, Company C to the 27th Regiment, Company D and A of the 79th alternated attachment to the Turkish Brigade.

At the outbreak of the Communist Forces' spring offensive of April 23d the 24th Regiment with Company B of the 89th Tank Battalion was the first and hardest hit. The division was forced to withdraw to the LINCOLN Line and each tank company acted as rear guard for their respective regiments. It was during this period that Company D of the 89th Tank Battalion had their company CP over run. It should be noted that the 25th Division always tried to employ a tank platoon reinforced with a platoon of quadruple 50, antiaircraft half tracks, with their forward battalions. No tanks were lost during the withdrawal to the LINCOLN Line.

After the initial phase of the Communist forces' offensive lost its momentum the tanks of the 89th were used in small unit power probing attacks. In mid-May Task Force DOLVIN was organized to drive up the UIJONGBU corridor. The Task Force consisted of Companies C and B of the 89th, Company A of the 79th, and the 3d Battalion of the 27th Regiment. On 20 May the task force crossed the 38th Parallel. The task force lost two tanks at the Communist MLR. to the 57mm antitank fire. Company C of the 89th knocked out the antitank guns and breached the line in a matter of seconds. The task force then established a patrol base and was later relieved by the 25th Canadian Brigade.

During the remainder of the period extensive tank-infantry patrolling took place. This patrolling was done mostly on a platoon level with and without infantry support. In early June

three tank companies, reinforced entered PYONGGANG, North Korea and by late June the tank units were patrolling extensively into KUMWHA, North Korea.

The operations of the 89th Medium Tank Battalion during the month of April were so varied and met with such uniform success that they present an excellent picture of typical armored combat in Korea under present conditions, highlighted by an absence of the enemy armor activity. The action of the battalion during this month included use of its flame throwers against enemy soldiers hiding in the village of SOMAM, shifting of a tank company from the support of one battalion to another in the middle of an engagement, a crossing of the YONGSYONG-CHON River, assaults against well dug-in enemy in bunkers, destruction of bazooka and satchel charge teams, tremendous expenditures of ammunition in direct support of an attack by the Turkish Brigade, the tie-in of tanks to the strong defensive position of the 27th Regiment, the defense in depth of this line and sorties into and behind the Chinese lines, and a battle with hand grenade wielding enemy troops who surrounded and approached to within 10 yards of the tanks.

In one engagement two platoons of tanks were almost overrun by swarms of enemy even after over 300 of them had been killed. Tank company command posts were engaged in fire fights and tanks were employed to lead attacks through enemy road blocks in rear of friendly units. On numerous occasions fanatic attacks



by grenade carrying infantrymen were turned back with severe casualties inflicted upon the attacking forces. Several delaying actions and withdrawals were completed, all of which forced the enemy to break contact with our infantry. Tank fire was used to destroy enemy forces in a tunnel and white phosphorus was fired into enemy bunkers to mark them for air strike. Several tank-infantry task forces were formed, one of which made the furthest penetrations into North Korea territory by the 25th Infantry Division since its limited objective offensive commenced in January.

Numerous delays were encountered due to enemy mine fields and clusters of mortar shells buried in the roads. Mines detonated in areas over which much traffic previously had passed and several vehicles were disabled. Other delays were caused by heavy rainfall which made the roads impassable in places. Increasingly heavy mortar concentrations were received during the mid-April advance.

The caution of the friendly advance contributed to increased use of the tank-infantry patrol. As a result of the great emphasis placed upon consolidation of positions, the main infantry body assumed defensive positions at increasingly frequent intervals. Tank patrols screened in front of the main body as it organized and improved its defenses. Some of the most difficult terrain encountered by tanks of this battalion in the Korean campaign placed severe limitations upon these patrols.

It was in supporting the defenses of the 25th Infantry Division against the enemy masses, particularly during the night of 24 April, that tanks of the 89th Medium Tank Battalion played their most significant role. When the enemy launched his all-out attempt to break through the division and race for SEOUL, five tank companies of this battalion met the enemy masses and inflicted severe casualties. Operating from the relative invulnerability of their tanks, the five companies used their great fire power at point blank range to cut down enemy groups. In the night-long fire fight, the tanks were shifted into critical areas as the situation demanded. These mobile machine gun nests fired practically continuously throughout the night. As the situation worsened and communications within the infantry force became more difficult, increased use was made of the tank communication system to direct and control the action. When the command posts of several units within the regimental sectors were in danger of being over-run, tanks were shifted into positions from which they could beat back the enemy. With the situation rapidly becoming untenable, tanks led the infantry forces as they disengaged, driving through enemy road blocks and destroying enemy automatic weapons which were threatening to prevent friendly infantrymen from effecting their escape. Other tanks covered the rear of the withdrawing force and prevented rapid pursuit of the friendly units. In the successive withdrawals following the action of 24 April, tanks blocked for

infantry elements as they displaced to the rear. Finally when all units of the 25th Infantry Division had closed into their well fortified defense lines, tank patrols were once again sent out to screen in front of the main body. As the month closed tanks of the 89th Medium Tank Battalion were patrolling to the north, seeking to locate the enemy and inflict additional casualties upon his forces. In spite of this period of heavy activity the unit lost only two tanks to enemy fire. Of course, as was the case with all other tank units, mines were no end of trouble. No tank vs tank action occurred during the period.

73d Tank Battalion. During the period 23 April to 30 June 1951 the 73d Tank Battalion was attached to the 1st ROK Division, which occupied the left flank of I Corps, the left corps of the Eighth Army. The 73d Tank Battalion was generally employed with one tank company with each of the three infantry regiments (the 11th, 12th, and 15th) of the 1st ROK Division. The 73 Tank Battalion is organized under the Heavy Tank Battalion T/O&E.

