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THE INCHON LANDING:
AN EXAMPLE OF BRILLIANT GENERALSHIP

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ABSTRACT

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The Inchon Landing's success required a commander like General MacArthur who could gain the cooperation and coordination of the Army, Navy, Marine, and Air Force commanders, despite their belief that the Inchon Landing operation was very nearly impossible. Only these commanders, with their men, had the necessary experience in amphibious attacks under General MacArthur in the Pacific during World War II. The speed at which the forces were built up, the timely and accurate intelligence information gathered, and the brave and valiant execution of the plan by the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who successfully fought not just the enemy forces but also the natural characteristics of the landing site with its tides, seawalls, mud flats and monsoons; changed the very nature of the Korean conflict. The landing at Inchon cut the North Korean lines of communication, allowed the breakout of the Pusan Perimeter, and totally routed Communist forces on the brink of apparent victory. The amphibious landing at Inchon on 15 September 1950, with its flanking movement using the indirect approach, is truly an example of brilliant generalship and military genius.

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THE INCHON LANDING:
AN EXAMPLE OF BRILLIANT GENERALSHIP

We shall land at Inchon, and I shall crush them.
—General of the Army Douglas A. MacArthur

A military genius takes a situation which is not working, envisions a unique plan everyone else believes is impossible, and makes it a successful operation. A review of the Inchon Landing operation will show that General Douglas A. MacArthur had the qualities of military genius and brilliant generalship which resulted in the operation's success. "From start to finish it [the Inchon Landing operation] was his idea; he made it work, and probably only he could have done so."[1]

The United Nations (U.N.) forces were in danger of being pushed into the sea at the Pusan Perimeter. Despite the great numbers of troops and equipment provided by the U.S., all they could do was barely hold the perimeter. Something fantastic and brilliant had to be done. The Inchon Landing's success required a commander like General MacArthur who could gain the cooperation and coordination of the Army, Navy, Marine, and Air Force commanders, despite their belief that the Inchon Landing operation was very nearly impossible due to Inchon port's inhospitable conditions and the required date of the landing. Many of these commanders, with their men, had experience in amphibious assaults under General MacArthur in the Pacific in World War II.

"During this period there was a great deal of infighting between the Services, yet MacArthur seemed to have a greater appreciation of the advantages of utilizing each Service's strengths than his peers. …The theater commander [MacArthur] was ahead of his time in integrating the efforts of the Services." [2] In the book, The Korean War, History and Tactics, F.A. Godfrey ranked, "… the decision to land at Inchon as one of unparalleled audacity and which puts it in a category of its own even when compared with [previous World War II] amphibious landings…"[3] Godfrey also wrote that MacArthur, "… demonstrated an extraordinary courage and an even greater strategic insight in initiating the planning of such an operation at a time when his troops already committed to the battle in Korea appeared to be having difficulty in arresting the continuing progress of the enemy."[4]

The amazing speed at which the forces were built up, the timely and accurate intelligence information gathered, and the brave and valiant execution of the plan by the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who successfully fought not just the enemy forces but also the natural characteristics of the landing site with its tides, seawalls, mud flats and monsoons; changed the

very complexion of the Korean conflict. The landing at Inchon cut the North Korean lines of communication, allowed the breakout of the Pusan Perimeter, and totally routed Communist forces on the verge of apparent victory. The amphibious landing at Inchon on 15 September 1950, with its flanking movement built on the indirect approach, is truly an example of brilliant generalship and military genius.

As Commander in Chief of the U.N. Forces of Korea, General Douglas A. MacArthur was the 'top dog.' Other commanders who featured most prominently in the Inchon Landing operation include: Vice Admiral Arthur D. Struble, commander of Joint Task Force Seven (the task force which landed at Inchon); Rear Admiral James H. Doyle, commander of the attack force, Task Force 90 and Amphibious Group One; and Major General Edward M. Almond, commander of X Corps, Task Force 92 (the task force which captured Kimpo Airfield and Seoul). Under the command of General Almond were Major General Oliver P. Smith, commanding general of the 1st Marine Division, and Major General David G. Barr, commanding general of the 7th Infantry Division. Lieutenant General Walton H. Walker commanded the U.N. ground forces of the EUSA in the Pusan Perimeter.[5]

BACKGROUND

GEOGRAPHY OF KOREA

Korea is known as "The Land of the Morning Calm," a great misnomer. The climate has temperature extremes of 110 degrees with 90 per cent humidity and monsoons. In a matter of hours a monsoon can turn a babbling brook in which the natives wash their clothes and dishes into a 25-foot-deep torrent that washes away trees, trucks, and homes. The winters are equally extreme with temperatures well below freezing, frigid winds and plenty of snow. There is a mountain range running down the east coast of the 600-mile peninsula with craggy peaks and endless ridges. The several rivers running southeast out of the mountains become important defense lines, particularly the Naktong River, near Pusan, and the Han River, running through Seoul. There is some 5,600 miles of coastline. The North Korean border with Manchuria is mostly the Yalu River and the Tumen River, with 12 miles of land bordering Russia, only 90 miles from Vladivostok. The east coast borders the Sea of Japan, and the west coast borders the Yellow Sea. This proximity to the three great Asian powers makes Korea an extremely valuable piece of real estate, despite its unappealing climate.[6]

HISTORY OF KOREA – 1905-1950

Korea was occupied by the Japanese after the Russo-Japanese War (1905) until the end of World War II. Then, at the July 1945 Potsdam Conference, and without consulting the Koreans, the powers-that-be divided Korea into the Soviet (USSR)-controlled, primarily industrial north (above the 38th Parallel), and the United States (U.S.)-controlled, primarily agricultural south (below the 38th Parallel). The USSR installed a communist government led by Kim Il Sung. The U.S. eventually supported Syngman Rhee. The U.S. and USSR, each having established a regime friendly to itself, withdrew their occupation forces. The Soviets left behind a military advisory group and large amounts of munitions and equipment, including tanks, artillery and combat aircraft. The U.S. withdrew all of their forces except a 500-man advisory group, and they left behind large quantities of small arms and ammunition, but no tanks, artillery, or aircraft.[7]

"For several years, Kim Il Sung had urged his Communist patrons to support a North Korean invasion of South Korea but they refused him each time."[8] "In March 1950 there was a further infusion of Russian equipment, following Stalin's tacit permission to invade."[9] On 25 June 1950, the North Koreans launched a surprise attack which decimated the South Korean Army. In an emergency session of the U.N. Security Council, which the USSR was boycotting at the time, the U.S. pushed through a condemnation resolution. President Truman then authorized air, naval, and ground support for the Republic of Korea, calling it a Police Action rather than an act of war. On 30 June, the U.S. Army's 24th Division departed Japan for Korea.[10]

