

THE HISTORY OF THE 2ND RANGER COMPANY

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Military History

by

VICTOR J. BOND, LTC, USA
B.S, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1977
M.A., Webster University, St. Louis, Missouri, 1993

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THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

Name of Candidate: Lieutenant Colonel Victor J. Bond

Thesis Title: The History of the 2nd Ranger Company

Approved by:

_____, Thesis Committee Chairman
Lieutenant Colonel Versalle F. Washington, Ph.D.

_____, Member
Lieutenant Colonel Taylor V. Beattie, M.A.

_____, Member
Mr. William M. Connor, M.A.

Accepted this 6th day of June 2003 by:

_____, Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Philip J. Brookes, Ph.D.

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ABSTRACT

THE HISTORY OF THE 2ND RANGER COMPANY, by LTC Victor J. Bond
57 pages.

The purpose of this research project is to uncover the history of the 2nd Ranger Company and to determine the impact segregation had on the selection, training, and combat operations of the 2nd Ranger Company. Subordinate questions are: What effect did black officers commanding black soldiers have on unit cohesion? How did leadership, training, and leader development contribute to successful combat operations? What role did the perception of inferiority, unwillingness to fight, and racial discrimination have on training, support, and combat operations? What role did segregation in the society play on integration of the Army in Korea?

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Throughout American history, blacks served in every war and conflict of the United States, individually and in units. Black combat units have generally had to fight two wars. The primary battle focused on defeating the country's identified enemy. The enormous resources of the United States backed this fight. The other battle focused on destroying the racial stereotypes of inferiority and unwillingness to fight. The military decided to organize, train, and employ black combat units because of military necessity, combined with economic and social pressures on the government. The society at large set the parameters for white supremacy. It exercised this belief primarily through the efforts of individual soldiers and officers, which prevented acceptance of these combat units into the military.

By the 1950s, these societal stereotypes were based upon racial discrimination backed by federal, state, and local laws; military policies; and over 200 years of history. Many black combat units proved themselves on the field of combat: the battles of Port Hudson, Milliken's Bend, and Fort Wagner in the Civil War;¹ Buffalo soldiers during the Indian Campaigns; Battle of San Juan Hill in the Spanish-American War; fighting under French control in Meuse-Argonne offensive during World War I; air and ground actions in both the European and Pacific Theaters of War during World War II.² However, the history of the United States has omitted their contributions, failed to recognize their service, and ignored their courageous sacrifices.

Extensive research has been conducted on the 24th Infantry Regiment, a segregated unit with white officers that fought in the Korean War. There has been very little research

on the 2nd Ranger Company, attached to the 7th Infantry Division, which also fought in the Korean War. The 2nd Ranger Company was the first and only volunteer, segregated, black Airborne Ranger unit commanded by black officers, which served with distinction in the Korean War from 6 October 1950 until 1 August 1951. To date, there has not been written a definitive source on the history of the 2nd Ranger Company.

The purpose of this research project is to uncover the history of the 2nd Ranger Company and to determine the impact segregation had on the selection, training, and combat operations of the 2nd Ranger Company. Subordinate questions are: What effect did black officers commanding black soldiers have on unit cohesion? How did leadership, training, and leader development contribute to successful combat operations? What role did the perception of inferiority, unwillingness to fight, and racial discrimination have on training, support, and combat operations? What role did segregation in the society play on integration of the Army in Korea?

The answers to the questions are important in a historical and social context because the 2nd Ranger Company, an elite segregated unit, commanded by black officers, distinguished itself in combat, yet there is hardly any recognition of their service. The 24th Infantry Regiment, also a segregated unit, commanded by white officers, was vilified for their service in combat, but the actions of their white officers were not questioned. The commander is responsible for everything the unit does or fails to do. The Army inactivated the 24th Infantry Regiment and ended its lineage during the Korean War.³ Rumor can ruin the morale and the command climate of a unit. Rumor based upon racial stereotypes not only destroys that unit, but casts doubt on the capability of an entire race. Examining the effects of segregation on combat operations

during the Korean War has valuable lessons for training and leader development as the Army prepares for Joint and Combined Warfare in the 21st Century.

Black soldiers fought in the nation's wars beginning with the Revolutionary War and continuing to present day Global War on Terrorism. The Army transformed itself from a local militia force in the 18th Century, through a large conscript force in the 20th Century, to a professional, volunteer force with global responsibilities in the 21st Century. Black soldiers answered the call in national emergencies and fought courageously when needed, but after the guns grew silent their services were no longer required. The military had a policy of reject-recruit-reject. It would reject black soldiers at the start of a war, recruit them due to manpower shortages, and reject them once the war was over. The start of the volunteer force in the 1970s put an end to the reject-recruit-reject cycle.

The defeat of America's foes did not gain blacks acceptance in the military. Besides fighting a wartime enemy, Black Americans faced a second and far more dangerous foe--racism, that sharply restricted their opportunities both within the armed services and civil society as well. The accomplishments of black soldiers in combat disappeared when viewed through the prism of racial discrimination.

The World War II Army numbered six million men and nearly 100 superbly equipped and trained divisions. When the war was over the nation wanted to "bring the boys home." No one wanted to maintain a large postwar Army sustained by the draft. The Army dwindled down to 530,000 men and was in a deplorable state of readiness.⁴ The only division remotely considered combat ready was the 82nd Airborne Division. The Army gutted its forces from around the world to make troops available for

occupation duty in Germany and Japan. It also built and maintained a reserve in the United States. By 1948, reductions forced units to reduce their strength by a third. Most regiments fielded two battalions instead of three. Artillery battalions fielded two firing batteries instead of three. Infantry battalions had two companies instead of three. The need to fill replacements for the Army was so severe that the length of basic training dropped from a high of sixteen weeks during World War II to eight weeks. Soldiers lacked the essential training needed to develop the combat skills required to conduct warfare and arrived at their new units unprepared and untrained. The post war Army did not have enough resources available for the gaining unit to correct critical shortfalls in basic training. Personnel shortages required the resources of an entire regiment to have sufficient soldiers available to conduct company or battalion sized training. As a result of the reductions, the occupation forces in Japan were not prepared to respond to an emergency in Korea.⁵

Black military service in World War II became the catalyst to expand the civil rights movement⁶ in the United States and end segregation in the military. The nation's military and civil rights leaders agreed that despite considerable wartime improvement, the racial policies of the Services were inadequate to handle the increased number of blacks in the military and the efficient operation and management of the Armed Services. Dissatisfaction with current military policies was a lightning rod for a more active and powerful civil rights movement. However, the Services were comfortable with racial segregation or exclusion and insisted on a strict examination of the wartime performance of segregated units and ignored the effects of segregation. The civil rights leaders saw the military as a vehicle to improve social justice and focused on the effects

of segregation and ignored the units' wartime performance.⁷ Neither group could understand the other's concern. This lack of understanding was the basis for conflict in the future.

World War II changed the economic conditions of many blacks and increased the power of civil rights. By 1940 almost 50 percent of all blacks lived in urban areas.⁸ As the demand for labor increased during the war, more blacks moved to the cities for jobs in the expanding defense industry. In Los Angeles, more than 1,000 blacks a month moved to the city during the war. Detroit, San Francisco, and Seattle experienced similar influxes. The mass migration to cities in the north and west had a profound effect on race relations in the country. Many blacks escaped a system of strict racial discrimination and Jim Crow laws, which had enforced legalized segregation on them for generations. Blacks moved to a relatively better location, where they had the right to vote and the reasonable protection of the law and the benefits of law enforcement. The cities also provided the black immigrants the opportunity for better schooling, which improved their ability to find employment. The number of skilled craftsmen, foremen, and semi-skilled laborers increased from 500,000 to 1,000,000 during the war. The number of blacks employed by the federal government rose from 20,000 to 600,000. The wartime expansion of the economy provided black workers with the experience and skills necessary to compete in the post war economy.⁹

Along with better pay, living conditions, and food, blacks in the military gained new experiences. They learned organizational skills, discipline, and structure. Blacks recognized an opportunity awaited those who had the courage to take advantage of their new skills in the post war industrial economy. Most importantly, the veterans learned

that they could change their political and economic position; their situation before the war did not have to remain the same after the war. Suddenly, the idea of racial equality was more than a dream. Black veterans could make it a reality and refused to accept the previous status quo.¹⁰

The Isaac Woodard incident symbolized the status of race relations at the end of World War II. Woodard was a recently discharged Army sergeant who had just completed three years of service, including eighteen months in the South Pacific. He boarded a bus at Fort Gordon, Georgia, to travel to his home in North Carolina, still dressed in his Army uniform. At a stop in South Carolina, the bus driver cursed at him for taking so long to use the “colored” bathroom. The driver asked the police to arrest Woodard for drunkenness at the next stop. Although Sergeant Woodard didn’t drink, the police arrested him and hit him with a billy club in the eye. He stayed in jail overnight and did not receive medical treatment for his injury. Sergeant Woodard was fined \$50 and released. His injury was so severe that by the time he arrived at an Army hospital in Spartanburg, South Carolina the doctors found the cornea in his eyes so badly damaged he was legally blind. Civil rights groups used the media to publicize Sergeant Woodard’s case. The country was outraged, providing him sympathy, and support. His treatment appalled Americans in the North as well as the South. The brutality inflicted on Sergeant Woodard influenced the mindset of a politician from Missouri who had just succeeded to the Presidency after the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1945. Harry S. Truman was shocked by the Woodard incident. He remarked “My God! I did not know it was as terrible as that. We’ve got to do something.”¹¹ The new President later put his shock into

action. President Truman signed Executive Order 9981 on 26 July 1948, which required the Armed Services to integrate as rapidly as possible.¹²

On Sunday, 24 June 1950 at 0400 hours, the North Korean People's Army (NKPA) and Border Constabulary began the invasion of the Republic of Korea (ROK). The invading force numbered about 135,000 men in seven infantry divisions, a tank brigade, an independent infantry regiment, a motorcycle regiment, three reserve divisions, and five border constabulary brigades. The defending force numbered 98,000 men in eight infantry divisions.¹³ The NKPA overwhelmed the ROK defenses and were able to infiltrate positions, surround them, and destroy isolated units. The NKPA continued this tactic as they advanced towards the south with the retreating ROK forces.