At the initial outbreak of the Communist Forces Spring Offensive the division was able to maintain positions. Due to the break in the line in another sector the division was forced to pull back to keep the line stable. It was during this phase that the Gloucester Battalion of the 29th British Commonwealth Brigade, was cut off and all but annihilated. Company C of the 73d Tank Battalion drove in to meet the remaining 40 men and one officer, bringing them to safety.

The 1st ROK Division finally took up position south of the IMJIN River where the situation stabilized. During the closing days of April the 1st ROK Division made approximately eight river crossings to feel out the enemy. In each instance the 73d Tank Battalion furnished tank and machine gun fire in direct support to the ROK troops across the river. In the week of May the 73d Tank Battalion itself crossed the IMJIN River in tank-infantry probing attacks. The remainder of the period was taken up in reinforced platoon and company size power probing attacks along the SEOUL-MUNSON-NI axis, inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy.

Although the 73d Tank Battalion suffered few casualties and no tank losses during this period, their close supporting fires to the 1st ROK Division gave the division the freedom of maneuver denied many ROK units because of their own lack of armor support.

The 73d Tank Battalion was equipped with M-46 tanks during this period.

70th Tank Battalion. The 70th Tank Battalion was in Eighth Army reserve with the US 1st Cavalry Division, located near SEOUL, South Korea, at the beginning of the Communist Forces' Spring Offensive. Company A of the 70th was attached to the 5th Cavalry Regiment, Company B was attached to the 8th Cavalry Regiment, and Company C was attached to the 7th Cavalry Regiment.

At the beginning of the Communist attack of 23 April 1951 the 1st Cavalry Division remained in reserve until the complete collapse of the 6th ROK Division in the IX Corps sector had left the SEOUL-CHUNCHON axis open to the enemy. On 25 April 1951 elements of the 5th Cavalry Regiment closed in the KAPYONG sector with Company A of the 70th Tank Battalion attached. The 5th Cavalry Regiment was to relieve the supposedly hard pressed 27th British Commonwealth Brigade. In this particular sector Company A of the 70th Battalion sent out one reinforced tank company patrol. It should be noted that the supporting infantry was mounted in half-tracks.

The patrol proceeded north of KAPYONG in column, during the hours of daylight. The lead tank was struck by four anti-tank rockets fired at close range, killing the platoon leader. Because of a small amount of small fire arms, the infantry leader turned his half-tracks around and left the tanks. The infantry had no casualties when they crossed back into friendly territory. The tank company continued its mission until road conditions prevented further movement. On the return trip the company commander picked up the knocked out tank and crossed into friendly territory. The 5th Cavalry Regiment with attachments was returned to the 1st Cavalry Division on 27 April.

The 8th and 5th Cavalry Regiments, with Companies A and B of the 70th Tank Battalion attached, went back in the line north and northeast of SEOUL on 1 May 1951. The 7th Cavalry Regiment

with Company C of the 70th operating as a covering force for the US 3d Division.

Patrol bases were established in battalion size and later regimental size in UIJONGBU by the 1st Cavalry Division to which the tank companies were still attached. During the remainder of May and in June 1951 the 70th Tank Battalion operated extensive platoon size patrols. These patrols went out twice daily, reaching deep into the enemy territory probing for possible concentrations.

During the period the 70th Tank Battalion had 26 tanks hit enemy mines and one tank hit by enemy rocket fire. Of the 26 tanks that hit mines all but three were recovered. The battalion lost no tanks due to antitank fire.

The 70th Tank Battalion was equipped with the medium tank M4A3E8 armed with the 76mm cannon.

6th Tank Battalion. During the period 23 April to June 1951 the 6th Tank Battalion was attached in part to the US 24th Infantry Division, 5th Regimental Combat Team, and the 187th Airborne Regiment. The 6th Tank Battalion was equipped under the medium tank battalion T/O&E with M-46 tanks.

At the beginning of the Communist Forces' Spring Offensive Company A was with the 19th Regiment; Company C was with the 21st Regiment; Company D was with the 5th RCT; and Company B was under battalion control. On the first night of the offensive

the 5th RCT was hard hit and forced to withdraw with Company D of the 6th acting as rear guard. In this night action Company D lost five tanks to enemy rocket and antitank fire.

The 19th Regiment was also hard pressed to make a successful withdrawal and Company A of the 6th made a short counter-attack at night, easing the pressure on the 19th Regiment. Company A lost two tanks in the action.

After the initial defensive action, the regiments, including the 5th RCT, made successful withdrawals to positions north of the HAN River. The tank companies of the 6th acted as rear guards, successfully covering the withdrawal with little action. In the withdrawal, tank units of platoon and company size were also used in blocking position on the flanks.

In early May 1951, Task Force SPOILER, consisting of one company of the 6th Tank Battalion, 187th RCT, Company A 72d Tank Battalion and one Battery of the 213th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, was organized. The task force was to drive back into KAPYONG, South Korea, a distance of some 30 miles, and seize the town, remain 48 hours and return.

The task force jumped off before daylight in a driving rainstorm, with the tank company from the 6th Tank Battalion leading. The attack carried across the PUKHAN River three to four miles above its junction with the HAN River. Due to the terrain, the combat vehicles were road bound. The attack carried some 15 miles without incident. The rain continued in intensity

and ground visibility was limited.

As far as air support and air observation were concerned, there was none. Midway through the attack, due to enemy pressure and lack of air support, the operation was called back, which was probably just as well, since most of the communications had failed due to the extremely heavy rain. During the remainder of the period the battalion continued to operate small unit patrols and support the action of their supported regiments.