U.S.-KOREAN STRATEGIC SETTING

Following World War II, the primary political focus of the U.S. was the economy. President Harry S. Truman proposed a new philosophy toward Communism: primarily political and economic containment.[11] On 12 January 1950, Secretary of State Dean Acheson told the Washington Press Corps that the U.S. included Japan, Okinawa, and the Philippines in its defense perimeter, but excluded Korea and Taiwan.[12] The National Security Strategy focused on military demobilization, and the majority of defense development and procurement dollars went to the Air Force. "Proponents concluded that the American atomic arsenal either would deter or defeat Soviet invasions of vital areas."[13]

Earlier, in October 1949, "General Omar Bradley had informed the Armed Services Commission that 'large-scale amphibious operations … will never occur again.'"[14] Secretary of Defense Louis A. Johnson believed there was no need for a Navy and Marine Corps – the Air

Force could do it all. In December 1949, Johnson said to Admiral Richard L. Conolly, "Admiral, the Navy is on its way out… There's no reason for having a Navy and Marine Corps… We'll never have any more amphibious operations. That does away with the Marine Corps. And the Air Force can do anything the Navy can nowadays, so that does away with the Navy."[15]

As a result of the nation's military demobilization policy, the only Army unit in the Pacific area was "an emaciated, peacetime garrison force stationed in Japan. [The EUSA under General Walton H. Walker] had four divisions on paper (1st Cavalry, 7th, 24th, and 25th Infantry),… far below strength and ill-suited for active operations."[16] As the Korean War showed, "Air Force and Navy fought, and spent long hours on dangerous and arduous duty. Airmen and sailors died – but it was an infantry war."[17] T.R. Fehrenbach wrote extensively in his book, This Kind of War, about insufficiently trained soldiers in the Korean War:

> Americans fully understand the requirements of the football field or the baseball diamond. They discipline themselves and suffer by the thousands to prepare for these rigors. A coach or manager who is too permissive soon seeks a new job; his teams fail against those who are tougher and harder. Yet undoubtedly any American officer, in peacetime, who worked his men as hard, or ruled them as severely as a college football coach does, would be removed.[18]

In addition to the lack of trained infantry on active duty, General MacArthur was also concerned about the Chinese entering the conflict. "MacArthur saw the danger [of the Chinese] clearly, but he had cried 'wolf' too often and his warnings about the 'Communist menace' went unheeded – as were the Central Intelligence Agency reports which as early as March 1950 described mammoth build ups north of the 38th Parallel and predicted an invasion for June."[19] Other American military and political leaders believed what they wanted to believe: On 19 June the Central Intelligence Agency published a report which stated the North Koreans would not launch a major attack across the 38th parallel that summer.[20]

U.S. RESPONSE TO THE INVASION

"At 0400 hours on 25 June eight NKPA [North Korean People's Army] divisions exploded over the 38th Parallel. …Within 72 hours Seoul had fallen and the South Koreans were in full retreat toward the south."[21] In response to the 25 June North Korean invasion, on 30 June 1950, Truman authorized ground forces and the U.S. Army's 24th Division, which was based in Japan, departed for Korea. By 3 July the U.S. Navy and Air Force had wiped out the North Koreans' few sea vessels and their air force; however, they still had their tanks and infantry. President Truman subsequently authorized the 25th Infantry and 1st Cavalry Divisions to deploy to Korea.

On 5 July the first U.S. ground troops went into action at Osan. The famous Task Force Smith discovered what the rest of the U.N. forces would soon experience. "To their considerable amazement, the Americans had not scared off the North Koreans by their presence, they had not stopped them by their fire, they had hardly, in fact, even slowed them down."[22] On 6 July, the remnants of Task Force Smith and two weak seaborne battalions of the 34th Regiment gathered at Ansong.[23] Unfortunately, "None of the men had ever expected to see action. In the words of the unit's candid post-combat report, 'early over-confidence changed suddenly to surprise, then to dismay, and finally to the grim realization that, of the two armies, the North Korean force was superior in size, equipment, training, and fighting ability.'"[24] As a result, "Men were soon moving back from the forward platoon positions, some without their packs and many without their weapons. Panic quickly set in, even though officers vainly tried to stop the rearward movement. Many of the men ran all the way to Pyontaek, three miles down the road, where they gathered in a shambling crowd."[25]

Nevertheless, the U.S. forces fought a delaying action across South Korea through 4 August, when the Pusan Perimeter was established with five South Korean divisions and three U.S. Army divisions (24th and 25th Infantry and 1st Cavalry) commanded by General Walton H. Walker. General Walker was extremely disappointed in the behavior of his troops and officers and on 29 July delivered his "stand or die" order.[26] The First Battle of Naktong Bulge was fought from 5 through 19 August. Perimeter battles, the heaviest fighting of the war, occurred from 27 August through 15 September, during which the North Korean Army launched their great Naktong Offensive from 1 through 5 September.[27]

On 15 September, U.N. forces landed at Inchon, allowing the EUSA to go on the offensive after seven weeks of defense and break out of the Pusan Perimeter on 23 September (officially the 18th but actually the 23rd). Seoul was recaptured 28 September (officially the 25th or 26th, but actually the 28th). (For details explaining the date discrepancies, see the **OPERATION CHROMITE – THE INCHON LANDING**, SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF THE BATTLE section beginning on page 20.)

U.N. Forces pursued the North Korean Army and crossed the 38th parallel on 7 October 1950.[28] According to three different authors cited, had U.N. Forces remained at the 38th Parallel, the Chinese would not have entered the war, and the U.N. would have won the war.[29] "On 1 October 1950, Mao Tse-tung stated publicly: 'The Chinese people will not tolerate foreign aggression and will not stand aside if the imperialists wantonly invade the territory of their neighbor.' …Washington took no action except to inform MacArthur's headquarters in Tokyo."[30]

THE COMMANDERS

GENERAL DOUGLAS A. MACARTHUR

General Douglas A. MacArthur was 70 years old at the time of his appointment as Commander in Chief of the U.N. Forces in Korea. In American Caesar, William Manchester described MacArthur thus:

> He was a great thundering paradox of a man…Flamboyant, imperious, and apocalyptic, he carried the plumage of a flamingo, could not acknowledge errors, and tried to cover up his mistakes with sly, childish tricks. Yet he was also endowed with great personal charm, a will of iron, and a soaring intellect. Unquestionably he was the most gifted man-at-arms this nation has produced. He was also extraordinarily brave.[31]

MacArthur came from a strong military background. His father fought heroically during the American Civil War and the Spanish-American War. As did his father, Douglas MacArthur attended West Point. He was valedictorian of the Class of 1902. Later, he fought bravely and commanded well during both World War I and World War II. Somehow, between the Wars, he changed from a tough but beloved field commander into an amusing pretentious, melodramatic authoritarian. His brilliant amphibious landings in New Guinea in 1943 endeared him to the public, but he gave himself too much credit and gave the men who did the staff work and fighting little or no credit.[32]

However, for the Inchon Landing, General MacArthur elevated and integrated each Service's strengths: the Navy landed the forces, the 1st Marine Division conducted the initial assault, the 7th Infantry Division drove across difficult terrain and helped capture Seoul, and until Kimpo air base was secured for the Air Force, the Navy and Marines provided air support.[33]