The United States requested a meeting of the United Nations Security Council six hours after the invasion. The Security Council recognized the South Korean government as the only legitimate government and demanded North Korea withdraw its forces immediately. The Council also asked all member nations not to provide support to North Korea. On 27 June 1950, the United Nations (UN) resolution recommended member nations to provide support as needed to repel the North Korean attack and restore international peace and security. The Soviet Union, who had veto power, was deliberately absent from both meetings. President Truman authorized General MacArthur to deploy ground forces to South Korea; establish a naval blockade of the entire Korean coast; and permitted the Air Force to conduct attacks at selected targets in North Korea.¹⁴

The first American ground force to enter combat against the NKPA was Task Force Smith, on 5 July 1950. The soldiers had high morale and they believed once the

North Koreans saw the Americans they would break and run away. However, high morale was not a substitute for readiness. High morale would not offset the lack of personnel, ammunition, realistic training, and substandard equipment. The NKPA smashed through Task Force Smith in a few hours. The resulting action left 185 men killed, wounded, or missing. Some men broke and ran under the attack, abandoning weapons and equipment. The first American defeat had a deep psychological impact. It planted doubt in the minds of soldiers about the adequacy of American tactics and weapons.¹⁵ Into this conflict, the United States would place its integrating Armed Forces testing the ideals of racial equality against the harsh realities of war (see Korean Map).

¹ Joseph T. Glatthar, *Forged in Battle: The Civil War Alliance of Black Soldiers and White Officers* (New York: The Free Press, 1990), 121-153.

² Bernard C. Nalty, *Strength For The Fight: A History of Black Americans in the Military* (New York: The Free Press, 1986), 54-183.

³ William T. Bowers, *Black Soldier, White Army: The 24th Infantry Regiment in Korea* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1996).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Morris J. MacGregor, *Integration of the Armed Forces* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1981), 122.

⁶ Ibid., 122.

⁷ Ibid., 124.

⁸ Ibid., 125.

⁹ Ibid., 125.

¹⁰ Bernard C. Nalty, *Strength For The Fight: A History of Black Americans in the Military* (New York: The Free Press, 1986), 204-207.

¹¹ Ibid., 242.

¹² Roy E. Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1986), 19.

¹³ Department of Army. *Korea 1950* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1997), 10-11.

¹⁴ Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War: America in Korea 1950-1953* (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 101-103.

¹⁵ Department of Army. *Korea 1950* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1997), 13-20.

CHAPTER 2

ORGANIZATION, SELECTION, AND TRAINING

The NKPA rapidly advanced towards the south by using swift armor and infantry attacks coordinated with actions of specially trained guerrilla units. These units wore civilian clothes in order to blend in with the local populace. The guerrillas hid their weapons and ammunition in native carts as they moved with the refugees. They quickly moved around the flanks and to the rear of South Korean and American units to establish ambushes and make attacks on rear areas. Infiltration was the primary means of movement for these guerrilla units. Infiltration, as defined in FM 3-90 is “a form of maneuver in which an attacking force conducts undetected movement through or into an area occupied by enemy forces to occupy a position of advantage in the enemy rear while exposing only small elements to enemy defensive fires.”¹ The success of the enemy’s effective infiltration tactics required the development of an American unit with similar capabilities.

The Army Chief of Staff, General J. Lawton Collins and the Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Forrest P. Sherman went to Far East Command (FECOM) in Japan for a briefing and discussion on General MacArthur’s proposed plan for a landing at Inchon. He attended a briefing with the Eighth Army in Korea on 22 August 1950. Later he toured frontline positions and spoke with local commanders. The problem of enemy infiltration was a recurring issue with both commanders and staff. He learned of the effectiveness of infiltration tactics by small units of the NKPA. Upon his return to the United States, General Collins directed Major General Charles E. Bolte, Assistant Chief

of Staff, G-3 (Operations), to form “marauder companies” on an experimental basis. In a memo Collins wrote:

One of the lessons to be learned from the Korean fighting appears to be the fact the North Koreans have made successful use of small groups, trained, armed, and equipped for the specific purpose of infiltrating our lines and attacking command posts and artillery positions. During the latter stages of the war with Germany, the Germans developed similar units. The results obtained from such units warrant specific action to develop such units in the American Army.²

The Chief ordered the G-3 to establish one company-sized force per division. The marauder company’s mission was “to infiltrate through enemy lines to attack enemy command posts, artillery, tank parks, and key communication centers or facilities.”³ The marauder’s mission mirrored that of the special North Korean infiltration units. Each company was to be a mobile force of tough, dedicated warriors with a maximum strength of 100 men. Each company would have three platoons with three ten-men squads. The companies’ T/O&E authorized minimal administration and logistics personnel. Collins planned to man the companies with volunteers of high intelligence because operations behind the line required extremely capable and motivated personnel for mission success. Each man received an additional twenty percent incentive pay. Additionally, each man would receive demolitions training, cook his own food, and carry a light automatic weapon or 60 millimeter mortar. The final part of the memo authorized the G-3 to establish a training section under an outstanding young brigadier general or colonel at Fort Benning, Georgia to oversee the formation, training, organization, and evaluation of these units.⁴

This action memorandum from the G-3 went to the Army Staff, Office of the Chief Army Field Forces (similar to Forces Command today), and the Central

Intelligence Agency (CIA). On 6 September 1950, representatives met to implement General Collin's memo and to work out the details of the marauder companies. The result of the meeting designated the companies as Ranger companies instead of marauder companies. This decision enabled them to maintain the lineage of the Ranger Battalions from World War II. Four companies were authorized for training with one of them ready for deployment to Korea as soon as possible. All Rangers would be airborne qualified, not based on mission requirements, but because their elite status would be enhanced by the extra pay and the prestige of the Airborne Units in the Army.⁵ The 82nd Airborne Division became the unit designated to provide the first group of volunteers. ("The National Security Council (NSC) had given the CIA the responsibility for conducting covert operations beginning in 1947. Because some Ranger operations, especially those involving sabotage or strikes behind enemy lines, fell within the NSC's loose definition of covert operations, the CIA had a "need to know" about the Ranger Program.")⁶ General Collins personally selected Colonel John G. Van Houton to be in charge of the training section. He established the Ranger Training Center in the Harmony Church area at Fort Benning, Georgia to begin preparation of these companies for operations in Korea. The cadre consisted of men with extensive combat experience from the Ranger Battalions of World War II, 1st Special Service Force, Merrill's Marauders, and the Office of Strategic Services.⁷ The plan called for four companies to begin the initial training for six weeks with additional requirements for demolition and airborne training. The Army organized Ranger recruiting teams whose objective was to select personnel with an Army Category score above ninety and who had completed both basic training and airborne school.⁸ This decision allowed the team to select volunteers only from

airborne units in order to streamline the recruiting process. The recruiting team would select the officers and the officers would select their men. The recruiting team selected 300 volunteers for the Ranger companies. The first three Ranger companies were white. Their reporting date was 1 October 1950 to Fort Benning, Georgia.⁹

However, unlike previous policies for the selection of specialized units, the Army authorized the Ranger recruiting team to select black volunteers for the Ranger program. Despite the provisions of Executive Order 9981, the Army decided to organize the black soldiers into their own company.¹⁰ The team went to Spring Lake, North Carolina, which housed the 82nd Airborne Division's segregated 3rd Battalion 505th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 758th Tank Battalion, and 80th Anti-Aircraft Battalion.¹¹ The infantry regiment integrated into the 82nd Airborne Division from the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion ("Triple Nickels"), the first and only all-black airborne battalion in the Army. After World War II, many units were scheduled for deactivation. The "Triple Nickels" would have been deactivated if it had not been for the actions of Lieutenant General James M. Gavin, the progressive and dynamic Commanding General of the 82nd Airborne Division. He integrated the "Triple Nickels" into the 82nd Airborne Division in 1947, a year before Truman signed Executive Order 9981 on 26 July 1948.¹²

Most of these enlisted volunteers joined the Army after high school near the end of WWII. Most of them served in the "Triple Nickels" and some were combat veterans of WWII. All the officers had been enlisted men during World War II and attended Officer Candidate School prior to assignment with the "Triple Nickels" or the 3rd Battalion 505th Airborne Infantry Regiment. The five officers selected by the Ranger recruiting team were exceptional leaders in the Army. First Lieutenant Warren E. Allen, Company

Commander, served in the Middle East during WWII. He also served in a cold weather climate and was the primary instructor for bayonet training at Fort McClellan Alabama. First Lieutenant James C. Queen, Executive Officer, served in the Aleutian Islands during WW II, and was a tactics instructor at Fort McClellan, Alabama. First Lieutenant Vincent Wilburn, a former Cavalry Sergeant Major, served in North Africa during WWII. First Lieutenant Bernard B. Pryor, had been an engineer first sergeant, serving in the China-Burma-India Theater during WWII. Second Lieutenant Albert Cliete was a quartermaster sergeant in Korea during WWII. He returned from Korea to the 3rd Battalion 505th Airborne Infantry Regiment. Two other officers joined the unit in Korea. First Lieutenant Antonio M. Anthony, received a battlefield commission with the 92nd Infantry Division in Italy during WWII. Sergeant First Class James E. Freeman, an original member, received a battlefield commission in Korea with the 2nd Ranger Company.¹³

The officers possessed a thorough knowledge and understanding of all the men they chose. They knew who were the hard workers and had the intestinal fortitude to fight through adversity and accomplish the objective at hand. These men worked together to achieve high standards of tactical and technical proficiency. The 3rd Battalion, 505th Airborne Infantry Regiment, had high morale because it earned the honor of representing the 82nd Airborne Division at a demonstration exercise for the Army War College to showcase new “Combined Arms” tactics.¹⁴ The recruiting team selected 139 volunteers (5 officers and 134 enlisted men).¹⁵ The company’s reporting date was 6 October 1950 to Fort Benning, Georgia.

Initially, the black soldiers were designated the 4th Ranger Company. However, the Army changed its designation to the 2nd Ranger Company by the completion of

training to preclude charges of racial discrimination.¹⁶ The 2nd Ranger Company prepared for combat operations with officers and men who understood and respected each other. They had already developed the bonds of trust and teamwork by successfully completing the rites of passage for airborne school and initiation into the 82nd Airborne Division. Ranger training and combat would only strengthen those bonds.