During the period the 6th Tank Battalion experienced no tank versus tank action. The battalion was, as usual, plagued with enemy antitank mines. Also during the period an increased use of captured US type rocket launchers by the enemy was noted.

1st Marine Tank Battalion. The only significant action noted by the Marine Tanks was a reconnaissance in force composed of an infantry battalion (-), a battery of field artillery, and a company of tanks. On 19 May 1951 this task force departed the MLR and advanced 3000 meters reaching the southern end of the pass on the HONGCHON-CHUNCHON axis where it attacked and dispersed an enemy battalion.

64th Tank Battalion. During the period 23 April - 30 June 1951 the 64th Tank Battalion operated with the US 3d Division. In this period the 3d Division's fighting consisted of a movement from the I Corps on the Eighth Army's left flank to X Corps located in Eighth Army's east control sector.



In the I Corps sector the enemy attempted to counter I Corps armor activity by using an antitank grenade against the 64th Tank Battalion's M-46 tanks. In introducing the weapon against the 64th Tank Battalion, the enemy succeeded in damaging one M-46 tank, by throwing the grenade into the rear deck of the tank and obtaining a penetration through one of the engine compartment doors into a battery compartment.

On 2 May 1951 the 64th Tank Battalion had the mission of making an armored reconnaissance of the SEOUL-UIJONGBU road to include the town of UIJONGBU. While on this mission, in an attempt to by-pass an obstacle, three M-46 tanks became stuck in a stream bed adjacent to the road they had been travelling on, and the maintenance section of the battalion was unable to extricate them.

On the following morning, a similar mission scheduled the battalion to go to UIJONGBU to reconnoiter the surrounding country side. A request was made to the I Corps armor section to furnish aid in recovering the three immobilized vehicles abandoned the day before. The tanks were recovered while under fire, thanks to the excellence of the men of the recovery team.

An unusual measure was employed on the nights of 24-25 April to counter close-in infiltration tactics against our tanks. Their locations were known to the enemy so there was no problem of giving away location. An undetermined number of enemy troops that had surrounded a friendly Infantry Company, attacked Company

B, 64th Tank Battalion at 250200 April, with small arms, automatic weapons, and grenades in an attempt to deny the relief of the friendly infantry. As the enemy troops attempted to climb on the tanks to strike at vulnerable spots, Company B, using headlights for illumination, repulsed the attack and inflicted heavy casualties. It is more apparent than ever before how much we need infra-red equipment mounted on our tanks.

On 3 June 1951 the 64th Tank Battalion encountered a strong defensive position near the town of CHAIL-LI. The results to the 64th of this encounter were: Four tanks disabled by antitank fire; one tank destroyed by antitank fire; and two tanks disabled by mines. Two of the enemy's antitank guns were destroyed. These antitank guns proved to be the Russian made 57mm 1943 using an HVAP type ammunition. Since one tank was penetrated through the turret and another through the engine compartment it was believed that a new type ammunition was being used.

In the X Corps sector only Company B of the 64th Tank Battalion was engaged in any action to be noted. During this time Company B operated as part of Task Force BAKER. (See Task Force BAKER, 72d Tank Battalion.)

72d Tank Battalion. During the period 23 April - 30 June 1951 the 72d Tank Battalion was broken down with Company A attached to the 27th British Brigade in IX Corps, while the remainder of the battalion was with the US 2d Division in X Corps.

The action started with Company A of the 72d during the afternoon and evening of 23 April 1951, Company A (-3d Platoon) 72d Tank Battalion and the RAR Battalion of the 27th British Commonwealth Brigade moved into positions north of CHERYONG-NI, Korea, in order to cover the withdrawal of the ROK 6th Division. At 232100 elements of the ROK 6th Division began a withdrawal south through the positions held by Company A 72d Tank Battalion and the RAR Battalion. Leading elements of attacking CCF forces were in contact with the rear withdrawing elements of the ROK 6th Division.

The tank company commander had placed his platoons so that the 4th Platoon was in a blocking position on the only north-south road in the area. The 1st Platoon was in position on high ground flanking the north-south road on the west and south of the 4th Platoon blocking position.

The RAR Battalion was deployed on the ridge flanking the north-south road on the east. The 2d Platoon and the company commander's command tank were deployed at a crossroad to the south of the other tank positions where the north-south road joined the northwest-southeast road. The latter road was being used by elements of the ROK 6th Division as an avenue of withdrawal.

The first CCF patrol hit and was destroyed by the 4th Platoon at its blocking positions at 232100. At about 232300 large numbers of CCF heavily attacked the friendly positions.

One force struck directly at the 4th Platoon positions. The platoon leader was mortally wounded. He died almost immediately, but not before issuing the order to his platoon to make a fighting withdrawal to previously prepared alternate positions with the 2d Platoon. Three other tank commanders were seriously wounded in the attack which enveloped the 4th Platoon. However, the platoon was able to withdraw to the positions designated by the platoon leader.

Concurrently with the attack on the 4th Platoon, other elements of the advancing CCF circled around the hill mass into the area west of the road. These CCF by-passed the 1st Platoon, which could not locate the enemy below because of the lack of any kind of natural or artificial illumination. This attacking force swept around the hill mass and swung again to the east to strike at the 2d Platoon positions which were soon surrounded and infiltrated. The enemy then swept on to overrun the RAR Battalion CP that was located well to the rear of the 2d Platoon's position.