MACARTHUR'S BRILLIANT GENERALSHIP AND MILITARY GENIUS

Concerning MacArthur's brilliant generalship, General MacArthur's Inchon flanking movement was one of the truly great battles of history. "To put the Inchon landing of 15 September 1950 into its proper perspective it has to be borne in mind that the planning and preparation for it were taking place at a time when reports coming out of Korea told only of unmitigated disaster for the United Nations forces there."[34] However, "MacArthur's brilliant generalship, particularly at Inchon, had provided the edge."[35]

British Brigadier Peter Young, a former commando who fought at Dunkirk, during the invasions of Sicily and Italy, and throughout the Normandy campaign among others, wrote about the Inchon Landing in his book, Strategy and Tactics of the Great Generals and Their Battles:

> In this case we can give one man credit for the fact that the action took place at all. It is probably safe to say that, although envelopment is a standard tactic in any general's arsenal, only MacArthur had the imagination to conceive this one in the face of such adverse conditions. More important is the fact that, having hit upon the plan, only a man of MacArthur's overwhelming self-confidence and high-handedness could have stuck to his guns so stubbornly and – in effect – forced the entire US military establishment to undertake it against their will.[36]

Even before the Korean War, in 1942 Frank C. Waldrop recognized MacArthur's unique genius. In a chapter entitled, "The Nature of Generals," Waldrop wrote about MacArthur: "But occasionally there comes a general who is not only enough of a mathematician, physicist, lawyer and leader to be a master of his trade, but who is also able to explain and express what the militarists mean by the phrase, "art and science of war." He not only can speak up, he cannot resist speaking up."[37]

Concerning MacArthur's military genius,

> On the purely military side, in this period, Douglas MacArthur's stature as one of the world's great captains was confirmed by his handling of the early operations of the Korean War, with the Inchon landings the capstone of his career. He was later wrong in disputing strategy with his commander in chief and he must also bear considerable personal responsibility for the subsequent temporary defeat of his U.N. forces by [the] unexpected intervention of Chinese Communist armies in late 1950. This reverse no more detracts from MacArthur's military genius than does Waterloo negate Napoleon's over-all military stature or Gettysburg that of Robert E. Lee.[38]

In the biography of General MacArthur, <u>American Caesar</u>, William Manchester wrote, "Great turning movements are as old as warfare, though only commanders possessed of military genius have been able to execute them successfully."[39]

In his comparison of the amphibious landings at Inchon and Anzio, Italy (1944), Colonel (retired) William J. Reynolds, a 1964 graduate and 9-year professor of geography at West Point and Vietnam veteran stated, "MacArthur used the forbidding hydrography at Inchon to great advantage. His selection of this site ensured surprise, precluded quick North Korean reinforcement, and allowed the rapid capture of the primary transportation hub of the North Korean Army, Seoul."[40] Reynolds further specified,

> By careful selection of the amphibious landing site and astute understanding of the hydrographic processes, MacArthur achieved one of the most decisive maneuvers in military history. …MacArthur's audacity and expert execution in 1950 epitomizes the proper use of the amphibious assault. …Inchon was bold and audacious. …MacArthur had a sufficiently strong two-division force to achieve his objectives.… [On a geographic scale, the Inchon envelopment was] too deep to allow the enemy the option of rapid response and counterattack.[41]

MacArthur's brilliant generalship is illustrated in two quotes from Sun Tzu's The Art of War, "Therefore, those who win every battle are not really skillful – those who render others' armies helpless without fighting are the best of all."[42] "One who is good at martial arts overcomes others' forces without battle, conquers others' cities without siege, destroys others' nations without taking a long time."[43] The Inchon Landing operation accomplished just that.

OTHER COMMANDERS

Lieutenant General Walton H. Walker commanded the U.N. ground forces, the EUSA in the Pusan Perimeter.

> …Walker, a Texan, was 61 and on the verge of retirement when he was sent from Japan as MacArthur's field commander. …Setting up his field headquarters in Taegu within sound of the guns, he tirelessly visited front-line units, impressing on all the absolute need to stand and die rather than carry on retreating; he could see that the morale of his army was at rock bottom following its precipitate retreat and his first aim was to instill confidence. In appearance he resembled a pugnacious bulldog and his words carried weight despite what many of his subordinates recall as a curiously uncharismatic delivery.[44]

Navy Vice Admiral Arthur D. Struble commanded Joint Task Force 7. Admiral Struble was abrasive and did not get along with some of the other commanders. "Struble was disliked and distrusted by some [in Washington] …"[45] In 1949, Vice Admiral Arthur W. Radford, then Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Air wrote, "Struble has done more harm to the Navy in the time he has been there [Washington] than anyone else could have possibly done."[46] During the Inchon Landing planning, "Struble used his authority directly by not allowing the Air Force to participate at Inchon." He was sure that to include the Air Force would require elaborate coordinating arrangements as was the case in Normandy.[47] He had naval aircraft handle the landing and the Air Force joined after Kimpo airport was secured. In the end, however, this worked well.

Navy Rear Admiral James H. Doyle commanded Task Force 90. "Doyle was a master practitioner of amphibious warfare. He had seen it all during World War II. Doyle was a principal amphibious planner on … staff in Washington. For two years he commanded the Amphibious Training Command in Coronado, California, keeping alive a form of warfare derided as obsolete by many in the Air Force and Army."[48] In the spring of 1950, MacArthur

> [H]ad let it be known that he wanted amphibious training for his army occupation forces in Japan. Ecstatic that a senior Army officer of MacArthur's prestige still felt that the Navy's amphibious forces were useful, the Navy sent Doyle and his ships [one each, flagship, attack transport, attack cargo ship, tank landing ship, and fleet tug] to Japan. It was a logical and fortuitous decision: Doyle was accustomed to conducting amphibious training and had already embarked Marines from the Troop Training Unit, Coronado. They would train MacArthur's Army.[49]

Marine Major General Oliver P. Smith was commanding general of the 1st Marine Division.

> Oliver Prince Smith did not fill the Marine Corps 'warrior' image. He was deeply religious, did not drink, seldom raised his voice in anger, and almost never swore. …He always commanded respect and, with the passage of years, that respect became love and devotion on the part of those Marines who served under him in Korea. They came to know that he would never waste their lives needlessly.[50]

Army Major General David G. Barr was commanding general of the 7th Infantry Division. Barr was a "strong staffer with much Southern heritage, but marginal experience in command. [Barr was] polite to a fault, visibly lacked self-confidence, and was too honest to deny problems with his command. He received command of the 7th Infantry Division because of seniority."[51]