The 2nd Ranger Company began training with the 1st, 3rd, and 4th Ranger Companies on 9 October 1950. The company quickly made up the lost week of training.¹⁷ They also had to overcome the racial stereotypes and perception of inferiority common in society and the Army at that time. The men of the 2nd Ranger Company were determined to prove black soldiers were just as good as the white soldiers in the other companies. The 2nd Ranger Company volunteers felt that black men deserved the right to fight in elite units. The Army denied The Triple Nickels an opportunity for combat during WWII. These volunteers sought to bring honor and enhance the stature of Black paratroopers by patriotic service within an elite Ranger unit in Korea.¹⁸

The company conducted hard training in patrolling, demolitions, land navigation, first aid, weapons proficiency, adjustment of indirect fire, raids and ambushes, survival, combat in cities, small boat operations, squad, platoon and company operations. The weapons training received on the use and employment of the Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) paid significant dividends during combat in Korea. A standard infantry company was authorized nine BARs for organic fire support. However, the Ranger company was authorized eighteen BARs which provided overwhelming, fire support in close combat with the enemy. The Ranger's mastery and orchestration of coordinated fires between the BARs and their light machine guns was the critical element between life and death in a

fire fight.¹⁹ The four Ranger companies graduated in November 1950. The 1st Ranger Company immediately departed by air to Korea. The 3rd Ranger Company was temporarily held back to become the training cadre for the next cycle of Ranger training. The 2nd and 4th Ranger Companies were scheduled to depart by train traveling cross country to their port of embarkation in California.²⁰

The Rangers had great respect for each other; skin color didn't matter because they had all completed the same tasks under the same miserable conditions. The Rangers completed another rite of passage, which helped cement unit cohesion. They referred to each other as "Ranger" plus last name instead of their rank. Finally, Ranger units were back in the United States Army.

¹ FM 3-90, *Tactics* (Washington DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, 2001) 3-19.

² David W. Hogan, Jr. *Raiders or Elite Infantry: The Changing Role of the U.S. Army's Rangers from Dieppe to Grenada* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1992), 106-107; and Dr. David R. Gray, Ph.D. *Black and Gold Warriors: US Army Rangers During The Korean War* (Michigan: University Microfilms International, 1992), 46-48.

³ U.S. Army. Operations. General Decimal File, 1950-1952, 322 Ranger Record Group 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ David W. Hogan, *Raiders or Elite Infantry: The Changing Role of the U.S. Army's Rangers from Dieppe to Grenada* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1992), 108.

⁶ David R. Gray, Ph.D., *Black and Gold Warriors: US Army Rangers During The Korean War* (Michigan: University Microfilms International, 1992), 47.

⁷ David W. Hogan, Jr., *Raiders or Elite Infantry: The Changing Role of the U.S. Army's Rangers from Dieppe to Grenada* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1992), 108-109.

⁸ David R. Gray, Ph.D., *Black and Gold Warriors: US Army Rangers During The Korean War* (Michigan: University Microfilms International, 1992), 47-48.

⁹ Ibid., 61.

¹⁰ Ibid., 61.

¹¹ James C. Queen, interview by LTC Victor J. Bond, 27-29 September 2002.
William Weathersbee, interview by LTC Victor J. Bond, 30 September-3 October 2002.

¹² Michael T. Booth and Duncan Spencer, *Paratrooper: The Life of Gen. James M. Gavin* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1994), 314-315.

¹³ James C. Queen, interview by LTC Victor J. Bond, 27-29 September 2002.
William Weathersbee, interview by LTC Victor J. Bond, 30 September-3 October 2002

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ David R. Gray, Ph.D; *Black and Gold Warriors: US Army Rangers During The Korean War* (Michigan: University Microfilms International, 1992), 61.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., 61-62.

¹⁸ James C. Queen, interview by LTC Victor J. Bond, 27-29 September 2002.
William Weathersbee, interview by LTC Victor J. Bond, 30 September-3 October 2002.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ U.S. Army. Operations. General Decimal File, 1950-1952, 322 Ranger Record Group 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

CHAPTER 3

FIRST COMBAT

General Douglas MacArthur was the Commander in Chief, United Nations Command, and as such, had responsibility for all United Nations Forces fighting in Korea. He had two separate and distinct commands operating in Korea, geographically separated by the Taebaek Mountains. Lieutenant General Walton H. Walker commanded the Eighth Army, operating west of the mountains. His forces consisted of: the US 1st Cavalry, 2nd, 24th, and 25th Infantry Divisions; the ROK II Corps contained the ROK 1st, 6th, 7th and 8th Divisions; British 27th Commonwealth and the 29th Independent Infantry Brigades; a Turkish Brigade; and a battalion each from the Philippines and Thailand. Major General Edward M. Almond commanded the X Corps, operating east of the mountains. His forces consisted of: the US 7th and 3rd Infantry Divisions; 1st Marine Division, ROK Capital and 3rd Divisions; and a reinforced company of British Royal Marines.¹

The X Corps penetrated deep into northeast Korea. The ROK Forces were positioned along the east coast in the vicinity of Chongjin. The 17th Regiment of the 7th Infantry Division stood on the Yalu River, international boundary between China and North Korea, and the northernmost penetration for US Forces. Elements of the 31st and 32nd Regiments of the 7th Infantry Division were located in the area of the Changjin Reservoir. The 5th and 7th Regiments of the 1st Marine Division were positioned on the right flank of the Eighth Army near Hagaru-ri. The 3rd Infantry Division was in reserve at Wonson.²

The Chinese counter offensive began on 25 November 1950 when the Chinese Communist Forces launched a two-phased offensive with the goal to annihilate General MacArthur's Command in Korea. The first phase of the attack focused on the Eighth Army's destruction by the CCF's 4th Field Army. The second phase occurred on 27 November 1950 with the objective to decimate the X Corp by the CCF's 3rd Field Army. The objective was to pin the UN commands against the coasts while advancing CCF divisions southward where they were able to link-up with large concentrations of guerrillas and bypassed North Koreans who remained to the rear of the Eighth Army.³

The CCF used human wave attacks against the Eighth Army. The Chinese crushed the ROK II Corps, suffering heavy casualties because inexperienced officers commanded it and contained many untested recruits. They also struck at the 2nd, 24th and 25th Infantry Divisions. The fighting was savage and close sometimes with hand-to-hand combat. The Eighth Army began a fighting withdrawal towards the south, stabilizing their position below the 38th parallel in a defensive line east and north of the city of Seoul.⁴

The CCF struck the X Corps with six divisions in the snow capped Taebaek Mountain area near Changjin Reservoir and Hagaru-ri. The X Corps made a fighting withdrawal sixty miles south through precipitous mountain trails toward the port city of Hungnam. The ROK 3rd and Capital Divisions reached Songjin and began their evacuation to Hungnam by rail, water, and road. They established defensive positions around the port.⁵

The 5th and 7th Marine Regiments and two battalion sized elements of the 7th Infantry Division conducted a withdrawal under pressure towards Hungnam. The CCF

destroyed bridges, established roadblocks, and ambushed the retreating units with artillery, mortars, and machine guns. The UN naval and air forces supported the withdrawal with close air support, using bombs, napalm, rockets, and cannon fire. They conducted aerial resupply and evacuated the wounded by air. The Marine and Army units finally reached Hungnam around 9 December 1950, after thirteen days of constant exposure to enemy fire in the freezing mountainous terrain.⁶ General MacArthur ordered the X Corps' evacuation by sea to South Korea where it would become the Eighth Army reserve. On 24 December 1950, the last UN soldier left North Korea. The next day General Walker died in a vehicle accident and Lieutenant General Matthew B. Ridgway became the new Eighth Army Commander. He had formerly commanded the 82nd Airborne Division in World War II.⁷

The only units enroute to Korea that had the ability to move forward and fight upon arrival were the 2nd and 4th Airborne Ranger Companies.⁸ The executive officers of the 2nd Ranger Company, (Lieutenant James C. Queen) and 4th Company (Lieutenant John Warren) departed Fort Benning, Georgia, by commercial air on 1 December 1950. They had the responsibility to act as the advanced party for the Ranger companies and have all their supplies and equipment on hand by the time the units reached Korea. The advanced party managed to obtain additional equipment beyond that authorized in the TO&E. Each man received a 45 caliber pistol, shoulder or hip holster, and an airborne jump knife. The 2nd and 4th Ranger Companies departed Fort Benning, Georgia, on 3 December 1950, by train to their port of embarkation at Camp Stoneman, California. The companies embarked on the United States Navy Transport Ship, General H. W. Bunter, on 9 December 1950 and disembarked at Yokohama, Japan, on 24 December 1950. They

departed by train to Camp Zama, Japan, remained in the area for six days and departed by airplane on 29 December 1950 from Tachikawa Air Base, Japan to Taegu Airbase, Korea.⁹ The 2nd Ranger Company was attached to the 7th Infantry Division Replacement Company for rations and quarters at 1115 hours, 30 December 1950.¹⁰ MG Almond telephoned the G-3, COL Chiles, and stated he wanted that the 2nd Ranger Company be moved up as rapidly as possible and employed.¹¹

The 7th Infantry Division assembled in the Yonchon area after its evacuation from Hungnam, (see figure 1). All division organizations quickly began the process to reorganize and re-equip in preparation for new orders. The 7th Infantry Division received orders on 1 January 1951, to move without delay to the Tanyang--Wonju area to block enemy threats from the north.¹² The division attached the 2nd Ranger Company to the 32nd Infantry Regiment. This attachment provided the Rangers about three days to do personnel in processing, draw ammunition, supplies, and load equipment before movement. The 32nd Infantry Regiment was designated as the 32nd Regimental Combat Team (RCT) because it had additional attached units including: the 48th Field Artillery Battalion, Company B, 13th Engineer Battalion, Detachment 7th Signal Company, Detachment 7th Medical Company, and 2nd Ranger Company. The mission of the 32nd RCT was to close in zone, establish strong blocking positions and conduct patrols. Additionally, they were to protect the Main Supply Route and railroad.¹³ The RCT departed Yonchon on the morning of 4 January, moved to Andong where they remained overnight, and completed their movement to Changnim-ni on 6 January. The Rangers moved with the regimental headquarters. The regimental commander ordered them to establish security for the medical company, which was located near the main supply

route. Guerrilla infiltration and attacks in the rear areas of headquarters and artillery positions were a serious concern.