However, under orders from the company commander, the tanks remained in position. During the initial stages of this fight at the 2d Platoon position, tanks from the withdrawing 4th Platoon appeared on the scene, moving south from their former outpost position. The company commander dismounted from his tank, moved under extremely heavy enemy fire to reach the

leading tank of the 4th Platoon. Upon learning of the heavy casualties in the platoon, he ordered all the wounded and dead, which included four of the five tank commanders, loaded on three of the tanks and ordered the tanks to run through the enemy force and return the wounded to the company trains area for treatment. He also instructed the ranking NCO to obtain replacement crews from the company headquarters personnel and return immediately to the scene of the battle.

The company commander then placed the remaining two tanks of the 4th Platoon in position with the 2d Platoon; and then, still under heavy enemy fire, returned to his command tank and continued to direct the action of his company. At one time the enemy succeeded in setting up a machine gun emplacement between the command tank and that of the 2d Platoon leader. This gun was reduced by tank fire. The Chinese attempted to mount the tanks and destroy them with grenades and satchel charges but were destroyed by fire from the surrounding tanks. One tank received a direct hit from a 3.5" rocket launcher that killed the loader and mortally wounded the tank commander. However, the position of the tanks was so completely encircled by this time that it was impossible to evacuate either of these two men or any of the other less seriously wounded. The fighting continued with unabated fury until daylight.

At dawn the CCF began to withdraw. As they attempted to pull back to the west of the hill mass around which they had

attacked the night before, the 1st Platoon opened fire. This placed the enemy force in a crossfire from 16 tanks, for by this time the three tanks of the 4th Platoon had returned to the 2d Platoon positions after fighting back up the entire length of the route. This crossfire into the withdrawing enemy continued until all targets were either destroyed or dispersed. It was later determined that more than 500 enemy were killed in this action.

At this time the tanks, then dangerously low on ammunition, were ordered to withdraw by the commander of the 27th BCB. The RAR Battalion was also ordered to withdraw but the enemy was still surrounding their position and prevented their movement.

The company commander led his company to the trains area. This withdrawal was conducted under automatic weapons and mortar fire from enemy positions which had been established on the high ground flanking the road leading south to KAPYONG. At the company trains area the tanks were refueled and resupplied with ammunition.

The company commander was informed about 241000 that approximately 50 friendly vehicles belonging to the 2d Chemical Mortar Battalion and Company B, 74th Engineer (C) Battalion had been abandoned in an area immediately south of the company's previous positions. Organizing volunteer drivers and "shotgun" riders from Company B, 74th Engineer (C) Battalion for these

vehicles, he had them mount the tanks and advance north to the area where the vehicles were located. On arrival at the area of the abandoned vehicles, the tank company commander deployed his company in a semi-circle to cover the manning and evacuation of the abandoned vehicles. The tank company then escorted the vehicles back to the friendly lines.

As the company was returning with the retrieved vehicles, the commander of the RAR Battalion stopped the platoon leader of the 1st Platoon and asked him to take ammunition up to cut off units of the RAR. The RAR Battalion Commander, riding as loader in the platoon leader's tank, directed them up to the surrounded positions. Then the platoon leader had his tankers pick up Australian wounded and placed them in and on the tanks of the first platoon. Some tank crewmen got onto the rear decks of the tanks to make room for the wounded inside while the tanks descended from the hills. The wounded were returned to safety. Then the 1st Platoon returned again to cut off positions, delivered more ammunition and brought out more wounded. A total of 16 wounded Australians were evacuated during this action. Two tank crewmen were wounded during this phase of the action by the heavy automatic weapons fire placed on the tanks as they moved back and forth from KAPYONG to the RAR positions at CHERYONG-NI.

About 241100 the plight of the encircled RAR Battalion was reported to the company commander. It still had been unable to disengage from the enemy and withdraw. The tank company advanced back to the CHERYONG-NI crossroads. Covering patrols were dispatched up the north-south road enabling the RAR Battalion to disengage and initiate its withdrawal. The tank company then returned to the company assembly area north of KAPYONG.

About 241300 it was apparent that some relief would have to be sent to the Princess Pat Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI) Battalion. This unit was located on the high ground south-west of the CHERYONG-NI crossroads. The northwest-southeast road ran to the north of the PPCLI positions. At this time the CCF forces had completely surrounded the PPCLI and were exerting heavy pressure on them.

Early on the afternoon of the 24th the tank company commander led a tank counterattack into the area in rear of the CCF attacking the PPCLI. Moving directly to the north of the surrounded PPCLI under heavy enemy fire, the tanks placed intense fire on the enemy forces and then withdrew South. Again at daylight on 25 April 1951 the company commander led two more tank counterattacks into the same area, each time directing heavy machine gun and tank cannon fire on the enemy, causing him to divert his effort. These counterattacks, coupled with the action of the PPCLI Battalion in placing continuous fire on the enemy,



subsequently resulted in a lessening of enemy pressure and finally in an enemy withdrawal, freeing the PPCLI from its encircled position. The tank company returned to the company assembly area north of KAPYONG at about 251000. The enemy made no further offensive efforts in the CHERYONG--NI area on 25 April.

No tanks were lost during this period although two received AT rocket hits. Personnel casualties were 3 killed, 8 seriously wounded, and 4 slightly wounded. The 3d Platoon of Company A, 72d Tank Battalion did not participate in the action but remained in Corps Reserve at HONGCHON. The company (-3d platoon) entered the action with 16 operational tanks and finished the action with 13 operational tanks.

Following this action the remainder of the 72d Tank Battalion went into action in the X Corps sector during May at the time of the second phase of the Communist forces' Spring Offensive.