Army Major General Edward M. Almond was appointed Commander of X Corps, comprising primarily of the 1st Marine Division (Smith) and 7th Infantry Division (Barr). Almond was the most controversial commander. Lieutenant General Lemuel Shepherd, Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, characterized Almond as "an excellent corps commander. He was energetic, forceful, brave, and in many ways did a good job under difficult conditions."[52] "As commanding general of the 1st Marine Division, [Oliver P.] Smith's feud with the mercurial commander of X Corps, Major General Edward M. Almond, USA [Army], would become the stuff of legends."[53] Admiral Doyle "…thought Almond arrogant and dictatorial and a person who 'often confused himself with his boss.'"[54] "Walker…regarded Almond as a court favourite and military adventurer who had been given X Corps by MacArthur as a reward for long and faithful service."[55] According to retired Marine Brigadier General Edwin H. Simmons, who was a Weapons Company Commander in the landing across Blue Beach Two at Inchon,[56] Almond worked well with MacArthur, but his inexperience led to tactically impossible and dangerous ideas that the other commanders had to talk him out of.[57] For example,

> Almond, still concerned by Smith's deliberate manner, had come up with yet another idea for the swift seizure of Kimpo. Almond's new plan [proposed on 9 September] called for landing a battalion of the 32d Infantry on Wolmi-do the evening of D-Day. It would 'barrel' down the road to Seoul in trucks and tanks provided by the Marines… Smith, horrified by a plan he considered tactically impossible, claimed 'he had no tanks to lend him' and the idea was dropped.[58]

Even Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman, General of the Army Omar N. "Bradley's assessment of Almond was less than enthusiastic: Ned Almond had never commanded a corps – or troops in an amphibious assault. However, he and his staff, mostly recruited from MacArthur's headquarters, were ably backstopped by the expertise of the Navy and Marines, notably that of Oliver P. Smith, who commanded the 1st Marine Division, which would spearhead the assault."[59]

AN AMPHIBIOUS FLANKING MOVEMENT USING THE INDIRECT APPROACH

MacArthur's success at Inchon was due, in large part, to it being the ultimate expression of Liddell Hart's concept of the Indirect Approach. The Direct Approach was what was happening in the Pusan Perimeter: the U.S. Forces were fighting head-to-head with the North Koreans in direct confrontation. B.H. Liddell Hart wrote extensively on the dual arts of war and generalship but perhaps his most influential work was his theory of the indirect approach. In his book Strategy, Hart states, "…throughout the ages, effective results in war have rarely been attained unless the approach has had such indirectness as to ensure the opponent's unreadiness to meet it. The indirectness has usually been physical, and always psychological. In strategy, the longest way round is often the shortest way home." [60] Centuries earlier, the warrior-philosopher Sun Tzu stated,

> Military formation is like water – the form of water is to avoid the high and go to the low, the form of a military force is to avoid the full and attack the empty; the flow of water is determined by the earth, the victory of a military force is determined by the opponent. So a military force has no constant formation, water has no constant shape; the ability to gain victory by changing and adapting according to the opponent is called genius.[61]

In Chapter Six, "The Theory of Strategy", Hart further explains that "Its [strategy's] purpose is to diminish *the possibility of resistance*, and it seeks to fulfill this purpose by exploiting the elements of *movement* and *surprise*." [62] Sun Tzu also emphasized the importance of surprise: "In battle, confrontation is done, directly, victory is gained by surprise."[63]

Clearly, in the case of Operation CHROMITE (the code name assigned to what would become the Inchon landing operation), by exploiting the undefended seaward flank, UN forces would bypass the main North Korean field army (resistance), which at the time, was decisively committed in South Korea around the Pusan Perimeter and was also far beyond mutual supporting distance of the few North Korean forces in and around Inchon. Additionally, since there was no North Korean Navy to speak of, a seaborne invasion (movement), at the port of Inchon, would not just outflank all the North Korean resistance on the land but would also capitalize on the tidal conditions, channel currents, mud flats, lack of beaches, fortified Wolmi Do Island and sea wall; which together combined to make Inchon appear improbable as an invasion site (i.e., surprise).[64]

MacArthur's landing at Inchon was also successful because it complied with all of what Hart describes as strategic dislocation factors: "… a move which (a) upsets the enemy's dispositions and, by compelling a sudden 'change of front', dislocates the distribution and organization of his forces; (b) separates his forces; (c) endangers his supplies; (d) menaces the

route or routes by which he could retreat in case of need and re-establish himself in his base or homeland. A dislocation may be produced by one of these effects, but is more often the consequence of several."[65]

Operation CHROMITE also conformed to Hart's eight axioms of the indirect approach:

> (1) Adjust your end to your means; (2) Keep you object always in mind; (3) Choose the line (or course) of least expectation; (4) Exploit the line of least resistance; (5) Take a line of operation which offers alternative objectives [in this case, Kimpo and Seoul]; (6) Ensure that both plan and dispositions are flexible – adaptable to circumstances; (7) Do not throw your weight into a stroke whilst your opponent is on guard and (8) Do not renew an attack along the same line (or in the same form) after it has once failed.[66]

Obviously, the plans needed for an amphibious flanking movement, deep into the North Korean's rear areas, required much more analysis and detail than could be provided from a theory. However, the concept of an indirect approach by way of an amphibious flanking movement, around to the enemy's rear, was sound.[67] Consequently, once the appropriate type of maneuver was determined, what remained was to decide who, what, when, where and why, and then work out the details.

CONCEPT: THE THREE PLANS

In July 1950, General MacArthur established the Joint Strategic Plans and Operations Group (JSPOG) to plan Operation CHROMITE. On 23 July three alternatives were stated. "Though the planners considered other landing places, such as Kunsan, it was obvious that MacArthur was set on Inchon."[68] Plan 100-D proposed a landing at Chunmunjin, up on the east coast of Korea.[69] This east coast landing was never seriously considered, as a landing on the same coast as the Pusan Perimeter would not cut any of the North Korean supply or communication lines. MacArthur stated, "The only alternative to a stroke such as I propose [landing at Inchon and capturing Seoul] will be the continuation of the savage sacrifice we are making at Pusan, with no hope of relief in sight. Are you content to let our troops stay in that bloody perimeter like beef cattle in the slaughterhouse?"[70]

Plan 100-C proposed a landing at Kunsan on the west coast, farther south from Inchon. Compared to Inchon, Kunsan was much better suited to an amphibious assault. The tides, seawalls, and defenses were far less difficult. Landing at Kunsan would provide a pincer effect when met with the EUSA, and it would create a continuous defensive front. However, General MacArthur wanted offense, not continued defense.[71] Kunsan was near the enemy's main supply routes through Nonsan and Taejon. Landing at Kunsan would not affect the North Korean communication lines in Seoul. MacArthur said, "As to the proposal for a landing at

Kunsan, it would indeed eliminate many of the hazards of Inchon, but it would be largely ineffective and indecisive… Better no flank movement than one such as this… It would be better to send the troops directly to Walker than by such an indirect and costly process."[72] Despite MacArthur's certainty of Inchon, the Joint Chiefs of Staff were still considering Kunsan as an alternative plan as late as 8 September (the Landing was only one week later).[73]