Guerrilla tactics caused the 7th Infantry Division to create an antiguerrilla force. The unit designation was the Benedae Group, but it was better known as Rice's Raiders. It was a special anti-guerrilla force controlled by the G-2, 7th Infantry Division. Its mission was to locate and fix guerrilla bands operating in the 7th Division area of operations. Most of the unit's members were selected Korean National Police and selected loyal Korean personnel. Captain Robert L. Rice was the commander. The remaining six American members were an executive officer and five enlisted men. The Korean members of the group did not speak English, but they learned four English phrases "Hour Glass, Benedae Group," "I am Rice Raider," "Take me to Capt Rice," "Take me to G-2." All units in the division were directed to assist this force.¹⁴

Intelligence reports indicated a large concentration of guerillas, (including women and wearing civilian clothes) in the Tanyang area, employing hit and run tactics.¹⁵ First Lieutenant Warren E. Allen, 2nd Ranger Company commander, established positions to conduct patrolling operations in the vicinity of the aid station. He established the company command post in a nearby schoolhouse. The Rangers had their first fire fight on 7 January. A twenty-member guerilla force ran into a Ranger roadblock during the night and was driven off by machine gun fire and hand grenades. The guerillas returned later with a much larger company-sized force. The Rangers attacked the guerillas when they opened fire on the aid station. The Rangers operated contrary to the tactics the North Koreans expected from the Americans. They maneuvered rapidly during the hours of darkness, returned a high volume of accurate and effective automatic rifle fire. The

Rangers were hunters who pursued the North Koreans instead of allowing them to escape. Sergeant First Class Isaac Baker became the first Ranger killed in action, while Rangers Webb, Paulding, and Smalls were wounded in action. The known enemy casualties were fifty killed in action.¹⁶

The Rangers continued patrolling on 9 January when the 3rd Platoon received the mission to conduct a patrol in the village of Changnim. The platoon engaged a group of guerillas preparing positions for a larger force. The firefight began at 0900 and lasted until 1445. The Rangers used their superior firepower and artillery against the enemy. One man, Ranger Daniels, was wounded and the guerillas left eleven dead behind.¹⁷

The Chinese Communist Forces continued their offensive, putting more pressure on the X Corps and 7th Infantry Division. Operations Instructions Number 9 from 7th Infantry Division ordered an attack by the 32nd RCT with not less than two battalions to destroy the enemy threat to the Main Supply Route in the Tanyang area. Operations Instruction Number 7 from X Corps ordered the methodical destruction of dwellings and other buildings forward of the lines, as the CCF had been using them for shelter.¹⁸ The 2nd Ranger Company spearheaded the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment attack on the village of Majori-ri by the on 14 January. The Rangers entered the village at 0730 and immediately a furious firefight erupted. A Chinese battalion arrived before the Rangers and had hastily dug a series of camouflaged, mutually supporting bunkers around the village. The Rangers used the fire from their automatic weapons and quick movement to take part of the village. The enemy counterattacked, but could not overcome the Rangers. The remnants of the Chinese battalion withdrew from the village. The Rangers had five men killed, and five men wounded, in action. The Chinese had 100 men killed in action.

However, another infantry company, which bypassed the village, ran into the parent regiment of the Chinese battalion. The company ran into an ambush and endured such intense fire the 2nd Ranger Company was ordered to try and relieve the pressure on them. The Rangers tried to breakthrough to the other company, but was not successful. Another ranger was killed and two more wounded. The Rangers started to run low on ammunition while the enemy started to counterattack. Lieutenant Allen conducted a withdrawal under pressure. The Rangers served as the covering force and told the other company to withdraw through them. The Chinese advanced and managed to break through the covering force and five Rangers were cut-off. Corporal Bill Rhodes, nicknamed the "Thin Man," realized the three rangers with him were dead after he ran out of ammunition. He attempted to evade capture and return to friendly lines. The Chinese overran his position and he acted like a dead man. The enemy took his watch and wallet and left him for dead. Thirty minutes later he left the position. As he crossed an open field the enemy shot at him. Once again he feigned death. However, this time the enemy took his boots and clothing. Frostbitten and cold, he found shelter with a Korean couple. Evading on his third night he ran into an American patrol who was able to return him to his company. Bill Washington, nicknamed "The Ghost" evaded capture in a similar manner for two days.

The 2nd Ranger Company paid a heavy price for their actions at Majori-ri. Eighth Rangers were killed in action: Corporal Richard Glover, Corporal J.T. Holley, Corporal Milton Johnson, Corporal Frank King, Jr, Private First Class Charles D. Scott, Private First Class Robert St Thomas, Private First Class Herman L. Rembart, and Private Lawrence Williams. Two officers, Lieutenants Allen and Pryor and eight men were

wounded in action: Rangers Boatright, Andres, Johnson, Lanier, Davis, Estell, Aikens, and Thomas.¹⁹

The 2nd Ranger Company's strength declined to sixty-three men by the end of January.²⁰ Losses are divided into two different categories: battle and non-battle casualties. Soldiers killed, wounded, or missing due to the result of enemy actions are battle casualties. Men lost because of frostbite, sickness, injury, or anything else are non-battle casualties. The cumulative effect of both categories reduced the effective fighting force. Ranger qualified replacements were in short supply because the Ranger Training Center at Fort Benning, Georgia was the only place that produced them. The 2nd Ranger Company, in spite of the losses, continued to conduct aggressive patrolling operations with the 7th Infantry Division.

While the 2nd Ranger Company distinguished itself in combat fighting against the communist enemies of the country, there was another more sinister enemy fighting against the company. It was not a threat from the outside but one from within. The belief of white supremacy was the foundation upon which racial discrimination existed and was practiced by MG Almond, the X Corps Commander himself. The policy of the corps commander sent to the 7th Infantry Division on 2 February stated,

All colored repls sent to the 7th Div will go to the 2d Ranger Co--there will be no mixed units in X Corp. If the Ranger Co under this policy should become excessively overstrength--separate colored units will be formed. No change in current SOP which provided that colored pers sent to 7th Div in error may be returned to Army Repl Bn (concurrent in previously by Maj Fairbanks--G-1 EUSAK).²¹

In May 1951, Lieutenant General Ridgway sent a cable to Washington recommending the desegregation of the black units. He wrote,

It is my conviction . . . that the only way we assure the sort of spirit a fighting army needs, where each soldier stands proudly on his own feet, knowing himself to be as good as the next fellow and better than the enemy. Besides it had always seem to me both un-American and un-Christian for free citizens to be taught to downgrade themselves in this way, as if they were unfit to associate with their fellows or to accept leadership themselves.”²²

Most of the senior generals favored desegregation but Almond did not. He opposed integration of the Army then and for the rest of his life.²³

On 20 February, the 7th Infantry Division was part of a two-division attack to reduce a salient made by Chinese Communist Forces. The 2nd Ranger Company spearheaded the operation with the 17th Infantry Regiment for an attack on Chuchon. This operation was slightly different because the media was part of the operation, providing news coverage to national and international audiences. As the Rangers approached their objective they discovered an enemy force headed towards the same place. The Rangers followed them until they entered the town, opened fire and drove the enemy from the town.²⁴

The Department of the Army requested a progress report on the performance of the ranger companies in Korea. General Ferenbaugh gave a positive response for the 2nd Ranger Company, “This Div is making good use of the Ranger Company in extreme mountainous and tortuous terrain which employs it fully in one of the roles for which it was designed.”²⁵ On 23 February, X Corps directed the company to move to Taegu and report to G-3 as soon as was practicable. The Rangers next move was a shuffle into history.

¹ Department of Army. *Korea 1950* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1997), 227-228.

² *Ibid.*, 233.

³ Ibid., 228.

⁴ Ibid., 229-232.

⁵ Ibid., 233-237.

⁶ Ibid., 233-237.

⁷ Ibid., 236.

⁸ Billy C. Mossman, *Ebb and Flow: November 1950-July 1951* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1990), 182-183.

⁹ 2nd Ranger Company Morning Reports 1-3 December 1950, William Weathersbee. Oral interview with James C. Queen, 27-29 September 2002. Oral interview with William Weathersbee, 30 September–3 October 2002. Black, Robert W. *Rangers in Korea* (New York: Ivy Books, 1989), 40.

¹⁰ 7th Infantry Division, G-3 Reports, 1115 hours, 30 December 1950, Yongchon, Korea.

¹¹ Ibid., 31 December. Periodic Logistics Report Number 63 listed the 2nd Ranger Company strength at 117.

¹² 7th Infantry Division, Command Report, Period 010001 January to 312400 January 1951, Operations Order 35.

¹³ Ibid., Periodic Operations Report Number 96.

¹⁴ Ibid., Anti-Guerrilla Force Memo, 4 Jan 51.

¹⁵ Ibid., Periodic Intelligence Report Number 70.

¹⁶ 2nd Ranger Company Morning Reports 6-7 January 1951, William Weathersbee. Oral interview with James C. Queen, 27-29 September 2002. Oral interview with William Weathersbee, 30 September-3 October 2002. Robert W. Black, *Rangers in Korea* (New York: Ivy Books, 1989), 46. David R. Gray, Ph.D., *Black and Gold Warriors: US Army Rangers During The Korean War* (Michigan: University Microfilms International, 1992), 170. Thomas H. Taylor, *Rangers Lead the Way* (Paducah, Kentucky: Turner Publishing Company, 1996), 110-111.

¹⁷ 2nd Ranger Company Morning Reports 9 January 1951, William Weathersbee. David R. Gray, Ph.D., *Black and Gold Warriors: US Army Rangers During The Korean War* (Michigan: University Microfilms International, 1992), 171. Thomas H. Taylor, *Rangers Lead the Way* (Paducah, Kentucky: Turner Publishing Company, 1996), 110-111.

¹⁸ 7th Infantry Division, Command Report, Period 010001 January to 312400 January 1951, Operations Instruction Number 9 and 7.

¹⁹ 2nd Ranger Company Morning Reports 14 January 1951, William Weathersbee. Oral interview with James C. Queen, 27-29 September 2002. Robert W. Black., *Rangers in Korea* (New York: Ivy Books, 1989), 49. David R. Gray, Ph.D., *Black and Gold Warriors: US Army Rangers During The Korean War* (Michigan, University Microfilms International, 1992): 172-174. Thomas H. Taylor., *Rangers Lead the Way* (Paducah, Kentucky: Turner Publishing Company, 1996), 111.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 31 January 1951. Periodic Logistics Report Number 92 listed the 2nd Ranger Company strength at 63.

²¹ 2nd Ranger Company Morning Reports 20 February 1951, William Weathersbee. Robert W. Black., *Rangers in Korea* (New York: Ivy Books, 1989), 49. David R. Gray, Ph.D., *Black and Gold Warriors: US Army Rangers During The Korean War* (Michigan: University Microfilms International, 1992), 174. Thomas H. Taylor., *Rangers Lead the Way* (Paducah, Kentucky: Turner Publishing Company, 1996), 112.

²² Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War: America in Korea 1950-1953* (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 867-868.

²³ *Ibid.*, 868.

²⁴ 7th Infantry Division, G-1 Reports, 0950 hours, 2 February 1951, Chechon, Korea.

²⁵ 7th Infantry Division, G-3 Reports, 1510 hours, 21 February 1951, Chechon, Korea.