Company C of the 72nd Tank Battalion was attached to the 23d Regiment; and during the period 30 April to 12 May, the 23d Infantry, minus the French Battalion, was in X Corps Reserve. The French Battalion, under 2d Division control, was a part of Task Force ZEBRA from 30 April until 12 May, at which time it reverted to 2d Division Reserve. The 2d Battalion, 23d Infantry relieved the French Battalion as a component part of Task Force ZEBRA on 12 May, while the remainder of the 23d Infantry still remained in X Corps Reserve.

On 16 May, the expected enemy offensive began, striking hardest at the 2d Division sector. The 2d Battalion was engaged throughout the night of 16 May and during the following day directed air strikes and artillery fires against heavy enemy troop concentrations in its sector. The 23d Regiment (-) was relieved from X Corps Reserve, the French Battalion was relieved from 2d Division Reserve and on 17 May, the 23d RCT (-) joined the 2d Battalion, on line in the eastern portion of the 2d Division Sector, taking over the defense of this area (the NONAME line) from Task Force ZEBRA.

Task Force ZEBRA was officially dissolved on 17 May at 1430 hours. "B" and "C" Companies of the 72d Tank Battalion remained with the 23d RCT.

During the morning hours of 18 May, as the situation on the 2d Division front cleared, the 2d Division commander ordered the 23d RCT to withdraw to new positions in the vicinity of HANGYE. Even as this order was received and passed on to the 2d and 3d Battalions, those units were under heavy enemy attack from the front, flanks and rear, where the enemy had formed a strong road block.

As it now was evident that the two battalions were cut off by the enemy road block, one platoon of Company K with a platoon of tanks from Company C, 72d Tank Battalion attached, was sent down the MSR with the mission of driving along the east

side of the river and clearing the enemy points of resistance along their route. This tank-infantry team progressed south, knocking out two enemy machine gun nests which were located on the east side of the MSR, and inflicting at least 300 casualties on the enemy on the east slope along the route. Intense enemy small arms and automatic weapons fire prevented the tank-infantry team from going beyond this point and the team was ordered to hold its position and continued to engage the enemy.

On receiving the order to withdraw, the 2d and 3d Battalion commanding officers made a coordinated plan for the two battalions. Due to the developments in the situation, an attack to the rear was the only plausible way of carrying out the order. Therefore, it was decided that the 2d Battalion was to clear the high ground on the west side of the MSR, joining up with the French Battalion; while the 3d Battalion was to clear the east side of the MSR to the high ground in the vicinity of CHAUN-NI. It was imperative that the MSR be cleared so that the tactical vehicles of the two battalions could be extricated. The 2d Battalion was to attack first, then the 3d Battalion would follow on the opposite side of the MSR.

This withdrawal was possible because of the accurate machine gun and 76mm fire of Company C, 72d Medium Tank Battalion, tanks which were attached to the 2d and 3d Battalion. A platoon from Company B, 72d Tank Battalion, aided this movement

by firing at the enemy to the northwest in the former 2d Battalion positions. This enemy force was trying to cut the 2d Battalion units off from the 3d Battalion positions.

The platoon of tanks with the Company K platoon, with intense fire from its holding positions on the MSR, was instrumental both in preventing the enemy from working his way up the ridges and attacking the 2d and 3d Battalions in force from the rear, and also in keeping the hills and ridges on both sides of the MSR free of the enemy for as far as the weapons could fire effectively.

As soon as the 2d Battalion had cleared through its positions, the 3d Battalion began to withdraw. Company I was designated as rear guard, and Company L followed Company K out behind the 2d Battalion. Elements of Headquarters Company infiltrated back and were organized with the rifle companies and Company M. Company C, 72d Tank Battalion, operating from the terrain in the vicinity of the MSR, in conjunction with Company I held off the large enemy force, estimated as at least an enemy regiment, while the 2d Battalion passed through the 3d Battalion positions, reorganized, and attacked south, followed by the 3d Battalion. In spite of the intense enemy small arms, automatic weapons, mortar and artillery fire, and the ever present danger of enemy attacking the tanks with satchel charges and TNT blocks, the tankers of Company C, 72d Tank Battalion, engaged the enemy in such a determined stand that they were an instrumental factor in the successful withdrawal.

The opportunity for exploitation had now arrived with the

enemy in an over-extended position, short of supply, and seriously impaired by the amazing toll of casualties inflicted. Acting promptly, the corps commander issued orders for a rapid and strong thrust up the HONGCHON-INJE corridor. The 187th Airborne RCT (-), as ordered; attacked north through the 23d Infantry at 1430 hours and secured its initial objective just south of HANGME at 1830 hours. Negligible enemy contact was reported during the action. This was apparently due to the fact that the major portion of the enemy strength was now east of the corps MSR.

After having stabilized its lines against enemy attacks during the preceding period, the 2d Division took the offensive in limited objective attacks. Advances of 1000-2000 meters were achieved by the 9th Infantry, as the 23d Infantry maintained previously occupied positions on the left of the Division Sector. The 15th RCT, still attached to the 2d Division, shifted its positions to the center of the Division area, and elements of the 38th Infantry assumed the offensive along the Division right boundary.

To effect a rapid thrust up the PUNGAM-NI-HABAE JAE axis and to secure HABAE-JAI, Task Force YOKE was formed by the Commanding General, X Corps, effective 220800 hours. It was commanded by the Deputy Corps commander and consisted of the following units:

- 2d Battalion, 38th Infantry
- 7th Tank Battalion (-one company)
- 1 Platoon, Heavy Tank Company, 15th Infantry
- 1 Battery, 300th Armored Field Artillery Battalion
- 3d Regiment (-) ROK 7th Division
- 1 TACP, 5th USAF (2d US Infantry Division.)

By midnight an advance of 2000 meters had been made toward the objective.