Plan 100-B proposed a landing at Inchon on the west coast with a simultaneous breakout of the Pusan Perimeter by the EUSA. General MacArthur believed, "Success at Inchon could end the war, while a seizure of Kunsan or another alternative site would be indecisive and lead to a brutal winter campaign."[74] In reality, the Inchon Landing was an idea which General MacArthur conceived from his visit to the front lines in June 1950. "From start to finish it was his idea; he made it work, and probably only he could have done so. He later said that he developed the idea from his first visit to the front in Korea; as he stood on the hills below the Han and watched Seoul falling to the enemy, he decided that they would first have to be contained, then defeated by an amphibious operation at Inchon. That was on June 29."[75] Instead of getting distracted by the sheer impossibility of the action, MacArthur ensured that the CHROMITE Operation continued to move forward.[76] "The genius of MacArthur's operational scheme lies in creating the conditions which render the enemy powerless to respond."[77]

> Aside from its military achievement, MacArthur's Inchon scheme might be judged by the quality of the opposition it aroused, for almost everyone was opposed to it. General Omar Bradley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was rather inclined to think that the day of the big amphibious operation was past. General J. Lawton Collins, "Lightning Joe" of World War II fame, now Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, thought the proposed operation was too deep in the North Korean rear and might well leave the invaders stranded and contained. The Navy's objections were largely couched in terms of the technical difficulties; the same was true of the Marines, who were the amphibious assault forces, but who were not keen to land over a seawall and charge directly into a city. That was not quite in keeping with their experience. Most of these other commanders [Navy and Marine] agreed with the idea of a landing, but wanted it in some other, less difficult place, such as perhaps Kunsan.[78]

INCHON ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Disadvantages

Landing at Inchon had numerous disadvantages. The Salee River, the approach route to Inchon, culminated in a dead end with no room for maneuver. There is a deep enough tidal range of 32 feet but only 3-4 days per month. Therefore, the only day, when the tides would be acceptable and before winter weather set in would be 15 September, giving only 23 days of

preparation and build-up time. If the landings were impossible on the 15th of September, then MacArthur would have to wait for an entire month for the right conditions to recur. The approaches were also difficult due to channel currents of at least 3 knots and up to 8 knots caused by the extreme tides. Wolmi Do and So Wolmi Do Islands stuck out into the approach channel, and Wolmi Do Island was garrisoned. The tides are high enough for landing craft only twice a day: morning high tide 45 minutes after sunrise and evening high tide 37 minutes after sunset. Also, the landing craft would have to maneuver in the daylight, so the landing would have to be made in two stages, on the morning and evening tides, with the first landing party exposed all day. There were no beaches due to a high sea wall of 14 feet and mud flats 18,000 feet from shore.[79]

Furthermore, there were no available army troops that were trained in amphibious operations. ("MacArthur's soldiers, the 35th Regimental Combat Team, first assembled with [Admiral] Doyle's [amphibious] training Team on 25 June. The exercise was cancelled when word was received of the North Korean attack."[80]) As a matter of fact, there were relatively no troops available at the time since all reinforcements were being sent to the Pusan Perimeter.

There was also the issue of the distance between Inchon and Pusan, which precluded mutual support between the two separated U.N. forces. It was theoretically possible that due to the distances involved, one or both of the two forces could be defeated in detail, before the other could respond.

The disadvantages and risks seemed to everyone except General MacArthur to outweigh the advantages.[81] "He was convinced that as long as he was willing to risk his life for something he believed in, everyone else should be willing to do the same."[82] MacArthur himself stated, "I was now finally ready for the last great stroke to bring my plan into fruition… a turning movement deep into the flank and rear of the enemy that would sever his supply lines and encircle all his forces south of Seoul. I had made similar decisions in past campaigns, but none more fraught with danger, none that promised to be more vitally conclusive if successful."[83]

Advantages

Despite the disadvantages, a landing at Inchon also offered several significant advantages. First, Inchon was the nearest landing site to the largest airfield in Korea, Kimpo, which would be essential for aerial resupply missions and strategic and tactical air operations. Second, Inchon was the chief port for the Korean capital - Seoul, which was only 18 miles away. Third, a landing at Inchon would open a second front against the North Koreans, who, at a minimum, would be forced to fight both to their front and rear and at the worst, might lead to

their strategic encirclement. Fourth, the North Koreans had decisively committed all their forces in the extreme south of the Korean peninsula, against the Eighth Army at the Pusan Perimeter, but appeared oblivious to the precariousness of their extended and vulnerable lines of communication. The capture of Seoul was crucial to the relief of the Pusan Perimeter because the main North Korean, north - south lines of communication (railroad lines, highways, telephone and telegraph lines) passed through Seoul. Without means of resupply or communications, the North Koreans would not be able to sustain their operations against the Pusan Perimeter and would be forced to retreat northwards towards their base of supply – North Korea.

In his book, Reminiscences, General MacArthur said, "To fight frontally in a breakthrough from Pusan will be bloody and indecisive. The enemy will merely roll back on his lines of supply and communication [at Seoul]."…"By seizing Seoul I would completely paralyze the enemy's supply system – coming and going. This in turn will paralyze the fighting power of the troops that now face Walker [in the Pusan Perimeter]."[84]

An amphibious landing in their rear was something that the North Koreans were neither expecting nor preparing for and would clearly constitute the point at which the North Koreans would lose the initiative. A landing at Inchon would also represent the point at which U.N. forces shifted from the defensive to the offensive. But most importantly, a U.N. landing at Inchon ~~it~~ would be a total surprise to the enemy and as William Manchester quoted General MacArthur as saying, "Surprise, 'is the most vital element for success in war."[85]

MACARTHUR'S UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE ON INCHON

In addition to the advantages stated above, General MacArthur had further rationale for selecting Inchon. He was well-read in military history, and at the time of the Korean Conflict was reading British General James Wolfe's diary concerning his 1759 capture of French-held Quebec during the French and Indian War.[86] General Wolfe envisioned a plan to attack French Marquis de Montcalm on the Plains of Abraham. In order to use the element of surprise, he proposed sending his men up the steep cliffs along a narrow, wooded footpath. All of his subordinate commanders said it was impossible. Wolfe decided, "If all his own advisers felt this way about it, so would Montcalm, the defending general."[87] MacArthur said, "On the Plains of Abraham, Wolfe won a stunning victory that was made possible almost entirely by surprise. Thus, he captured Quebec and in effect ended the French and Indian War. Like Montcalm, the North Koreans would regard an Inchon landing as impossible. Like Wolfe, I could take them by surprise."[88]

MacArthur was accustomed to swimming against the tide of conventional thought. "The doubts of his staff regarding its [Inchon's] obvious unsuitability for an amphibious landing only reinforced his notion that it would be the perfect spot for a surprise attack."[89] As was stated earlier, MacArthur considered surprise to be vital to success. The fact that Inchon was so unlikely for an amphibious landing was the attractive point.[90] General MacArthur called a strategic conference in Tokyo on 23 August including Army Chief of Staff General Joseph Collins and Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Forrest Sherman, the Commandant of the Marine Corps Lieutenant General Lemuel Shepherd, Air Force Lieutenant General George Stratemeyer, Far East Chief of Staff Major General Edward Almond (during the Inchon Landing, to be Commander of X Corps), Navy commander Vice Admiral C. Turner Joy (to be Commander of Naval Forces, Far East), fleet commander Vice Admiral Arthur Struble (to be Commander of Joint Task Force Seven), amphibious expert Rear Admiral James Doyle (to be Commander of Amphibious Group One), and various other "silver stars."[91] At that conference, MacArthur explained, "The very arguments you have made as to the impracticabilities involved will tend to ensure for me the element of surprise. For the enemy commander will reason that no one would be so brash as to make such an attempt. Surprise is the most vital element for success in war."[92] Authors Fehrenbach, Hickey, and Stokesbury all believed that had the Chinese not entered the fight, MacArthur at Inchon, (like Wolfe at the Plains of Abraham), would have won the War.[93]