CHAPTER 4

MUNSANI-NI, TRAINING MISSION, AND HILL 581

The Chinese and North Korean Forces expended their offensive efforts during January and February 1951 and transitioned to the defensive after the Eighth Army counterattacks in Operation KILLER. LTG Ridgway designed a new offensive campaign using his forces in Operation RIPPER to attack across the 38th Parallel to destroy enemy forces and equipment and to interdict the enemy's attempt to launch a counteroffensive (see figure 3).¹ An additional objective was to outflank Seoul and the area north of the city to the Imjin River. He published the plan on 1 March 1951 but he did not provide an execution date because he wanted to establish a five-day supply of food, ammunition, and petroleum in all forward supply areas. The intelligence analysis forecasted the 37th Chinese Army was moving into defensive positions in the Chunchon area. It also identified the 24th and 26th Chinese Armies located just to the north of Chunchon. These reserve armies were available for offensive operations in the central region. Additional information gained from agents operating behind the lines stated the enemy had originally planned to launch their offensive on 1 March but for some unknown reason decided to wait until 15 March. Prisoners of war substantiated the intelligence and agent reports.² Eighth Army developed a deception plan to hold the enemy in place with an amphibious invasion demonstration in the Yellow Sea. The deception objective was to fix enemy reserves in position and distract attention from the central region where the UN planned to execute Operation RIPPER.³ Eighth Army forces planned to advance as far as Phase Line Idaho, creating a deep salient in the enemy's territory believed occupied by large concentration of Chinese troops and equipment. The key objectives in the central

zone were road junctions in the towns of Hongchon and Chunchon with the latter also containing a critical enemy supply center. The IX Corps' mission was to seize these two towns as it advanced to Phase Line Idaho. The 187th Regimental Combat Team (Airborne) with the attached 2nd and 4th Ranger companies, currently conducting airborne refresher training at Taegu, was to assist the IX Corps attack with a parachute assault behind enemy lines.⁴

The Eighth Army attached the 2nd Ranger Company to the 187th Regimental Combat Team (Airborne) on 28 February 1951.⁵ The company stayed in an assembly area vicinity K-2 airfield Taegu and conducted many activities from 1-19 March. Lieutenant Allen was promoted to Captain on 1 March 1951. The company had also received replacements from Fort Benning. Lieutenant Antonio Anthony arrived with thirty Rangers who had completed the second cycle of training at the Ranger Training Center. These new arrivals brought the company up to full strength. The company conducted physical training with runs around the airfield. They conducted airborne refresher training in preparation for an upcoming operation. The company sent two men to a modified jump school conducted by the 187th RCT and qualified them as parachutist during the week 4-8 March. The company conducted an airborne operation on 16 March.⁶

The 187th RCT was also very busy during this period as they conducted training and preparation for a possible airborne assault. The unit was placed on an eight-hour alert status on 11 March. The next day all officers attended training and a demonstration of the 4.2 chemical mortar, fougasse, and aerial resupply. The units trained on small unit tactics and conducted firing of all unit weapons. Training Memorandum Number 3 notified all assigned or attached units of the upcoming airborne operation on 15 and 16 March. A

regimental field training exercise involving 3,728 personnel was conducted as part of the operation. The regiment continued training over the next four days and received an alert notification on March 19.⁷

The IX Corps would commence the attack at 0800 hours on 22 March and assume operational control of the 187 RCT immediately after the drop. The IX Corps had responsibility to provide artillery and logistical support for the 187th RCT after link-up with ground elements of IX Corps. The mission for the 187th Regimental Combat Team (Airborne) and the attached 2nd and 4th Ranger companies was to drop at H-Hour on D-Day on selected drop zones to seize objectives in the northern part of the Chunchon Basin and to block enemy movement through the Chunchon corridor.⁸ However, the mission on Chunchon was cancelled because the rapid advance of the 1st Cavalry Division captured the Chunchon area. The Rangers and the 187th RCT received a new mission to seize objectives near Munsan-ni. Operation TOMAHAWK was the code name for the airborne part of Operation KILLER.⁹

Throughout the day on 22 March all units continued training and made final preparations for the Munsan-ni operation. The final operations briefing was made for Air Force personnel, operations officers, and battalion and separate unit commanders. Captain Allen directed Corporal Weathersbee to make a sand table for the Munsan-ni operation to brief the men on the mission, drop zone, and the surrounding terrain.¹⁰ The revised plan required the 187th Regimental Combat Team (Airborne) and the attached 2nd and 4th Ranger companies to jump at Munsan-ni to capture it and establish blocking positions to trap the North Korean Peoples Army I Corps. Simultaneously, two armored task forces would move north. Task Force Growdon comprised of the 6th Tank Battalion

and supported by two all black artillery units would use the road from Seoul to Munsan-ni and link-up with the rangers and paratroopers.¹¹

On the morning of 23 March at 0450 the units of the 187th RCT and the 2nd and 4th Ranger companies began movement to K-2 airport to load aircraft. The 2nd Ranger Company was attached to the 2nd Battalion and the 4th Ranger Company with the 3rd Battalion. The assault force was divided into three serials for movement to the drop zone. C-46s and C-119s of the 315th Air Force began takeoff from K-2 at 0730. All serials headed for a rendezvous point over the Yellow Sea west of the objective area. The airborne assault utilized two drop zones. DZ North located a mile northeast of Munsan-ni was the drop zone for the rangers and the 2nd and 3rd Battalions. DZ South located three miles southeast of town was the drop zone for 1st Battalion. The 3rd Battalion jumped first at 0900. The 1st Battalion lost the lead aircraft shortly after takeoff and they mistakenly dropped on DZ North. The 2nd Battalion jumped at 0915 as scheduled. The 2nd and 4th Ranger Companies made the first Ranger unit combat jump in American history (see figure 4).¹²

The 2nd Ranger Company landed on the eastern end of the drop zone within close proximity to each other and quickly assembled. However, the 60 millimeter mortar section became scattered during the jump and had not linked up with the company. The company had two men injured on the jump. First Sergeant West saw two enemy machine guns overlooking the drop zone. He gathered together some Rangers and attacked the machine gun positions. The 3rd platoon arrived and immediately joined in the assault. The Rangers captured the machine guns, killed two communists soldiers, and captured two prisoners.¹³ The S-2 Journal entry for the 187th RCT on 23 March at 0930 hours

showed the 2nd Ranger Company was the first unit to capture prisoners and at 1000 hours turned in a water-cooled Russian Maxim heavy machine gun.¹⁴ West established a hasty perimeter at the rally point until the remainder of the company had fully assembled. Next, the company advanced towards its assault objective on Hill 151, located about 2,500 meters north of the drop zone. The 2nd Rangers attacked Chinese troops and cleared the village of Sandokso-ri. The 2nd Platoon led by Lieutenant Freeman killed six and captured twenty during the attack. The Company quickly reorganized and continued their attack to Hill 151. The mortar section rejoined the company at this time.¹⁵

The Rangers observed the enemy withdrawing from the forward slope of Hill 151. Lieutenant Queen opened fire with the mortar section to support the company's attack. He called in close air support from four P-51 Mustang fighter planes. As the company moved closer to the objective he called off the aircraft and increased the mortar fires. The enemy was dazed and confused from the Ranger's sudden attack, but still managed to fire their automatic weapons before retreating to the north. The Rangers suffered one killed in action--a medic; Private First Class William Van Dunk. Sergeant First Class Boatwright and Sergeant Robertson were wounded. The company evacuated their casualties and established hasty fighting positions as they waited for the linkup with TF Growden.¹⁶

TF Growden reached the Munsan-ni area and linked-up with the airborne force at 1848 hours 23 March. The next day the TF Growden and the 187th RCT conducted tank infantry patrols to seek out and destroy enemy in the area. Over the next four days, the 2nd Ranger Company spearheaded attacks for the 187th RCT; provided security for the tanks in TF Growden; conducted link-up with elements of 3rd Infantry Division; and

conducted security patrols.¹⁷ The 2nd Ranger Company completed its mission with the 187th RCT at the end of March. The members of the 2nd Ranger Company became the first Black men to make a parachute assault in combat. They fought with skill and dedication using their quickness and speed to defeat the communists and to limit the number of casualties. They were trailblazers who demonstrated that not only would the Black man fight but also that he is very good at it.

The 2nd Ranger Company was relieved from attachment with the 187th RCT and reattached to the 7th Infantry Division effective April 1951 with an assigned strength of 102 men.¹⁸ The division did not attach the company to a regiment like it had previously. Instead the 2nd Ranger Company moved to the vicinity of the Division Rear Command Post and the 7th Replacement Company for a new mission. The X Corps Commander's policy on mixed units did not have much effect on the 7th Infantry Division in February 1951 because basic training in the United States was segregated. However, the shortage of manpower due to combat losses and the integration of basic and advanced individual training, sent replacements to Korea without regard to race.¹⁹

The X Corps Commander's policy was enforced in April 1951. The 2nd Ranger Company became the repository of all black soldiers sent to the 7th Division. On 7 April the Company received fifty-two men.²⁰ The soldiers were not ranger or airborne qualified and many did not have an Infantry Military Occupational Specialty. There were infantrymen, cooks, mechanics, and artillerymen represented in this group. The Rangers' new mission required them to train these men in infantry tactics. The mission was a surprise to the leadership of the Ranger Company. They did not receive any advanced warning or provided preparation time to develop a training program.

However, the Rangers accepted this training mission as another challenge to be the best. The officers developed a training program based upon their combined experiences gained in combat, previous airborne assignments, ranger training at Fort Benning, Georgia, and training cadre at Fort McClellan, Alabama. Captain Allen also included bayonet training.²¹ The company received two missions. It still conducted combat operations and trained the new men at the same time. The company strength continued to increase. It reached its highest level on 24 April with a count of 440 men.²² A major deficiency noted in the new trainees was that the shortness of basic combat training did not allow the soldiers to become competent in the skills of battle and confident in their own abilities to succeed in combat. The Rangers' training program emphasized: physical fitness; tactics at the squad, platoon and company levels; communications; marksmanship and weapons firing. Many different military occupational specialties came to the Rangers. They even received a band member who played the bugle. Lieutenant Queen directed him to learn the communist bugle calls so the Rangers could use them in training. Captain Allen made an agreement with General Ferenbaugh that allowed him to retain ten trainees as replacements for the company. The only thing the men had in common was that most of them were from the Washington, D.C. area and knew of Lieutenant Queen before. The Junior Reserve Officer Training Program was compulsory in the public school system in Washington, D.C. Jim Queen established a good reputation for himself when he served as the cadet commander. The replacements believed he was a good leader and wanted to join the Rangers because of him. Paul Lyles, one of the trainees who remained with the Rangers said the training he received from the Rangers kept him alive in Korea. Joe Russo, a medical aidman, was the first white man

attached to the 2nd Ranger Company from May--July 1951.²³ The Rangers continued to train this force until 24 April.

