

GALAHAD NEWSLETTER

For Korean War Veterans of the 224th Infantry Regiment

Volume 3, Number 1, February 1996

KUMSONG, THE GHOST CITY

by Sgt. Joe Schwaller, Monterey Park, CA

*"There's a place to dance
In your combat pants,
--And a place to forget the fight;
There's gals galore
And no sign of war*

*In Kumsong, Saturday night,
It's down the line,
Don't step on the mine,
Far from the battle's din,
Where you can jig
To the phantom music
Of Ching --and his violin"*

Though the above ballad was written about Kumsong, 3 miles west of Chungbangp'yong, it fitted many Korean towns and villages trapped in "No Man's Land" all across the Korean peninsula "where, except for the rats, the only living beings who ever walk the streets are the patrols that move cautiously among the ruins late at night and depart silently before dawn." (Los Angeles Times, 14 Mar 52)

OPERATION HEADLINER



Chungbangp'yong, early February 1952

Picture from slides contributed by Jay Briscoe, Company L

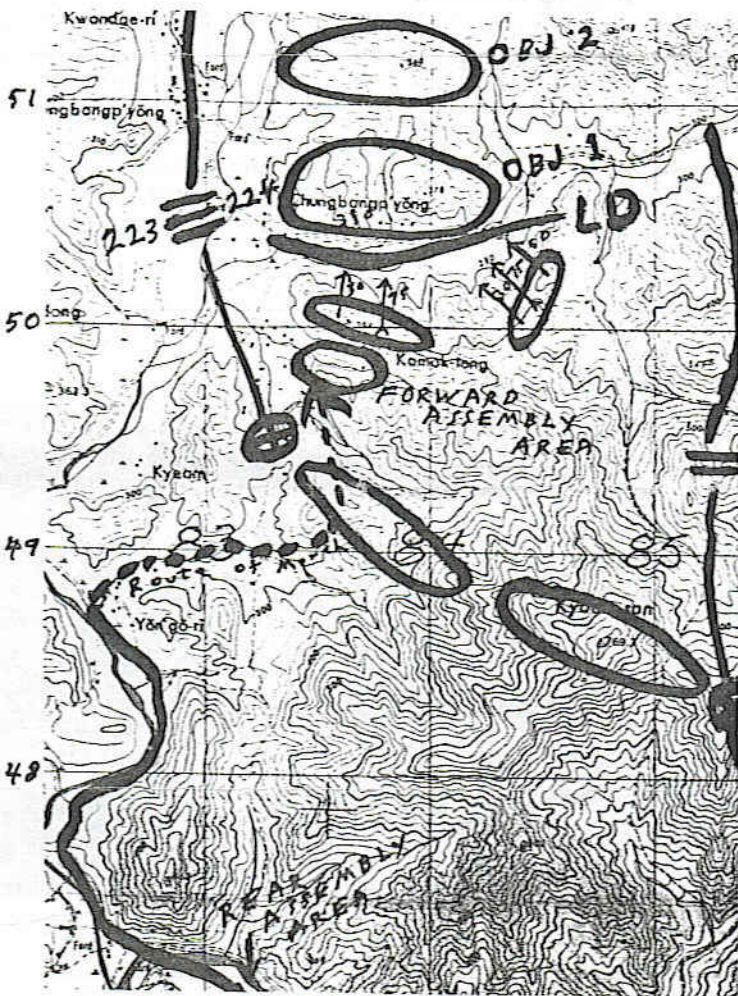
SITUATION

The 224th Infantry Regiment set sail from Yokohama, Japan, mid-morning of 31 Jan 1952 and arrived at Inchon, Korea, on 3 Feb 52. The troops were taken ashore by LCIs (Landing Craft, Infantry) and moved by train to Camp Kaiser, a tent city near Chun Chon. Upon arrival in Korea, the Regiment had a strength of 3254 personnel: 112 officers, 19 warrant officers, and 3123 enlisted men. Issue of parkas and rubber insulated boots began on 5 Feb. Advance parties moved on line on the 4th and replacement of the 5th RCT (Regimental Combat Team) was completed on 10 Feb, the

date that the 224th Infantry Regiment assumed command of their sector along the Missouri Line of Defense east of Kumsong-ni. Patrols were dispatched immediately.