General MacArthur also had had a personal success history with surprise amphibious landings: most spectacularly in New Guinea in 1943. MacArthur surmised that the Japanese could not continue to supply their several detachments along the coasts of New Guinea. Rather than fight it out with each one successively, MacArthur chose to hop forward 600 miles to Hollandia, bypassing the little detachments. After this complete surprise attack, he continued the amphibious hops supported by carrier-borne aircraft. In one year, he advanced 1,300 miles with little serious bloodshed, and stranded 135,000 Japanese.[94]

Finally, MacArthur, with his great depth of experience with and understanding of the Asian people as well as of military strategy, was frustrated with Washington's emphasis on Europe, where there was no war at the time. In the 23 August strategic conference in Tokyo he stated,

> It is plainly apparent that here in Asia is where the Communist conspirators have elected to make their play for global conquest…It is here and it is now – it is along the Naktong River in South Korea…Actually, we here fight Europe's war with arms, while there it is still confined to words…If we lost the war to Communism in Asia, the fate of Europe will probably be saved from war and stay free. Make the wrong decision here – the fatal decision of inertia – and we will be done…We must act now or we will die.[95]

OPERATION CHROMITE – THE INCHON LANDING

BUILDUP

In July the Marine Corps had already begun to bring its 1st Division to full strength, calling its entire Reserve force to active duty. That included 1,800 officers and 31,000 enlisted reservists. They also transferred 6,800 regulars from the 2nd Marine Division of the Atlantic Fleet.[96] The Army, Air Force, and Navy quickly called up their Reserves, and the President called four National Guard divisions to active duty.[97] In addition to the 7th Division from Japan, MacArthur got all the infantry and artillery replacements meant for the Pusan Perimeter diverted to the X Corps[98], and the remaining 9,000 shortfall was made up of hastily drafted, non-English-speaking Korean civilians, trained on the buddy system. It is interesting that an Army which had not even integrated blacks would consider such a system; however, desperate times call for desperate measures.[99] On 14 September, the X Corps comprised 70,000 marines and GIs (Army troops).[100]

According to Manchester, the only unit that could have made the impossible a success was the 1st Marine Division. They were the cutting edge of the military with extensive amphibious experience during World War II at Guadalcanal, New Guinea and Okinawa. They were also in peak condition.[101] Unfortunately, the 5th Marine Regiment of the Division was fighting with General Walker in the Pusan Perimeter. Because of the difficulty in replacing or doing without them, they were not released to the Division for the Landing until midnight 6 September. The Korean 1st Marine Regiment of 3,000 men, experienced in small-scale, hit and run raids, also joined the U.S. 1st Marine Division.[102] "The men of the 7th Infantry Division expected a tough fight ahead and were uneasy with the large numbers of ill-trained Korean 'augmentation troops' dumped in their ranks. Every third soldier within the 32d Infantry was a Korean draftee."[103]

The Navy was the best equipped and prepared of all the forces involved in the Landing. Joint Task Force 7, commanded by Admiral Struble, "…provided air cover, shore bombardment, blockade, minesweeping, and logistics support for Admiral Doyle's attack force."[104] Altogether 261 vessels from seven nations were involved in one stage or another of the Inchon Landing.[105] Doyle had assembled 17 U.S. Navy tank landing ships (LSTs) and 30 Japanese-manned LSTs (from the civilian Shipping Control Administration of Japan). LSTs which were designed to operate in shallow water and unload directly onto the beach were vital to success at Inchon.[106] Despite Struble's support of the Landing, his reservations about leaving his vehicles "high and dry" overnight were evident in the fact that he used "…eight old LSTs that had previously been

decommissioned, and had been kicking around Japanese waters slowly rusting for the last five years. One of them actually had to be towed to Inchon."[107]

General Walker's 8th Army was intended as the hammer to X Corps' anvil, and had approximately 150,000 U.N. troops including four U.S. divisions with an average strength of 15,000 men. The South Korean Army had six divisions with an average strength of 10,000 men. However, "the number of riflemen remained proportionately low with some line companies at less than 50 percent strength.… [In addition, despite the] vast superiority of armor and artillery…the firing batteries were on ammunition ration[ing] because of the shortage of shells."[108]

INFORMATION GATHERING

The Chinese warrior-philosopher Sun Tzu stated, "So only a brilliant ruler or a wise general who can use the highly intelligent for espionage is sure of great success. This is essential for military operations, and the armies depend on this in their actions."[109] The Central Intelligence Agency personnel had been gathering information long before the North Korean invasion of 25 June. This long-term knowledge and development of sources was essential to the success of intelligence gathering. "The intelligence estimates had said there were probably only about 6,500 North Koreans around [the landing site], perhaps 5,000 in Seoul, 500 around Kimpo airport, and 1,000 in Inchon. This seems to have been about correct, and not only did the marines outnumber the defenders, but the Navy far outclassed them in firepower."[110]

However, "no one did more to provide that [accurate intelligence] information [immediately prior to the Landing] than Navy Lieutenant Eugene F. Clark."[111] Clark was a 39-year-old, chief petty officer commissioned during World War II.[112] With a team including two South Korean interpreters, Clark organized a force of men and boys who returned with valuable intelligence from the islands, Inchon, Kimpo, and Seoul. Lieutenant Clark recognized the desperate and essential nature of his mission and impressed that upon one of his two South Korean interpreters, Kim, saying, "It will be part of our job to build up our capability [to obtain the required information]. It's not so much a question of *can* we do it at this late stage. We are the only ones here, the job has been given to us, and we *must* do it."[113]

Clark reported that the Japanese tide tables were accurate, the sea walls were higher than estimated, and that Wolmi Do was heavily fortified and armed with Soviet artillery pieces.[114] Referring to Wolmi Do, Clark recalled, "It was reiterated that they considered this island the whole key to success or failure of the Inchon invasion. The task force commander, Admiral Doyle, wanted it knocked out at any cost."[115] Clark was discovered by the North

Koreans on 7 September, engaged the enemy, and had the destroyer *Hanson* blast the island of Taebu Do, while "Marine Corsairs covering the destroyer [*Hanson*] also bombed and strafed the North Korean lair."[116]