Operation Order Nr 22 dissolved Task Force YOKE and organized Task Force ABLE which was composed of the 15th RCT, ROK 3d Regiment (-), and one battery of the 300th Armored Field Artillery Battalion. Operation Order Nr 23, which was issued on the 25th, organized Task Force BAKER with the mission of spearheading a drive to the east coast on the INJE-KANSONG axis where it was to secure the town of KANSONG and hold it until relieved by elements of ROK I Corps. This Task Force was composed of the following units:

- 187th Airborne RCT
- 72d Tank Battalion (-1 Company)
- 1 Company, 2d Engineer (C) Battalion
- Detachment, 4th Signal Battalion
- 300th Armored Field Artillery Battalion
- 1 Company, 64th Tank Battalion
- 49th Transportation Truck Company
- 514th Transportation Truck Company
- Naval Gunfire Team, X Corps Artillery

Task Force Baker was organized at 1200 hours 25 May, under the command of the Commanding General, 187th RCT. It was assigned the mission of securing KANSONG, some 75 miles northeast of the HONGCHON-INJE-KANSONG axis, in order to strike a decisive blow in cutting off the enemy's precipitous retreat.

Task Force BAKER forced its way 4000 meters forward, as the 27d Infantry defeated an estimated enemy battalion in a two hour fire fight and advanced 5000 meters. The 38th Infantry attacked northwest along the HYON-NI-INJE axis.

Enemy resistance throughout the day limited the Task Force BAKER advance to 3000 meters, while the 23d Infantry, from its base of operations, employed reinforced companies on patrol missions, some of which engaged determined enemy groups in fire fight.

The 38th Infantry closed on INJE, completing the pincer movement when it joined with elements of the 23d Infantry. Several enemy groups attempting to escape along that route were decimated, and during the evening the 38th Infantry occupied positions in the INJE area.

30 May - On May 30, 1951, the Commanding General, Eighth Army, directed a boundary change between X Corps and ROK I Corps, ordered that X Corps halt the advance toward KANSONG, upon gaining contact with elements of ROK I Corps; and delineated the line upon which defensive positions were to be secured.

The area south of the HWACHONG RESERVOIR was occupied and the YANGGU area was seized.

No other significant action took place during 30 May, as the counterattack and exploitation phase drew to a successful conclusion.

During the entire period the 72d Tank Battalion had two tanks hit by enemy rocket fire, two tanks hit mines, and three were destroyed because of mechanical failure. The two tanks hit by rockets were in Company A. Both were recovered. The remaining disabled tanks were from Company C. All five tanks had been

abandoned by Company C and as Company B fell back past the tanks they destroyed them with tank fire. When friendly forces again drove back into that sector the tanks were burned beyond repair or salvage.

#### Comments on Armored Action

1. The effects of tanks upon the tactical operations during this period has been very well shown. In the tank supported ROK units their combat conduct was all that could be desired, where in the non-tank supported ROK units there were many incidents of complete collapse under normal enemy pressure. The tank gives the man on the ground a definite and highly reliable source of heavy fire power.

An even greater tank-infantry relationship should be established to the point where they know and understand each other's actions and manner of fighting--so that, for example, when the tanker cranks up his engine or auxiliary engine for power, the man on the ground will not think that he is being left behind. The man on the ground should be encouraged to point out targets to the tanker and inform the tanker exactly to what degree his tank is protected by the employed infantry around the tank.

2. Maintenance is an ever present problem dependent upon the type of tanks in a unit and the age of the equipment. If the supporting army, corps and division ordnance units are



willing, the maintenance problem for the line units can be greatly reduced. In the past, and in some units in Korea, the supporting ordnance units would rather find a reason to send a vehicle back to a unit than fix it. A constant battle existed between tank units and ordnance units of the 2d Division. (One tank with a skeleton crew remained in ordnance in the 2d Division from October until December 1951. Another tank was sent in for a clutch and the ordnance company wanted to salvage the tank. The driver "scrounged" the clutch parts and he and the assistant driver replaced the clutch and returned to duty, all in four days.) It is definitely felt that the majority of maintenance problems can be solved if the supporting ordnance units and the battalion maintenance platoon properly perform their functions. As it stands now the company maintenance sections are the only elements that are really carrying the load. It is realized that this particular situation does not exist in all units as described here, but in one place or another in every unit some one is simply lying down on the job.

3. Fuel consumption is another logistical problem that is increasing as our tanks get heavier. The units equipped with M4A3E8s were aware of fuel needs but it did not constitute a great worry, except in possible deep exploitation runs. It is not believed every effort is used to conserve fuel, which places a big drain on the unit trains. The answer to fuel consumption seems to be a problem for the automotive engineers.

4. Combat troops seem to think in battle everything is expendible. In the withdrawal from North Korea in November of 1950, tanks were pushed off the road and burned without any effort to tow them out. Wheeled vehicles were treated in the same manner, only in greater quantities. There are examples in this chapter where units recovered their own knocked-out vehicles. If one unit can do this others can. The reason we have failed so miserably in battlefield recovery of expensive equipment is that the commanders of certain units in the field are not sufficiently cost-conscious.

5. Armor exerts a powerful influence on tactical operations, but there is some question as to whether the increased complexity of new tank models is improving this effectiveness, or decreasing it.

There is no question that a well trained crew operating a super-tank, regardless of its complexity, is something to be desired. But even with the tanks we now have, they seem to be too complicated for a great many persons in our armored units. If we need more complex tanks to do the job it will necessitate an educational minimum for armor personnel.