The CCF launched a coordinated attack across the entire Eighth Army Front on 23 April. The ROK 6th Division collapsed under this attack and left the right flank of the 7th Infantry Division exposed. The 32nd Regiment, 7th Infantry Division bore the brunt of this attack. It withstood numerous counterattacks and still maintained the defense. The division committed its reserve, the 31st Regimental Combat Team, to support the defense by the 17th and 32nd Regiments on 24 April.²⁴ The 2nd Ranger Company received new attachment instructions to the 31st Regimental Combat Team. The company left a small cadre behind to continue the training mission.²⁵ The soldiers trained by the 2nd Ranger Company were distributed throughout the 7th Infantry Division on 25 April and the cadre rejoined the company for combat operations. Patrols from the company operated with the ROK 3rd Regiment 25-27 April.²⁶ On 29 April, the company received attachment instructions to the 17th Regiment, which was covering the division withdrawal across the Soyang River. The 2nd Ranger Company conducted aggressive patrolling between the gaps with the ROK Division.²⁷

The 7th Infantry Division received orders to move to a new sector in the IX Corps area.²⁸ The division's mission was to establish and improve defensive positions along the General Defensive Line. Its two critical sub unit tasks were to establish a combat outpost line 1,000-2,000 yards in front of the main line of resistance and to conduct patrolling operations a distance of 3,000-5,000 yards in front of the main line of resistance.²⁹ The 2nd Ranger Company served as the lead element patrolling in front of the main line of

resistance for each regiment during the period 1-17 May. Patrolling and screening of the forward areas continued until 17 May without enemy contact (see figure 5).

The 7th Infantry Division's rotation policy planned for every soldier to receive a periodic five-day rest and relaxation period in Japan.³⁰ It was the Rangers turn to take rest on 18 May. Three officers and eleven enlisted men departed to Japan leaving the company with 80 men available for duty.³¹ The CCF continued their offensive breaking a lull in the fighting and requiring immediate action by the division. The 2nd Ranger Company led the 32nd Regiment attack on 20 May to seize Hill 581. The company approached the hill from the reverse slope. Lieutenant Queen fixed the enemy with on-call artillery fire. The Rangers managed to get halfway up the hill before the Chinese realized that the Americans were attacking under the artillery barrage. The fire fight began at 1,500 and after two hours of fighting the Rangers took control of Hill 581, killing fifty and wounding ninety.³² Lieutenant Queen prepared his men for the counterattack. The Chinese attacked at 210200 hours and the Rangers drove them off with machine guns, hand grenades, and automatic rifle fire. Lieutenant Queen used preplanned artillery fire to disrupt the Chinese attack. The Chinese attacked again at 210500 hours and the Rangers, low on ammunition, withdrew. At 210620 the Rangers counterattacked forcing the communists to withdraw.³³ The Rangers observed sixty mangled bodies around their positions. A company commander from the 7th Division passing through the Ranger positions to continue the attack turned to his men and remarked, "I want all of you to look around. This is what happens to the enemy when soldiers don't panic."³⁴

The battle for Hill 581 cost the Rangers one killed in action, Corporal Ralph W. Sutton and eighteen wounded in action: Sergeant Kirk P. Atkins, Sergeant Clinton

Cleveland, Sergeant John E. Ford, Sergeant Herman Jackson, Sergeant Henry Wilson, Corporal Eugene V. Arnold, Corporal Donald Felder, Corporal Walter Gray, Corporal Emmett L. Johnson, Corporal Jude P. St. Martin, Corporal William G. Rhodes, Private First Class Legree Aiken, Private First Class James K. Conway, Private First Class Isaac Grasty, Jr., Private First Class James Hardy, Private First Class Ralph Leggs, Jr., and Private First Class Joseph Whitmore.³⁵ Seven Rangers were cited for bravery.

The Rangers did not have time to reflect on the battle since they had to move out to relieve elements of the 7th Marines. On 24 May, the Rangers attacked Hill 545 similar in the way they attacked hill 581, killing 15 on the way to the objective. The Rangers successfully captured Hill 545.³⁶ The 2nd Ranger Company continued aggressive patrolling and spearheaded attacks constantly moving between regiments throughout May and early June. On 11 June the Rangers spearheaded an attack with the 32nd Regiment seizing key terrain in the vicinity of Sanying-ni. During this action, Corporal James Petteress, Jr. was the last Ranger killed in action.³⁷

The war settled into static positions by early July. The 7th Infantry Division was the Corps Reserve. This was the first time the division had been in a reserve status since the withdrawal from Hungnam in January 1951. All divisional units used the time from 1-25 July for extensive training.³⁸ The 2nd Ranger Company conducted an airborne training operation on 27 July to qualify the ten replacements it received in April as parachutists and to maintain airborne proficiency. The last jump the Rangers made was in March at Munsan-ni. General Ferenbaugh wrote a letter of appreciation to the 2nd Ranger Company for their outstanding service with the Division. An awards ceremony was held on 31 July to present Silver Stars for Hill 581. The 2nd Ranger Company had spent 205

consecutive days in combat.³⁹ All the Ranger companies were inactivated on 1 August 1951 and their personnel assigned to the 187th Regimental Combat Team (Airborne) at Beppu, Japan.

¹ Department of Army. *Korea 1951-1953* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1997), 20-21.

² Billy C. Mossman, *Ebb and Flow: November 1950-July 1951* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1990), 311-312.

³ *Ibid.*, 313.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 315-316.

⁵ Headquarters Eighth Army, General Orders Number 108, 28 February 1951.

⁶ William Weathersbee, Ranger Company Morning Reports 1-22 March 1951.

⁷ Operations Summary, 187th Regimental Combat Team, 1-31 March 1951.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 17-18.

⁹ United States Air Force, *USAF Airborne Operations: World War II and Korean War* (Washington, D.C.: USAF Historical Division, 1962), 106.

¹⁰ James C. Queen, interview by LTC Victor J. Bond, 27-29 September 2002. William Weathersbee, interview by LTC Victor J. Bond, 30 September-3 October 2002.

¹¹ Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War: America in Korea 1950-1953* (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 762-766.

¹² Oral interview with James C. Queen, 27-29 September 2002. Oral interview with William Weathersbee, 30 September-3 October 2002. David R. Gray, Ph.D., *Black and Gold Warriors: US Army Rangers During The Korean War* (Michigan: University Microfilms International, 1992), 176-178. Thomas H. Taylor, *Rangers Lead the Way* (Paducah, Kentucky: Turner Publishing Company, 1996), 112. Operations Summary, 187th Regimental Combat Team, 1-31 March 1951, Mossman, Billy C. *Ebb and Flow: November 1950-July 1951* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1990), 336-340.

¹³ James C. Queen, interview by LTC Victor J. Bond, 27-29 September 2002. William Weathersbee, interview by LTC Victor J. Bond, 30 September-3 October 2002. David R. Gray, Ph.D., *Black and Gold Warriors: US Army Rangers During The Korean*

War (Michigan: University Microfilms International, 1992), 178-179, Robert W. Black, *Rangers in Korea* (New York: Ivy Books, 1989), 92-93.

¹⁴ 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team, S-2 Journal, 230001-232400 March 51, entry 4, 6, and 7.

¹⁵ James C. Queen, interview by LTC Victor J. Bond, 27-29 September 2002. William Weathersbee, interview by LTC Victor J. Bond, 30 September-3 October 2002. David R. Gray., Ph.D., *Black and Gold Warriors: US Army Rangers During The Korean War*, (Michigan: University Microfilms International, 1992) 179-180; Robert W. Black, *Rangers in Korea* (New York: Ivy Books, 1989), 93; Thomas H. Taylor, *Rangers Lead the Way* (Paducah, Kentucky: Turner Publishing Company, 1996), 112-113.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team, S-3 Journal, 230001-312400 March 51.

¹⁸ 2nd Ranger Company Morning Report 4 April 1951, William Weathersbee.

¹⁹ Oral interview with James C. Queen, 27-29 September 2002. Oral interview with William Weathersbee, 30 September - 3 October 2002.

²⁰ 2nd Ranger Company Morning Report 7 April 1951, William Weathersbee.

²¹ Oral interview with James C. Queen, 27-29 September 2002. Oral interview with William Weathersbee, 30 September - 3 October 2002.

²² 7th Infantry Division, Periodic Logistics Report Number 177, 231800-241800 hours, 24 April 1951, Umyang-ni, Korea.

²³ Oral interviews with James C. Queen, Marion A. Alston, and Paul Lyles, 27-29 September 2002. Oral interviews with William Weathersbee and Edward Posey, 30 September-3 October 2002.

²⁴ 7th Infantry Division, Command Report, Period 010001 April to 302400 April 1951.

²⁵ 7th Infantry Division, G-3 Reports, 241001 hours, 24 April 1951, Umyang, Korea.

²⁶ Ibid., 271240 hours, 27 April.

²⁷ Ibid., 271240 hours, 27 April.

²⁸ Ibid., 301648 hours, 30 April.

²⁹7th Infantry Division, Command Report, Period 010001 April to 302400 April 1951.

³⁰7th Infantry Division, Command Report, Period 010001 May to 312400 May 1951.

³¹Ibid.

³²2nd Ranger Company Morning Report, 18 May 1951, William Weathersbee.

³³Oral interview with James C. Queen, 27-29 September 2002. Oral interview with William Weathersbee, 30 September-3 October 2002. David R. Gray, Ph.D., *Black and Gold Warriors: US Army Rangers During The Korean War*, (Michigan: University Microfilms International, 1992), 219. Thomas H. Taylor, *Rangers Lead the Way* (Paducah, Kentucky: Turner Publishing Company, 1996), 114, Robert W. Black, *Rangers in Korea* (New York: Ivy Books, 1989), 164-165.

³⁴7th Infantry Division, Periodic Intelligence Report Number 204, 201800-211800 May 1951, Chipyeong-ni, Korea.

³⁵Robert W. Black, *Rangers in Korea* (New York: Ivy Books, 1989), 164-165.

³⁶2nd Ranger Company Morning Report, 23 May 1951, William Weathersbee.

³⁷Thomas H. Taylor, *Rangers Lead the Way* (Paducah, Kentucky: Turner Publishing Company, 1996), 114.

³⁸2nd Ranger Company Morning Report, 14 June 1951, William Weathersbee.