They repaired the lighthouse beacon on Palmi Do and, as requested by Tokyo, Clark activated the light early on the morning 15th to guide the Advance Attack Group through the difficult approach to Inchon.[117] Clark expected the North Koreans to return but hoped they would delay until after the 15th. Unfortunately, a North Korean battalion attacked at dusk on the 14th, causing Clark to be 50 minutes late lighting the Palmi Do lighthouse.[118] Despite his two weeks of hard work and daily successes, Clark was exhausted and discouraged when he was unable to light the Palmi Do light by midnight as requested. He said, "It was 0050 when we adjusted the vector shade to throw the light down Flying Fish Channel. I felt defeated. Completely defeated. Everything had gone wrong at the last. Good planning would have avoided all this… Had we given them enough information? Had it been accurate? A sudden shudder coursed through me… Doubts began to assail me from all sides."[119] It was enough, and he was successful. "For his 'conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity' in obtaining 'vital intelligence information,' the Navy awarded Lieutenant Eugene Franklin Clark the Silver star."[120]

Also of vital importance to the element of surprise was the disinformation campaign. Sun Tzu said, "When you are going to attack nearby, make it look as if you are going to go a long way; when you are going to attack far away, make it look as if you are going just a short distance."[121] With such a huge undertaking, even at the speed with which it was prepared, leaks were unavoidable. An amphibious attack was obviously being prepared. In order to divert the North Koreans' attention, Kunsan continued to be purposely leaked as the landing site. Cruisers and destroyers shelled Kunsan on 6 September, a day after shelling Inchon. During the night of 12-13 September, a British frigate landed U.S. special operations troops and Royal Marine Commandos on the docks at Kunsan, making sure the enemy was aware of their presence.[122]

THE LANDING ITSELF

The 7th Fleet, carrying General Almond's X Corps, was scheduled to leave Japan headed for Korea on 12 September. However, "…Typhoon Kezia was detected in the Marianas, heading for Japan with 125-knot winds… Kezia could scuttle the entire Inchon operation. …Admiral Struble…ordered the fleet to sea a day early on 11 September to escape its full impact. …Despite being battered by rough seas, the fleet arrived at Inchon on schedule."[123]

Preliminary napalm bombardment of Wolmi-do Island began on 10 September. On the 13th and 14th surface ships pounded the island with 5-, 6-, and 8-inch guns. On the morning of 13 September, one of the destroyers spotted a mine, one of 17 contact mines floating in the water. Later that day, destroyer sailors noted piles of Soviet-made mines that the enemy was obviously planning to mine the water approaches to Inchon – too late. Also on 13 September a North Korean commander radioed his headquarters in Pyongyang, "Ten enemy vessels approaching Inchon. Many aircraft are bombing Wolmi Do. There is every indication that the enemy will perform a landing." However, he assured the higher headquarters that his defenses were sufficient to repel the enemy attack.[124]

On the morning tide of 15 September, the 3rd Battalion of the 5th Marines took Wolmi Do Island within 45 minutes, rooting out the last of the defenders within a few hours.[125]

> Late in the afternoon, the Marines hit Red and Blue Beaches [of Inchon], the former right in the city, the latter south of it. The troops went up and over the walls with scaling ladders and grappling lines…and the LSTs [Landing Ships, Tank] banged into the seawall. Unloading of bulldozers, tanks, and heavy equipment began under fire. …The sailors from…the LSTs hosed down everything in sight – including some Marines - with 20mm and 40mm cannon. Within an hour and a half they had secured Cemetery Hill overlooking Red Beach. By the next …day's end the city [Inchon] and beachhead area were under their control.[126]

"Once Inchon had been encircled, ROK [South Korean] Special Marines were allowed to enter the city to mop up. This they accomplished with such a vengeance that for a number of hours no man, woman, or child of Inchon, friend or foe, was safe."[127] "The Marines suppressed intermittent sniper fire and secured the urban flanks of this headlong advance. The attached 1st ROK Marine Regiment was employed to eradicate the last pockets of resistance. The logistical lifeline from Japan to Inchon port was so tenuous that X Corps could not afford communist infiltrators or saboteurs behind the lines."[128]

> Although Kimpo [airfield] provided X Corps with an important airdrome, the seaport of Inchon was the logistical key to Operation CHROMITE and the liberation of Seoul. Over three thousand Army engineers and support troops, Navy beachmasters, and Marine shore party controllers working with hundreds of Japanese stevedores, hatch-gang laborers, and dragooned Korean workers, repaired port damage, cleared the docks, and pressed the harbor into functional service.[129]

On 16 September, the U.S. Marine ground troops moved toward Kimpo Airfield and Seoul. The soldiers of General Barr's 7th Infantry Division were offloaded at Inchon 18-19 September and moved toward Seoul to secure the Marines' right flank.[130]

SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF THE BATTLE

Once the landings were successful, General Almond came ashore and took command. The U.S. Marines moved east from Inchon, approaching the air field at Kimpo. The U.S. repelled three badly coordinated attacks by the North Koreans within 24 hours.[131] "By 18 September the 5th Marines had [taken] Kimpo Airfield. American air support now could fly from land bases. By nightfall of the 18th, Marines reached the banks of the Han [River at Seoul]."[132] It is interesting to note that at Kimpo airfield, James M. Gavin, the airborne hero of Europe representing the Pentagon's Weapons Systems Evaluation Group, was, "amazed to find an elaborate arrangement of hard stands and revetments all around the airfield…Obviously, some sophisticated thinking had gone into the planning, and much labor and effort had been expended in anticipation of using the airfield by a modern air force. …An intervention by the Chinese seems most likely." MacArthur's G-2, Willoughby, insisted the Chinese would never cross the Yalu.[133]

After securing the port city of Inchon and the air field at Kimpo, the final step was to take Seoul. "For four days the Marines and infantry locked the stubbornly defending NKPA in close combat along the western approaches to Seoul."[134] "By midday on the 24th …General Almond, dissatisfied with the Marine progress through the city, moved the 32d Infantry and the 17th ROK Infantry across the Han [River] to flanking positions."[135]

There is considerable confusion as to the exact date of Seoul's recapture. General Almond wanted to announce the recapture three months to the day from the date of the North Korean invasion.[136] That was 25 September. Based on Almond's report, MacArthur announced the recapture on 26 September. However, the fighting continued for two more days, until 28 September. According to Army Chief of Staff J. Lawton Collins,

> Shortly before dark [on 25 September] an air-observer report reaching General Almond indicated that enemy columns were streaming to the north out of Seoul. Although the air report had some factual foundation, the Marines, hit with counterattacks before they got their own attacks under way, made little or no advance before dawn.
>
> Nonetheless, just before midnight on September 25 General Almond, apparently basing his press release on the air-observer report and the capture of South Mountain, announced the liberation of Seoul. The next day the Marines continued to encounter the same deadly street fighting…and by nightfall of September 26 the Americans held only half the city. MacArthur followed Almond's declaration by issuing on September 26 an official United Nations communiqué announcing, 'Seoul, the capital of the Republic of Korea, is again in friendly hands. The United Nations forces … have completed the envelopment and seizure of the city.'
>
> Actually, fighting in Seoul continued throughout September 27 and 28 before the last groups of the North Korean invaders were ferreted out.[137]