6. The tank killing properties of our tanks were not important during this period, because the Communists did not send a single tank into action in their spring offensive. It had been established earlier in the war that the 76mm cannon mounted on the M4A3E8 tank was very capable of knocking out the T-34 tank,

and the 90mm cannon would practically tear apart a T-34.

7. There is little question of the infantry killing properties of our tanks, especially in this period. If the tanks will only stay and slug it out it will not be long before the enemy infantry gives all tanks a wide berth.

8. Armor is ideally suited for exploitation, even in Korea.

a. Tanks alone can handle their own security during exploitation in daylight hours. After darkness it is absolutely necessary to have infantry outpost the tanks in all-round security.

b. The depth of exploitation depends upon the force involved and the situation, including terrain and weather conditions. A short powerful exploitation used against an enemy like the Chinese is very effective. It inflicts terrific casualties and constitutes not too great a risk of losing your armor.

c. The occasion for exploitation in a conflict like Korea is ever present. The one big obstacle is breaching the enemy mine fields which the enemy lay covering almost all available routes. The most opportune time for exploitation seems to exist at the moment our forces have successfully contained a major enemy attack.

~~CHAPTER 8~~

~~CONCLUSIONS~~

General

One of the most important lessons to be learned from the war in Korea is that armor is still an indispensable part of ground combat, regardless of any limiting conditions under which it must operate. The fall-back to the PUSAN Perimeter in the first months of the war was caused in large part by the UN forces' inability to stop the North Korean tanks. The almost immediate removal of the enemy armored threat after the arrival of US medium tanks in August 1950 serves to reaffirm the basic principle that "the best antitank weapon is another tank".

As a corollary to this, armor must and can operate effectively in all types of terrain. The assumption that terrain, and terrain alone, can stop tanks is entirely false. At its worst, terrain can only limit the use of armor; it cannot bar its use entirely. This would seem basic, but it was ignored in 1940 in the ARDENNES and again in 1950 in KOREA.

Tank Performance

The three models of US medium tanks, the M4A3E8, the M26, and the M46 consistently outfought the Russian made T34. The 90mm tank gun was particularly effective, destroying T34s at ranges varying from 10 yards as shown by an M26 of Company B, 70th Tank

Battalion near SONGHYON, to 3000 yards as shown by an M26 of Company C, 73d Tank Battalion near SUWON.

It can be seen from the actions described that M4A3E8's were used more often for long penetrations and the more mobile phases of armored warfare than were the M26 or M46 tanks. The greater use of the M4A3E8 was, of course, partly due to the greater availability of this older World War II tank. In addition, however, it was generally considered that the M4A3E8 was mechanically more reliable than the newer tank types. As a case in point, it will be recalled that the 73d Tank Battalion, having M26 tanks, was moved by LST from INCHON to PUSAN in October 1950 while the 7th Division to which it was then attached went overland. The M4A3E8's of the 70th and 89th Tank Battalions covered an equal distance in overland marches without fear of excessive breakdown.

It is <sup>believed</sup> ~~the authors'~~ opinion that the ideal tank for the war in Korea would have been a tank with the armor and 90mm gun of the M26 and M46, and with the mechanical reliability of the M4A3E8.

#### Tank-Infantry Coordination

Although varying greatly between units and commanders, tank-infantry coordination was largely unsatisfactory, due primarily to poor communications. There were many instances in which infantry commanders were not familiar with the tactical employment

of attached tanks. For instance, some actions have been mentioned in which infantry commanders ordered tanks to advance through known mine fields. There was a general lack of understanding of the logistical needs and mechanical limitations of tanks.

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The other side of the picture, and the one most easily overlooked, is that many armored commanders did not have an adequate grasp of the tactical employment and limitations of infantry. This was particularly evident in those operations where truck-mounted infantry or infantry mounted on tanks were attached to tank units for primarily armored missions, such as exploitation or armored penetrations.

The fact that the desired standard of teamwork can be achieved between tanks and infantry is evident in some of the actions described, notably those of the 89th Tank Battalion.

#### Defense

The "war of maneuver — slashing at the enemy when he withdraws and fighting delaying actions when he attacks" was a successful means of defense against a numerically superior but logistically weak enemy. This "rolling with the punch", as exemplified by the X Corps' containment of the Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) Spring Offensive in April 1951, although not truly a defense in its strictest interpretation, is more indicative of the measures taken to meet the enemy's offensives than is any

specific example of a sustained defense over the period of a few days. The defense behind the NAKTONG in August and September of 1950 most closely approximated the sustained defense, although the overextended nature of the lines and the frenzied shifting of units within the perimeter often had more in common with the mobile defense than with the sustained defense. The fighting in the vicinity of TAEGU often assumed the characteristics of a delaying action during this same period.

To simplify what is essentially only a question of semantics, there were two major periods of retrograde action in its purest sense -- the fall-back to the FUSAN Perimeter in July and August of 1950, and the "bugout" from North Korea in December 1950 and January 1951. The major periods of UN defensive action were also two -- the defense behind the NAKTONG in August and September of 1950 and the "fluid defense" of "rolling with the punch" during the CCF Spring Offensive of April to June 1951. Specific defensive actions not included in these periods are the 38th Regiment's and Turkish Brigade's defense of KUNU-RI 30 November - 1 December 1950, the defensive perimeter of X Corps around HUNGNAM in December of 1950, the 2d Division's defense of WONJU in January 1951, and the 23d Regiment's defense of CHIPYONG in February 1951.

Armor was employed in the defense of the NAKTONG largely, in accordance with the doctrine of tanks supporting infantry in the sustained defense. Initially their primary role was that of antitank protection.