Operation "Clam Up" went into effect at 1800 hours on the 10th of October. This operation was intended to draw the enemy out by withholding all fire and offensive actions. At 1400 hours on the 15th of February, "Clam Up" was terminated by a "Turkey Shoot," with all weapons firing simultaneously on enemy positions.

Regimental Operations Plan 3 was issued on 12 Feb ordering the 3rd Battalion to conduct a company-supported raid on 18 Feb. Units directly supporting the raiding company were elements of the Tank Company and Company M, a platoon of the Heavy Mortar (4.2-in) Company, one platoon of Company E, the 2d Platoon of Battery C of the 140th AAA AW Battalion, and engineers from Company D of the 578th Engineer Battalion. Other supporting units, including Division Artillery, were in direct or general support of the battalion. Mission of Company L, the assaulting company, was to destroy enemy forces and positions, capture PWs, and return to the MLR. On 16-17 Feb, the 2nd Battalion relieved the 3rd Battalion on line and the 3rd Battalion went into Regimental reserve.



3rd Battalion Operations Plan 1 Copies by Col Bruce Paul and Harry Talv

Facing the 224th Regiment were two battalions, plus part of another, of the 103rd CCF (Chinese Communist) Regiment of the 35th Division. Enemy strength on objectives was unknown. However, on the morning of 15 Feb smoke was observed at two locations just north of the objective area. Shortly after noon on 16 Feb, a 3rd Battalion patrol reported many bunkers and trenches on Hill 378, part of Love

Company's first objective: At 0258 hours on 17 Feb, a report was received from the 223rd Regiment, which was on the 224th Regiment's left flank, that they had observed 100 enemy on the western slope of Hill 394, the hill behind which Company L's forward assembly area was plotted. In reply, Cpt Malandres, F Company Commander, immediately requested and received approval for a concentration on the site that was planned for Company L's forward assembly area.

PREPARATION

The 980th Field Artillery commenced its preparatory and supporting fire plan five days before the attack. Commitments were obtained for support from all other Divarty batteries plus two Corps artillery units. One 4.2-in mortar was moved forward to coordinates CT 833490 at 1400 hours on the day before the operation to zero on targets and concentrations for use during the next day's operation. The rest of the 2nd platoon of the 224th Heavy Mortar Platoon was moved forward at 1800 hours on the 17th.

Ten minutes prior to H hour, all three batteries (two 105-mm howitzer batteries and one 155-mm howitzer battery) would fire two volleys each on objective 1. Five minutes prior to the attack, a similar barrage was scheduled to fire on objective 2. Beginning at H hour, all artillery units, including Corps artillery, were to fire on designated positions northeast and northwest of objective B.

One Forward Observer party was assigned to L Company, the attacking company, plus one to each the right rear and left rear of the attack. A liaison plane was designated to provide aerial observation. One demolition squad from Co D, 578th Engineer Battalion, was attached to each rifle platoon. Elements of the 2d platoon of Battery C, 140th AAA AW Battalion, with their Quad 50s, were attached to the Tank Company.

At 0830 hours on 16 Feb 1952, a briefing was held for all commanders of the 3rd Battalion who were taking part in Operation Headliner. At 1735 hours, Mike Company closed into the reserve area; Love Company at 1750 hours. And at 2120 hours, all units were notified of the drop in temperature.

At 1030 hours on 17 Feb, Maj Charles S. Dever, the 3rd Battalion Commander, presented the situation and plans for the upcoming operation. The rest of the day was spent readying the troops and assuring they knew their mission and how to respond to each new situation as it developed. Troop leaders, like Sfc Raymond C. Yesaluski, cautioned their squads to be careful and "take care of yourselves."

A LONG NIGHT...

Night fell and the troops were advised to get some rest. Rest? As Pfc Jay L. Briscoe recalls "Sleep had not come easy to many of us on that Sunday night of February 17th, 1952."

After all they had been on line just a little over a week and it was their first experience in an actual attack on hostile forces. As Jay recalls, **they** "were not so honored to be the first to pick a fight."