On the morning of 27 September, elements of Walker's EUSA met elements of Almond's X Corps at Osan; "the campaign for South Korea was almost over."[138] Over the next week, the soldiers and marines established blocking positions south toward Suwon, (a city 25 kilometers south of Seoul); and north, taking Uijongbu, (a city 35 kilometers north of Seoul). On 3 October the 1st Marine Division met its last organized resistance in front of Uijongbu.[139]

EVALUATION

WHAT WENT WRONG

The first problem was Typhoon Kezia which headed toward Korea and was predicted to hit just as the invasion force was to leave Japan. The invasion could not be delayed due to the tides and winter. Trusting his staff meteorologist, Admiral Struble ordered the fleet to sea a day earlier. Rough seas resulted, but the landing was not postponed or cancelled.[140]

Due to post World War II downsizing, demobilization and complacence, the U.S. Army was horribly unprepared for combat, especially in ground troops. "Thus, again, it cannot be considered accident that in 1950 the dominant power of the world was barely able to contain the ground attack of an almost illiterate nation of nine millions – nor could it have done so without the enormous manpower sacrifices of its Korean ally."[141]

There was a great deal of mustard colored haze and black smoke, rain, and gathering darkness and unanticipated crosscurrents during the landing on the Inchon beaches. As a result, some landing craft drifted to the wrong beaches. Some Marines had to go overland to link up with the rest of the landing party, while other groups were backed up on the same beaches, creating a great clog of Marines. Also, there were some friendly fire casualties. Despite the confusion, the landings were quite successful and with only 21 killed and 174 wounded in action.[142]

The weather and smoke problems were unavoidable; however, some confusion could have been alleviated had the landing craft drivers been more experienced and trained. The author Edwin H. Simmons, a company commander in the Inchon Landing, knew he was approaching the wrong landing site and asked his driver if he had a compass. "He looked at his instrument panel and said, 'Search me. Six weeks ago I was driving a truck in San Francisco.'"[143]

General Walker had great difficulty breaking out of the Pusan Perimeter. The troops were exhausted from months of sustained combat. "There had been heavy losses in equipment as well as men."[144] The Naktong River was extremely difficult to cross with their inadequate

equipment. Even more difficult was the fact that the North Koreans maintained their offensive against the Pusan Perimeter for an additional seven days, following the Inchon Landings.

The North Koreans did not respond to the leaflets and broadcasts of the Inchon Landing success. Perhaps they could not read the leaflets and did not believe the broadcasts. Commenting on the interrogation of North Korean police and soldiers, Lieutenant Clark stated, "Their indoctrination had included lectures on the long arm of the Reds… They were more afraid of their own people than they were of us and would take their chances accordingly."[145] The front did not begin opening up until 22 September.[146]

According to General J. Lawton Collins, Chief of Staff of the Army, General Almond was not the right man to command the attack on Seoul. "General Collins surmised that MacArthur placed Major General Almond in command of X Corps simply to enable him to be promoted to lieutenant general. This was in spite of the fact that he had no combat amphibious experience and a more senior and experienced Marine General with an existing staff was available."[147] Those directly involved with the Landing also felt General Almond was not the best choice.[148] (See also **THE COMMANDERS**, OTHER COMMANDERS section beginning on page 8.)

WHAT WENT RIGHT

All branches of the armed forces gave their best efforts. They coordinated and cooperated with each other regardless of personal feelings and personality clashes. "The Navy and Marine Corps had never fully accepted the plan; yet they carried it out to perfection."[149] Despite the infighting between the Services during this period, MacArthur had accentuated each Service's strengths.[150]

The intelligence gathered in advance was comprehensive and accurate. Navy Lieutenant Eugene F. Clark was vital to the Landing's success, gaining accurate and timely information immediately prior to the 15th. He also repaired and lit the lighthouse beacon early the morning of the attack, which guided the ships of the Advance Attack Group through the treacherous approach.[151] The Central Intelligence Agency, British Commandos, U.S. Marines, South Korean military and civilians; all contributed to the success of the mission.

Following the Inchon Landing with so few killed and wounded, when the going got tough and the fighting got bloody as the X Corps attempted to take Seoul, the soldiers and marines did not "bug out" as so many did in early July (see **BACKGROUND**, U.S. RESPONSE TO THE INVASION section beginning on page 4 for details). The X Corps forces had enough experienced and disciplined soldiers and marines mixed in with the inexperienced and hastily

recruited U.S. Reservists and South Korean civilians to follow orders and accomplish the mission successfully.

CONCLUSION

General Douglas A. MacArthur clearly showed military genius and brilliant generalship in the visualization, development, and implementation of the Inchon Landing operation. He anticipated a future need and envisioned a unique plan. The operation was to be implemented in a location labeled impossible by all others in order to ensure the element of surprise. Then, General MacArthur overcame obstacles of severe time and manpower shortages to bring his plan into fruition.

The first time MacArthur observed the Pusan Perimeter and the geography of Korea, he envisioned the landing at Inchon as the way to reclaim the capital city of Seoul and allow the breakout of the Pusan Perimeter. The direct approach in the Perimeter was not working, so MacArthur created a plan using the indirect approach. Landing far in the North Korean rear, he cut their lines of communication and supply which routed Communist forces on the verge of apparent victory. Amphibious landings had been done successfully before the Landing at Inchon; however, the fact that it was at Inchon, 18 miles from Seoul and so far behind enemy lines, made the disadvantages of the landing site worth the effort and success so complete.

The port of Inchon was so completely unlikely a landing site due to its climate and natural characteristics that it afforded the essential element of surprise. No one except MacArthur, not the highest military commanders under him, nor the enemy, believed a landing at Inchon could be successful. By his strength of will and presence, General MacArthur gained the support of the commanders, and they did not fail him. Even though some commanders had personality conflicts, they successfully accomplished their missions. Also, despite the infighting between the services, MacArthur utilized each service's strengths and gained the cooperation and coordination of the Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force.

The speed at which the operation occurred was phenomenal, from an idea in General MacArthur's head to the completion of the mission: only six weeks after the plan's conception and 23 days after commitment of troops for an amphibious landing were approved. MacArthur gathered 70,000 men, including U.S. marines, sailors, troops, and airmen, some of whom were stationed in Europe and the Mediterranean; activated Marine and Army Reservists, and Korean military and civilians. British commandos and South Korean guerrillas aided immeasurably in intelligence gathering and feints at Kunsan immediately prior to the landing at Inchon.

In his book, Korea – The Limited War, David Rees stated, “Inchon, then, could not have happened under any other commander but MacArthur. It sprang from his overpowering personality and self-confidence, and his plan was supported by no one else for it looked back to an age of warfare unencumbered by specialist objections and peripatetic Joint Chiefs. It remains an astonishing achievement precisely because it was a triumph not of military logic and science, but of imagination and intuition.”[152]

WORD COUNT = **10,434**

ENDNOTES

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[7] Brigadier Peter Young, ed., Great Generals and Their Battles (Greenwich, CT: Bison Books, 1984), 241.

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