³⁹7th Infantry Division, Command Report, Period 010001 July to 312400 July 1951.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The 2nd Ranger Company performed magnificently and compiled an exemplary combat record. The Rangers took the battle to the North Korean and Communist Chinese Forces at a time when the American Army was not prepared to fight. They traveled fast, fought at night, used superior firepower, and skilled marksmanship to terminate the enemy's will to resist. The Rangers superbly employed guerrilla tactics against the guerrillas and made excellent use of American tactics when fighting alongside Army and Marine forces.

The men of the 2nd Ranger Company made history three separate times. The first time was their selection to become an elite unit. Normally selection for elite ground combat units excluded black men and involved only the recruitment of white men, (i.e., the World War II Ranger Battalions, the Joint Canadian and American 1st Special Service Force, and the Marine Raider Battalions of World War II). The 2nd Ranger Company was the exception to the rule. The second time occurred when they became the first black men to conduct a combat jump. The 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion was activated during World War II but it never participated in combat overseas. Operation Overlord and Operation Market Garden were excellent opportunities to employ the unit. However, the Army decided to maintain them in the United States. The third time was at Munsan-ni when the 2nd and 4th Ranger Companies conducted the first combat jump in Ranger history and earned the coveted gold combat star on their jump wings. The World War II battalions were not airborne qualified.

The 2nd Ranger Company fought in combat for 205 continuous days facing death, capture, injury, and disease. Thirteen men were killed in action. The company received over 100 purple hearts indicating that almost every man in the unit was wounded in action. The awards for bravery made them stand above the rest. Nine men earned Silver Stars for heroic combat actions at Marjori-ri and Hill 581. Twelve men earned the Bronze Star for valor for actions above and beyond the call of duty. Every man in the unit earned either the Combat Infantryman's Badge or the Combat Medical Badge. The 2nd Ranger Company earned the 100 percent Combat Infantryman's Streamer where even the support personnel participated in combat patrolling.

The legacy of the 2nd Company continued after the Korean War. Nine men volunteered for duty in Special Operations with the mission to conduct military, covert, or clandestine operations in support of United States National Objectives. Eight men entered US Army Special Forces and one man became a US Navy Seal. Sixty-two of the Rangers retired from the Army, with ten retiring as officers and the remainder as senior noncommissioned officers.

The primary research question: What impact did segregation have on training and combat operations of the 2nd Ranger Company? Segregation had both a positive and negative impact. The positive aspect of segregation was an advantage in the selection of the company. The Army decided to recruit an all black company. The only place to find black paratroopers was the 3rd Battalion, 505th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 80th Anti-Aircraft Battalion, and 758th Tank Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division. The soldiers recruited from these organizations were already in an elite unit. Every paratrooper made five qualifying jumps to become airborne qualified thereby completing a rite of passage

to enter the profession. They knew and understood the culture, customs, and expectations of members in the airborne brotherhood. The soldiers trained harder both mentally and physically to maintain the high standards of the 82nd Airborne Division, America's Guard of Honor. Another positive aspect of segregation was it significantly increased the motivation of the men in the Ranger Company to succeed. A recurring theme from the interviews was the 2nd Ranger Company felt they carried the fate of the race on their shoulders. Failure was not an option. They understood the military and the society's misperception that black men would not fight. They had already broken the misperception that black men won't jump out of an airplane. The Rangers' motivation was to be the best at whatever they did and prove it to others through action. Physical fitness, marksmanship, movement to contact, aggressive attacks in combat, tactical and technical proficiency were actions to prove themselves. The negative side of segregation was the group judgment of black people based on the actions of an individual. If one black soldier broke under the strain of combat then all black soldiers will run. Racial differences lose their significance in the heat of battle where the main objective was staying alive.

A subordinate question: What effect did black officers commanding black soldiers have on unit cohesion? The officers and the men of the 2nd Ranger Company knew each other before activation of the company. The officers knew which soldiers were physically and mentally prepared to endure hard training, but also who had the perseverance to do their best under adverse conditions. The soldiers knew which officers were competent in their positions, earned the soldier's trust, and looked out for the soldiers welfare. The officers and soldiers had mutual respect for each other. They

developed the bonds of trust through hard training and fair discipline. All of these factors led to better cohesion in combat.

How did leadership, training, and leader development contribute to successful combat operations? All the officers of the 2nd Ranger Company were enlisted men before the Korean War. Only one officer had not served in World War II. The company's leadership had a strong foundation of knowledge and experience to build upon. They understood what it was like to be enlisted and that made them better officers. All the officers were excellent problem solvers and made decisive decisions. They immediately reacted to enemy contact and moved aggressively to defeat it. The officers had high standards and expected their soldier to have them too. They set the example for their soldiers to follow.

What role did the perception of inferiority; unwillingness to fight, and racial discrimination have on training, support, and combat operations? One of the biggest problems for the 2nd Ranger Company was the X Corps Commander, General Almond. He was a bigot and a racist who had the power to discriminate. His policy on no mixed units demonstrated his belief in white supremacy. He commanded the black 92nd Division in World War II and he blamed it's poor performance of the black soldiers instead of his own leadership. The Army axiom, "The commander is responsible for everything the unit does or fails to do" is gospel for command. However, when it pertained to white officers in predominately black units then it was the soldiers who were responsible for failure and the white commander was responsible for success. The 2nd Ranger Company did not receive the same awards and recognition as white soldiers and units in the X Corp. The Rangers did not receive the United States and Korean

Presidential Unit Citations even though the units they were attached to received them. The type and amount of combat awards earned by the 2nd Ranger Company were less than those awarded to other units in the X Corps. The incident with Captain Forrest Walker demonstrated General Almond's ferocity to discredit black officers. Captain Walker commanded Company E, 2nd Battalion, 9th Infantry. He had just led his company against the Chinese during a fixed bayonet, hand grenade assault on defensive positions on a hill. The Eighth Army Commander, General Ridgway witnessed the assault and wanted to recognize Captain Walker for his courage and skill leading the assault. He ordered that Captain Walker be awarded the Silver Star. However, when General Almond found out about it he stopped the award and ordered Walker relieved of command. "This was because Almond was a devout anti-black bigot."¹

I discovered racial discrimination played a significant part with the 7th Infantry Division and the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team. Two different books showcasing the pictorial history of the 7th Infantry Division did not mention the 2nd Ranger Company, even though it fought and died, in front of every regiment in the division for six months. The 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team's pictorial history printed only the words "2nd Ranger Company." The Rangers did not receive credit for their actions. Combat actions directly attributable to the Rangers, were falsely claimed by other units. These histories chronicle the actions of UN forces but not the 2nd Ranger Company.

What role did segregation in the society play on integration of the Army in Korea? Segregation in society slowed the process of integration in Korea. The military reflects the culture of the country. Many leaders in the military were not ready to abandon

Jim Crow laws of separate but equal facilities. It was almost impossible to have black officers commanding white troops. The stereotypes of black inferiority, white supremacy, and blacks unwillingness to fight existed in society and the military. The civil rights movement placed considerable pressure on the government to integrate. The sacrifices and deaths of black soldiers, sailors, and marines in World War II gave moral legitimacy to end segregation in the military. President Truman signed Executive Order 9981 on 26 July 1948, providing equal treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed forces but he did not establish a definite date to begin integration. Combat losses leading to a shortage of manpower in the field, combined with the desire of senior officers in a position of authority like General Ridgway who wanted to desegregate military for efficiency and moral purposes, forced integration in Korea.

The 2nd Ranger Company overcame racial discrimination, destroyed the stereotype of inferiority and unwillingness to fight, and set an example of what was possible for blacks in ground combat units in the military. The sacrifice and courage of the men of the 2nd Ranger Company lives on in our current military. The Army finally recognized it required the capabilities and qualities demonstrated by the soldiers in the 2nd Ranger Company through the activation of the 75th Ranger Regiment at Fort Benning, Georgia. It is one of the major subordinate units under the United States Army Special Operation Command.

However, the most important and enduring legacy of the 2nd Ranger Company is that their leadership, tactical and technical proficiency, and will to be the best in spite of any challenges serves as the foundation for the graduation and commissioning of black officers and the enlistment and promotion of noncommissioned officers in the combat

arms. These officers have now held positions at every level of command from Second Lieutenant to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The noncommissioned officers have held positions and at every level of responsibility from corporal to Sergeant Major of the Army. Black men have successfully led combat soldiers of all races and ethnicity in battle. Beginning with the first War after integration Vietnam, through small scale and contingency operations Grenada, El Salvador, Panama, Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo, to Major Theaters of War in Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom, the Global War on Terrorism, and Iraqi Freedom.

¹Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War: America in Korea 1950-1953* (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 648.

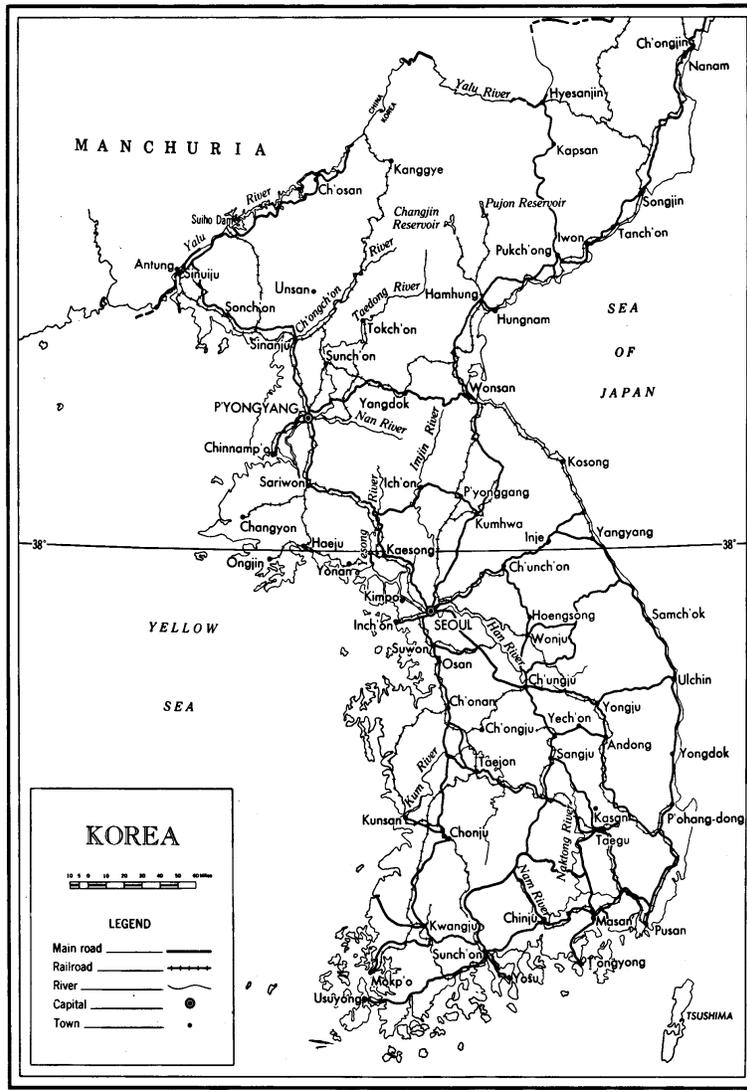


Figure 1. Map of Korea. *Korea 1951-1951*. Source: John Miller, Jr., Owen J. Carroll, Major, U.S. Army and Margaret E. Tackley, Center for Military History, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1989.