Sfc James R Shaffer, 1st Platoon, recalls that later in the evening "the platoon sergeants, assistant platoon sergeants and some of the company officers got together just to relax and unwind. I remember that Lt. Townsend and Lt. Inglesby were there. Someone produced a bottle of liquor and we toasted to everyone's health and good fortune for the following day. I believe most of us spent the rest of the evening writing letters. There was a lot of anxiety about what was to take place the next day. I remember it was difficult getting to sleep that night."

...BUT AN EARLY MORNING!

Finally morning came. And was it cold! The "official" low was 5 degrees Fahrenheit. And that light breeze didn't help. Breakfast was served at 0330 hours. Company L, commanded by Cpt John V. Wilts, and the attached engineers left their rear assembly area at CT 836467 by truck at 0415 hours. The troops detrucked about 15 minutes walk from the MLR and proceeded to the forward assembly area (CT 837498) without incident.

H-HOUR!!!

At 0645 hours, preparatory fires began falling on Objective 1 and the infantry platoons moved down and across the line of departure at 0700 hours as scheduled. The 3rd platoon, led by Lt James F. Inglesby, was on the right and was to move up the steep slopes of Hill 378 while hugging the left of the hill. Light mortar fire was received as the 3rd platoon moved across the open valley of Hill 378 in open squad column.

Starting up the hill, the platoon changed to single file. About half way up, Lt. Inglesby fanned the platoon out with the 3rd squad on the left, the 1st squad in the middle and the 2nd squad on the right.

Pfc Jay Briscoe, 3rd platoon, remembers well that "menacing pile of what seemed to be almost solid rock." "It was formed in somewhat of a U shape, with the open end facing us. The arm of the hill to our right ended in a steep, rounded slope with brush and evergreen trees and grasses lightly covering it. The arm to the left ended in a sheer cliff or outcropping of rock. Looking into the U we could see rocky slopes with scattered trees, and grass, and a trail leading into the center."

The 2nd platoon, led by Lt James M. Townsend, was the left attacking platoon. Upon reaching the line of departure, the platoon began receiving small arms fire as it moved across the valley and began ascending the finger of Hill 330. Lt Townsend deployed his 1st squad on the left portion of the forward slope. The 3rd squad followed the 1st squad and fanned out to clear the right portion of the hill when they reached the top.



Lt. Jim Townsend, 1951

The 1st platoon, led by MSgt Richard C. Dietz, had been designated the support platoon. It was to initially follow the 2nd platoon then move to the left in a flanking movement and clear the left finger of Hill 330. The platoon crossed the line of departure on schedule and moved toward their objective without incident. Soon after entering the valley between their objective and Hill 330, the platoon began receiving artillery fire. After the artillery fire eased, the platoon advanced up the finger.

The weapons platoon leader, Sfc James L. Rawding, attached 57-mm recoilless rifles to each attacking platoons. One 60-mm mortar was attached to the 1st platoon; the other two mortars and the mortar section leader accompanied the 3rd platoon. Sfc Rawding went with the command group.

The command section, including Cpt Wilts and 1st Sgt Bill Cathcart, followed the 3rd platoon across the valley and broke off at a position between Hills 378 and 330. They were quickly pinned down in the vicinity of coordinate 838506 by fire coming from the north, possibly from Hill 369.



Cpt Wilts

Picture by Phil Heppenstall

In the meantime, the Tank Company, commanded by Cpt Clarence J. Kreger, and the attached four sections of M16's (quad-50mm machine guns) from Battery C, 140th, commanded by

1st Lt Everett F. Whitney, had arrived at their pre-designated areas near the objective areas at 0700 hours. The 2nd platoon of tanks drove deep into the valley in front of Hill 378 with a squad of engineers clearing mines as they went. The second tank platoon also entered the valley and both platoons maneuvered while covering the slopes and crests with fire. They attempted to move up the slopes but found this impossible due to the ice and snow. The 3rd platoon of reinforced tankers moved to the left of the objective to fire up the valleys and draws. The 4th platoon remained in reserve and assisted the assault with covering fires.