After November of 1950 the enemy tank threat was negligible, and armor employed in the line was primarily used in the role of close fire support against enemy infantry. It was in the periods of counterattack and counteroffensive, however, that armor was to contribute the most to UN defensive operations.

It was found after the first CCF Intervention and again after the CCF Spring Offensive that the logistical inadequacy of the Chinese was such that the enemy offensives lost momentum rapidly. Once the enemy attack had spent itself, an immediate counteroffensive exploited to the fullest his weakened logistical and tactical potential. The use of armored task forces as the spearheads of a general counteroffensive produced excellent results, making best use of armor's mobility and shock action.

It might be added here that many situations existed in which armor was not suitable for use as a local counterattack force. This was particularly true in extremely mountainous terrain, where steep slopes prevented armor from reaching the infantry positions. Armor could and did, however, play an important role in such terrain by occupying blocking positions.

#### Offense

One of the greatest difficulties encountered in offensive action was a tendency to move forward too fast and not properly "digest" the ground taken. This is particularly applicable to the period of the UN offensive, 16 September to 2 November 1950,



when major elements of the North Korean army were bypassed and remained behind the UN lines to harass the lines of communications.

A failure to maintain proper lateral security in the offensive was often evident, as the failure of Operation Ripper shows.

In the offensive, armor was subject to the same two faults as were all ground units -- a too rapid advance, and failure to maintain lateral security. The armor protection of the tank and its great firepower and mobility enabled it to run through some enemy positions, through which the attached infantry could not follow. Task Force CROMBEZ provides an excellent example of this. It was also possible for the tanks to fight their way back through such positions, but in order to hold on to the gains made by the armor it was necessary for the infantry to fight their way up to the tanks.

In extremely mountainous terrain which required the infantry to move along steep ridge lines, tanks were able to deliver very effective fire support by moving along the valleys. <sup>When</sup> If these tanks were accompanied by infantry and tied in with the infantry perimeter at night, losses to the tanks were minimized.

#### Armored Raids and Reconnaissances in Force

The use of the reinforced tank battalion in a raid or reconnaissance in force achieved excellent results. When the tanks operated during the daylight and returned before darkness to be

tied into the infantry perimeter, tank losses were minimized. The continued use of armored raids against the same objective and using the same route, of course, rapidly loses its effect and serves to invite ambush. ~~As has been mentioned,~~ The tank raids of Company B, 70th Tank Battalion in the TABU-DONG area were quickly brought to a halt by enemy mine-fields.

Armored reconnaissances in force have the additional advantage that, once having established that the enemy is withdrawing, they can be pushed out to form the spearhead of a general counter-offensive.

#### Night Operations

Night operations were conducted effectively, as the 73d Tank Battalion's capture of SUWON demonstrates. The confusion existing in that particular operation, however, could have been minimized by <sup>providing</sup> adequate time for prior training and coordination with the attached infantry.

It is <sup>believed</sup> ~~felt~~ that armored night operations can be conducted ~~the~~ most successfully and with the fewest casualties by planning the operation so that the tanks return to their base or continue moving until daylight. Seizure and consolidation of an objective during darkness is difficult for armored units.

#### Exploitation

Exploitation by armored units was highly desirable and effective when the situation permitted. Exploitation against a

numerically superior enemy, however, is subject to more care, <sup>and caution</sup> in execution than ~~is present~~ doctrine, <sup>dictated.</sup> The breakout from the PUSAN Perimeter is an excellent example of the dangers inherent in excessive by-passing of resistance during the exploitation. It is felt that no major resistance should be by-passed; light resistance should be by-passed with caution and a following <sup>up</sup> force designated to reduce it.

The opportunity for exploitation must actually exist in fact, rather than in the mind of the commander. Initial success may mean only that the enemy is absorbing the exploiting force to destroy it in <sup>his</sup> the rear. Although not an armored action, the prime example of a poorly timed exploitation in Korea was the abortive push to the YALU by X Corps.

In difficult terrain, destruction or capture of enemy supply and communications centers are better missions for armor than are the destruction or encirclement of personnel. As an example of the ability of the enemy to escape encirclement in difficult terrain, most of the 60,000 enemy cut off by the capture of HWACHON and INJE in May 1951 managed to escape over the hills.

To be really successful, an exploitation by armor should be followed up immediately by infantry units and by a general advance of the line as soon as possible. The great offensive capabilities of armor enable it to take objectives which its lesser

defensive capabilities do not allow it to keep. This was particularly true against an enemy who had little armor of his own, and inadequate antitank means.

The extensive use of army aircraft <sup>to</sup> the flanks of exploiting armored columns was an excellent means of gaining flank security. The nature of the terrain in Korea makes this flank security very difficult to obtain by any other means, as routes of advance normally lay down valleys dominated on either side by ridges inaccessible to vehicles.

To accomplish its mission properly during the exploitation, artillery accompanying armor should be self-propelled. The mounting of infantry in armored personnel carriers was highly desirable, as the successful operation of the 6th Tank Battalion in its link-up with the airborne showed. In direct contrast to the success of this operation, one may consider the losses among the tank-borne infantry of Task Force CROMBEZ and the truck-borne infantry accompanying the first action of the 89th Tank Battalion in August 1950.

Although armored infantry would have been desirable in many cases, there was not a constant need for them. Therefore, it is <sup>believed</sup> ~~felt~~ that consideration should be given to establishing an Armored Personnel Carrier Company <sup>just</sup> at corps or army level, to function as a transportation pool for foot infantry, in much the ~~same manner as a truck company.~~ This would <sup>have</sup> ~~enable~~ higher level

commanders to mechanize foot infantry to accompany armored units  
for special missions, particularly exploitation operations *in Korea.*

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