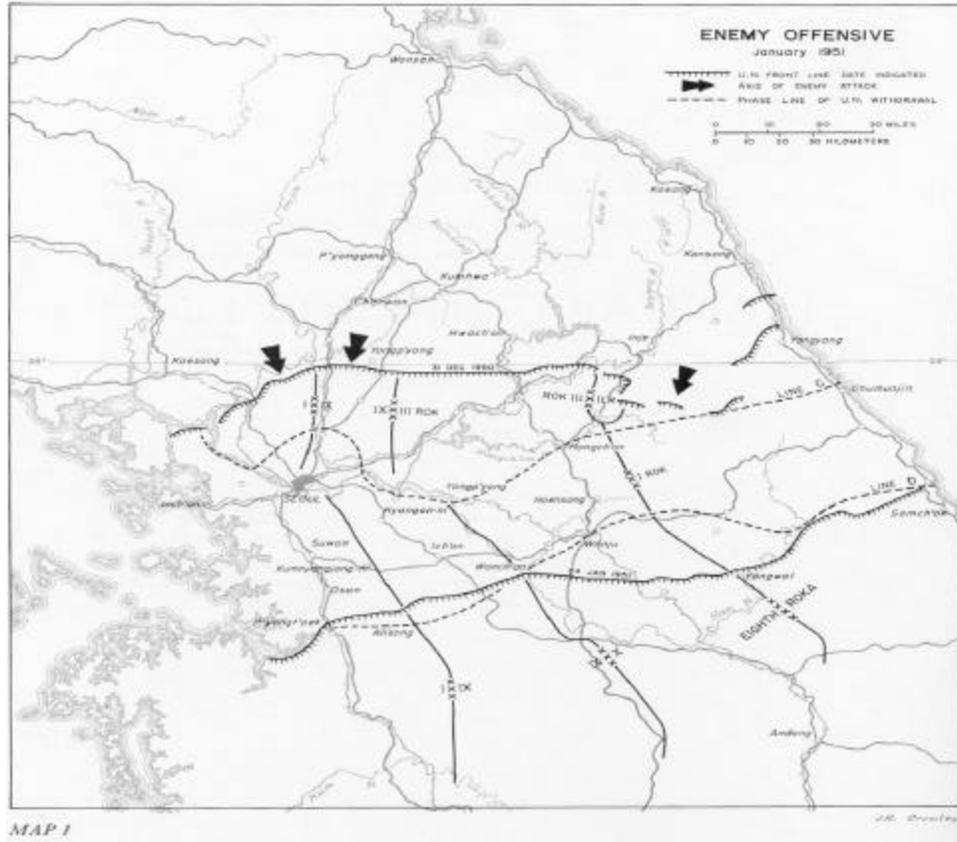


Figure 2. Enemy Offensive. *Korea 1951-1951*. Source: John Miller, Jr., Owen J. Carroll, Major, U.S. Army and Margaret E. Tackley, Center for Military History, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1989.

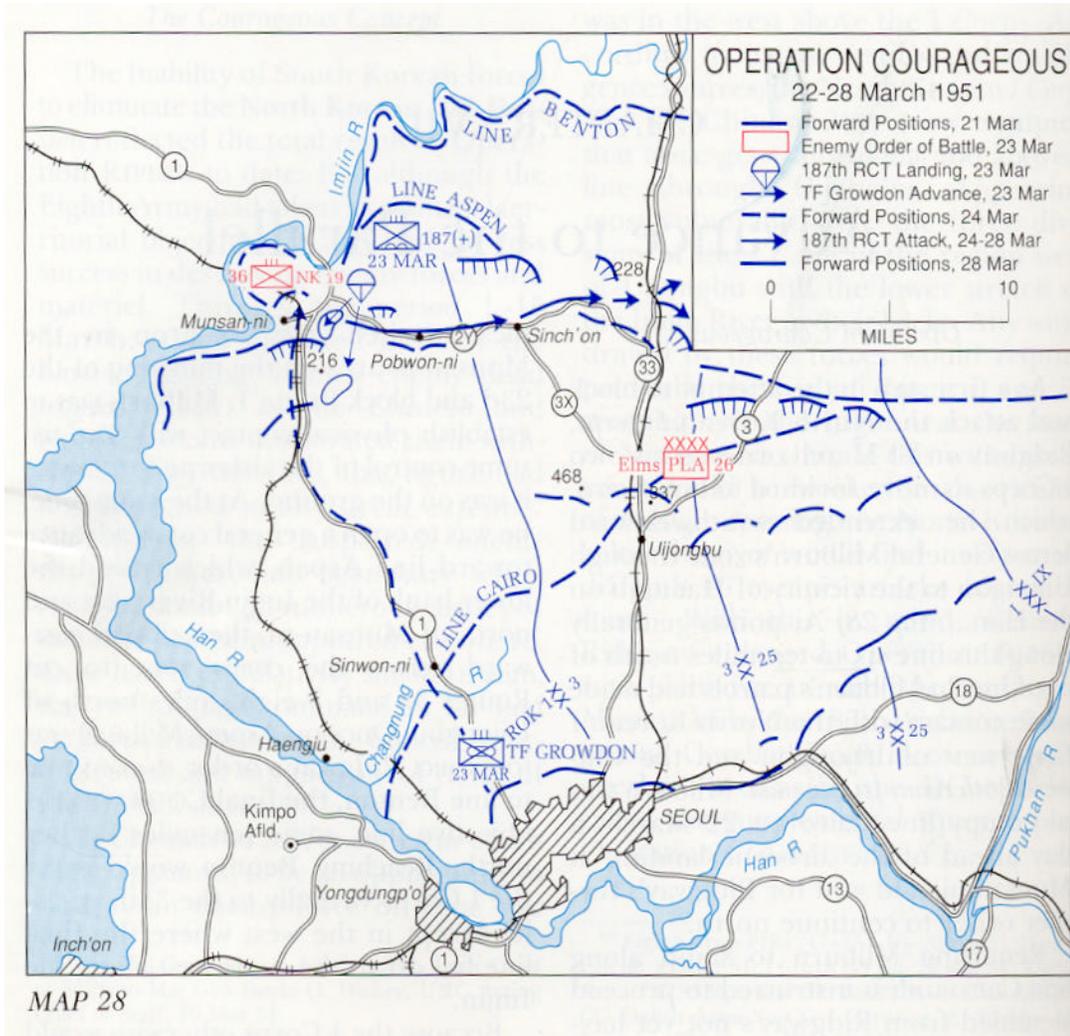


Figure 4. Operation Courageous. Source: Billy C. Mossman, *U.S. Army in the Korean War*. (Ebb and Flow November 1950-July 1951), Center of Military History, Washington D.C. 1990.

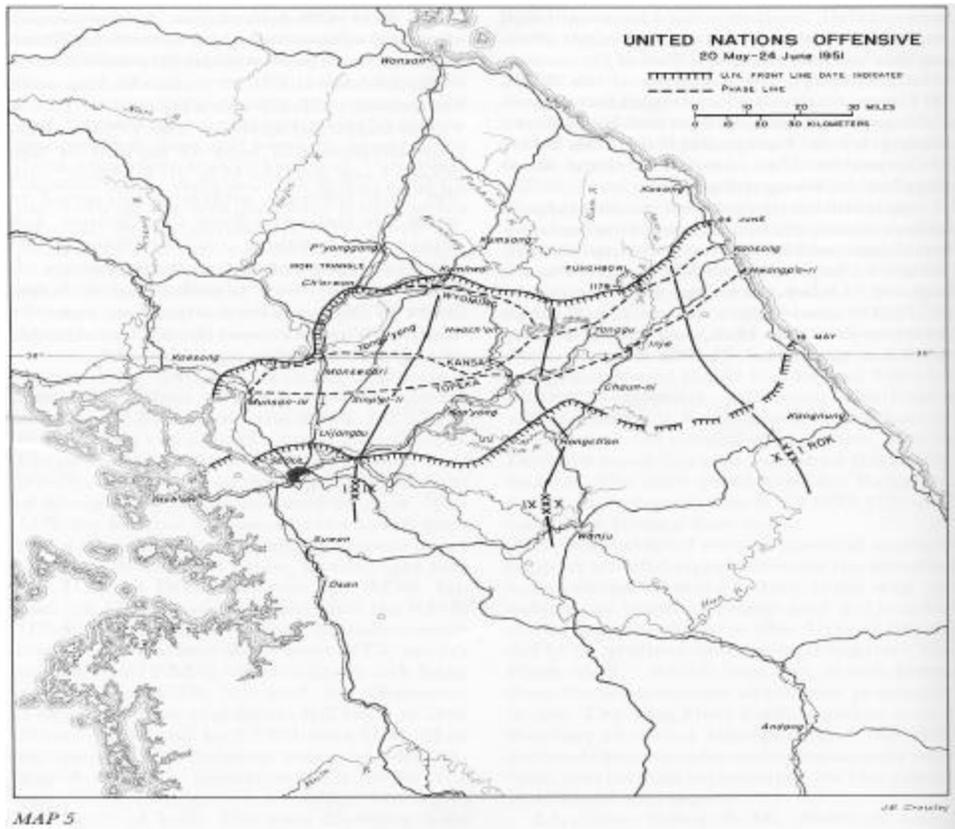


Figure 5. United Nations Offensive. *Korea 1951-1951*. Source: John Miller, Jr., Owen J. Carroll, Major, U.S. Army and Margaret E. Tackley, Center for Military History, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1989.

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USACGSC
1 Reynolds Avenue
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-1352
6. Ranger William Weathersbee
2nd Ranger Company Historian
340 Mumford Road
Raeford, NC 28376
7. Ranger Jim Queen
2nd Ranger Company Executive Officer
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