Prior to the assault, Company M moved onto Hill 394 and cover the attack with their 30-cal heavy machine guns and 75-mm recoilless rifles. A rifle platoon from Company K accompanied them to clear and secure Hill 394. Company H also supported the assault from the vicinity of CT 845503 with their machine gun platoon, two 50 cal. machine guns and one 75-mm recoilless rifle.

"THE WHOLE FRONT SEEMED TO DISINTEGRATE!"

Immediately after the 3rd platoon fanned out, they were hit by heavy fire from mortars, artillery, machine guns and small arms. As they continue to crawl upward, they were hit by increasing fire from burp guns, artillery and mortar rounds and from hand grenades tossed by unseen hands just over the crest of the hill. Machine gun and mortar fire seemed to come from "Chalk Face" and just beyond. Since automatic weapon fire was coming from the right side of Hill 378, the 3rd platoon attempted to move left while climbing toward the hilltop. "A tremendous barrage of artillery suddenly hit in the vicinity of the center squad and when it lifted, the platoon continued inching around to the left." By this time, the 3rd platoon infantrymen were about ten yards below the

crest of the hill and started throwing fragmentation and white phosphorus grenades over the crest. But to no avail. The Chinese Communists just ducked into their holes and came out shooting and threw more grenades. Numerous casualties were suffered during these last actions, including Lt. Inglesby and the Engineer squad leader who were mortally wounded in the artillery barrage that hit the center squad. This same barrage also wounded Lt.



Lt. Inglesby, 1951

Picture by BG Cal Samples

Inglesby's radio operator, his medic, and two messengers. After Lt. Inglesby fell, Sfc William H. Jenks took charge of the 3rd platoon. Sfc Will T. Cross, who was with the left squad, was fatally hit by machine gun fire. Others were more fortunate, such as MSgt Vernon S. Evans whose carbine stock was busted by a burp gun round as MSgt Evans charged the hill.

The second platoon reached their initial objective on Hill 330 at 0730 hours. About this time, the 1st squad leader, SFC Raymond Mendoza, was hit by machine gun fire. The platoon continued up the finger under mortar fire that wounded several more men.

The 2nd platoon's advance was slowed somewhat because the 3rd platoon was pinned down. But as they advanced toward their second objective, the enemy fell back under heavy fire from 2nd platoon riflemen and gunners. By 1109 hours, the platoon had advanced to phase line 3, just 200 yards short of their 2d objective. At this point, Cpt Wilts directed Lt Townsend to hold up since the 3rd platoon was still pinned down short of their 1st objective.

In one of the exchanges between the 2nd platoon and the enemy, both Col Richardson and his radio operator, Pfc Lawrence M. Gold, were hit, Larry fatally, Col Richardson slightly wounded in the hand. Pfc Phil Heppenstall was nearby and Col Richardson began using his radio for contacts. Phil remembers receiving reports from the aerial observer that a large group of enemy troops was headed toward them. Col



Larry Gold, 1951

Picture by Milton Byer

Richardson soon after directed Cpt Wilts to withdraw his company.

The support platoon meanwhile had advanced to the reverse side of the finger leading off Hill 330 and commenced firing on enemy emplacements. Enemy small-arms and mortar fire

responded that wounded three men of the first platoon, including the platoon sergeant, MSgt Dietz. Sfc James R. Shaffer then took charge of the platoon. A 57-mm recoilless rifle was brought forward that fired four direct hits on an enemy bunker and the platoon continued forward.

OPERATION PLAN BONAPARTE

With the 3rd platoon unable to advance further onto their object and enemy forces closing in for a counterattack, Cpt Wilts initiated Operation Bonaparte thus ordering his platoons to withdraw. Under withering 76-mm cover fire by the tanks and other supporting forces, L Company began retracing its steps. The 3rd platoon, which had taken a defensive position to protect their wounded, began edging back down the slope with their casualties. 1st Sgt William D. Cathcart, Sfc Rawding and Cpl James D. Renfro noted the large number of 3rd platoon casualties and ascended the slopes to assist in evacuating them off Hill 378. At the bottom of the hill the platoon received a resupply of ammunition and took up positions to cover withdrawal of the other two platoons.

To aid evacuation of the casualties and treatment of the wounded, Cpt Charles F. Barnhart and 1st Lt. Donald Lusk set up an aid station at the foot of Hill 378. Cpt Barnhart received a shrapnel wound before returning to the MLR.

The 2nd platoon, which had penetrated much deeper into the enemy hills, began receiving enemy fire as they withdrew with their casualties. Col Richardson, who was with this platoon, helped by carrying the body of his radio operator down the icy, snow-packed trail. As Lt. Townsend reported in his after action report, Col Richardson's courage under fire was a great inspiration to everyone.

To help cover the withdrawal, Cpt Wilts increased artillery fire onto the hills above his troops. The tankers and attached Quad 50s received special praise for their support during the withdrawal as they moved in between Hills 330 and 378 providing covering fire and help. They were among the last to leave the battle area.

Sgt Gail J. Frampton, supply sergeant with the Tank Company, volunteered to man the bow gun of Sfc Kenneth Johnson's tank. He recalls their tank firing on enemy positions and receiving well-aimed white phosphorus rounds in return. But what he remembers best was their encounter with four or five GIs crouched in a shell crater as Sfc Johnson's tank was leaving the canyon heading back toward the MLR. Stopping to give aid, they "recognized the familiar face of Colonel Richardson...whom everyone in the regiment knew and respected. Here he was now looking up at our tank, virtually on top of him." Col Richardson had delayed returning to the MLR because of the wounded who were with him. The tank crew dropped their belly plate and all the wounded climbed inside. Sfc Johnson provided cover

with his 50 cal machine gun and was wounded in the forey.

Commenting on why Col Richardson had chose to accompany Love Company on this attack, one Regimental Headquarters Company veteran recalls overhearing Col Richardson discuss the operation with Gen Hudelson several days before the attack. Col Richardson had serious concerns about the mission. But when the Division Commander would not relent, Col Richardson said he knew it was going to be rough and felt compelled to accompany his troops.

Withdrawal of the 1st platoon was also eased by the covering fires of the Quad 50s and tanks. But just as they started up the slope toward the saddle near Hill 394, they came under fire from the enemy on Hill 378. Cpl. Stanley J. Ejzak immediately set up his machine gun and returned the fire, helping his platoon to continue safely through the saddle.

The company withdrew to its former assembly area behind Hill 394. Cpt Wilts was the last to withdraw as he cleared the MLR at 1307 hours.

"...REFLECTS GREAT CREDIT..."

The number of those losing their lives in this operation was unually small considering the odds that faced Love Company so soon after they had arrived on line and for most, the first time they had faced a hostile enemy. And as one sergeant reported, the slopes of those hills were tough enough just to climb. "But, to do it with an enemy waiting at the top of those steep slopes covered with ice and snow, it became an impossible task." Nonetheless, it was tragic for 1st Lt James Inglesby, SFC Will T. Cross, and SFC Raymond Mendoza who lost their lives - and for their loved ones and friends. In addition, Pfc Lawrence M. Gold from Regimental Headquarters Company (Colonel Recharadson's radio operator), two from Co M, and one engineer were killed in this action.

The result would have been much different if not for the bravery of many. This heroism is mentioned often in the after action reports, such as Cpt Wilt's: "Sgt Jenks the platoon sergeant stayed with his platoon leader until he the lieutenant was brought down," "Sgt Cathcart made four trips up the hill under small arms fire and under hand grenade, artillery, and mortar fire to carry five wounded men down the hill," "Sgt Ranney, our medic with utter disregard of his own life was all over the hill slopes looking for wounded and treated the wounded...until he himself was wounded in the chest...even then he wanted to go back up to help."

Others by Lt Townsend: "Sgt Melvin a medic assigned to my platoon faced great personal danger...in his task to treat the wounded...placed himself in exposed areas to properly care for the wounded" and "Sgt Mendoza...stood in the open until all his men were safely removed...until he was hit and I think killed." And there was similar praise for Lt Mortiki (Cpt Wilt's FO), Pfc DeVoir, SFC Yesaluski, Cpl S. Ejzak, medic

For their actions of bravery many received awards including our nation's second highest award. 1st Sgt Bill Cathcart was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross; Lt James Inglesby (posthumously), Col James Richardson, Lt. Jim Townsend, SFC Kenneth V. Johnson, and medic Sgt Carl M. Melvin received the Silver Star; and Pfc Phil Heppenstall was awarded the Bronze Star.



1st Sgt Bill Cathcart, 1951

Picture by Phil Heppenstall
The Purple Heart was awarded to the following Love Company personnel who were wounded in action: MSgt Richard C. Dietz, MSgt Vernon S. Evans, Sfc Richard L. Adams, Sfc Harry T. Case, Sgt Douglas G. Ranney, Sgt Floyd H. Robinson, Sgt Paul J. Toberty, Cpl Ronald L. Brown, Cpl Vernon Cude, Cpl Homer J. Keeslar, Cpl Richard G. Levario, Cpl Joe P. Lozano, Cpl Dale D. Marks, Cpl Mike Villa, Pfc William J. Barczak, Pfc Jay L. Briscoe, Pfc Rene J. Duclose, Pfc James J. Egan, Pfc Anthony J. Helenek, Pfc Howard P. Heppenstall, Pfc William J. Karas, Pfc Richard G. Love, Pfc Walter Rebhun, Pfc Malachy Ryan, Pfc John E. Schultz, Pfc Lorry L. Wise, and Pvt John D. McCormick. In addition, Col James L. Richardson, Cpt Charles F. Barnhart and Pfc Earl P. Minor of the 3rd Battalion Headquarters, Sfc Kenneth V. Johnson of the Tank Company, Cpl Richard Berdensen and three other men of Mike Company, medic Pfc Raymond R. Parker, four engineers, and one man of Battery C, 140th AAA, were wounded and received the Purple Heart.

Based on Operations Report No 9, the enemy suffered 27 KIA plus estimates of an additional 46 KIA and 65 WIA. And for those who appreciate numbers, Col Richardson's after action report states that about 129,900 30-cal rounds were expended, 100,700 rounds of 50 cal., 147 recoilless rifle rounds, 1275 mortar rounds, 489 76mm gun rounds, 472 hand grenades, and 3394 artillery rounds.

CREDITS

Much of the information for the above came from after action reports, operation plans and reports, daily journals, and other official reports and from newspaper articles of the period. I am especially indebted to the many who sent pictures and memories of those events that happened forty-four years ago.

However, the story is not complete. I've listed everyone whose awards were listed in my sources but there were probably more - for Purple Hearts, Bronze Stars, and perhaps Silver Stars. Please let me know if I have missed anyone. Please also send the names of those wounded and those receiving awards from the units that supported

REUNION - REUNION - REUNION - REUNION!!!!

We've got a time and place now. Looks like we'll be meeting the first week of October 1996 in Ontario, CA - at the Marriott. In the heart of America's funland. Just miles from Disneyland, Hollywood, the Pacific Ocean, and so much more. Though we'll be setting up an agenda you will enjoy, we can't include everything. So why not plan your annual vacation in conjunction with our reunion? With the low rate you'll pay at the Marriott, you may want to use it as the hub for many sightseeing excursions throughout Southern California before or after the reunion - or both.

But the best reason to attend the reunion is to renew old friendships, retell war stories, share photos and memorabilia of old, and in general have a great time with your old, and new, friends. Providing the backdrop, we are scheduling hospitality lounges, a delicious barbeque, a memorable banquet, and more. Don Fiedler, our reunion commander, is working on guests and entertainers who will make you want to come back for more. So close to Hollywood and Palm Springs, what better sources of talent?

The reunion will culminate with the semi-formal banquet on Saturday night with some excellent entertainment, interesting guests, a mouth-watering dinner, and dance music to take you back to those evenings in the early fifties. Though most of the music will be on the slower side - cause we are a bit older, there'll be some faster music for the high-steppers too.

So, be sure to block off that week, from October 2nd thru the 6th, for the week of a lifetime! In our next newsletter, I'll be including complete information how you can make reservations for this great gala.