UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
OFFICER CANDIDATES SCHOOL
TRAINING COMMAND
2189 ELROD AVENUE
QUANTICO, VA 22134-5033

HIST 1004
SEP 2014

MARINE CORPS HISTORY 4

TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE(S)

1. Without the aid of references, identify significant events in Marine Corps history without omitting key components. (OCS-HIST-1002)

ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVE(S)

1. Without the aid of references, identify influential contributors to the history of the Marine Corps from 1950 to 1965 without omission. (OCS-HIST-1002o)

2. Without the aid of references, describe Marine participation in Major Operations throughout Marine Corps history from 1950 to 1965 without omitting key components. (OCS-HIST-1002p)

3. Without the aid of references, trace the history of Marine Corps Amphibious Doctrine from 1950 to 1965 without omitting key components. (OCS-HIST-1002q)

4. Without the aid of references, trace the history of Marine Corps Aviation from 1950 to 1965 without omitting key components. (OCS-HIST-1002r)

1. THE POST WORLD WAR II PERIOD

a. Women's Armed Services Integration Act

(1) On 12 June 1948, President Truman signed the Women's Armed Services Integration Act, which allowed women to serve in the regular armed forces. Previously, women had been restricted to reserve forces. By the end of the Korean War, 2,800 were on active duty, mostly in administrative fields. Some served in weapons repair and truck driving.

(2) The summer of 1949 saw the enlistment of the first black women Marines. Now, at a time when male Marines were still segregated by race, women's Platoon 7 of the 3rd Recruit Training Battalion at Parris Island became one of the first integrated units in the Corps. The third black woman Marine, who enlisted in Chicago in 1950, was Annie L. Grimes. She was selected to Warrant Officer in 1968 and became the first black woman officer to retire from the Corps with 20 years of service. From the beginning, black and white women Marines trained and lived together.

(3) "Molly" Marine is the nickname of a statue dedicated to women who served as Marines. It has stood at the intersection of Elk Place and Canal Street in downtown New Orleans, Louisiana, since it was originally dedicated on the Marine Corps Birthday in 1943. Originally cast in marble chips and granite (because of wartime restrictions) Molly became weather beaten. Molly was later refurbished in bronze finery. Her unveiling took place during the Women Marine Association National Convention, 29 June – 1 July 1996.

b. Executive Order Number 9981

(1) On 26 July 1948, President Truman signed Executive Order 9981 that desegregated the armed services. Although there were only 2,200 African-Americans among a total of 93,000 Marines in mid-1947, the change wrought by integration was fundamental. Athletic teams, recruit platoons, and non-commissioned officer (NCO) clubs were the first groups that were desegregated.

(2) By the end of the Korean War, the percentage of African-Americans in the Corps rose from two to six percent. Major General O.P. Smith, who commanded all Marine forces in Korea, stated after the war when asked if his division was integrated, replied:

"Oh yes, I had a thousand Negroes, and we had no racial troubles. The men did whatever they were qualified to do. There were communicators, there were cooks, there were truck drivers, there were plain infantry-they did everything, and they did a good job because they were integrated and they were with good people....Two of these Negroes got the Navy Cross.. There was no fooling; they were real citations, and there were plenty of Silver Stars and Bronze Stars, and what have you. And I had no complaint on their performance of duty."

(3) The first African-American officer to lead Marines in combat was Lieutenant William K. Jenkins of Elizabeth, New Jersey, who served with B Company, 7th Marines in 1951-1952. The Marines in Korea had only one African-American pilot, Second Lieutenant Frank E. Petersen, Jr., of Topeka, Kansas, who flew 64 combat missions with VMF-212 and earned the Distinguished Flying Cross. Petersen was the fourth African-American man to become a naval aviator, the rest being in the Navy.

c. **National Security Act of 1947**

(1) Congress cut the military drastically following the Second World War. The Marine Corps went from 495,000 to 92,000 by 1948. As the 28th Marines seized the summit, Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal marked the event with the words, "... the flag raising on Mount Suribachi means a Marine Corps for the next 500 years." Despite this recognition, battles for the Marine Corps' existence would rage in Congress during 1948-49.

(2) Enemies of the Corps called for its disbanding. For the tenth time in its 170-year history, determined attempts were made to abolish the Marine Corps. Many congressmen aligned themselves with supporters of the Army and the newly created Air Force argued that the Marine Corps was obsolete in the nuclear era.

(3) Through a heavy public affairs effort led by an informal group of current and former Marine Officers known as the Chowder Society. Through their efforts the Marine Corps was able to successfully lobby congress for legislative protection.

(4) Congress passes the National Security Act of 1947 which laid out the roles and responsibilities of each of the armed services. For the Marine Corps this meant:

(a) "...the seizure and defense of advanced naval bases and for the conduct of such land operations as may be essential to the prosecution of a naval campaign."

(b) "...develop, in coordination with the army, navy and air force, the doctrine, tactics, techniques, and equipment employed by landing forces in amphibious operations.

(c) "…perform such other duties as the president may direct."

(d) Congress cut the military drastically following the Second World War. The number of active duty Marines in February 1948 was 92,000, down from a wartime peak of 495,000. During World War I, the Marine Corps had created the Organized Reserve. Congress planned to rely on it to provide manpower for any serious emergency. By 1950, the Marine Corps' strength was down to 75,000 Marines. The Marine Corps Reserve enabled the First Marine Division to meet its manpower requirements and deploy quickly for the Korean War.

2. **THE KOREAN WAR**

a. **The Road To War in Korea**

(1) In Europe, at the end of World War II, a reasonably clear line was drawn between Communist and non-communist blocs; but no such line could be fixed in Asia. Generalissimo Chiang Kai Shek's Nationalist Chinese government, which the United States recognized and supported, and the armies of the Chinese Communist revolutionary movement battled for four more years. The Marines, as the amphibious arm of American

sea power, remained in China until practically the end of that struggle in 1949. At the same time in Southeast Asia, nationalist and communist factions were fighting against the resurgence of Western colonialism.

(2) At the end of World War II, Korea is divided at the 38th Parallel. The Soviet Union turns North Korea into a satellite communist state with a fully armed and well trained army. The United States (U.S.) establishes the Republic of Korea in the south.

(3) In 1947, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) developed a plan to protect Japan from the communist influence that had overcome Russia and parts of China. The JCS stated they saw little strategic interest in the Korean peninsula and so, in the spring of 1949, they withdrew the 49,000 U.S. forces occupying South Korea. Left, were 500 U.S. military advisors, but no tanks, artillery or aircraft. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union was arming and training the North Korean Army to become one of the best-armed and best-trained armies in the world. On 12 January 1950, Secretary of State Dean Acheson excluded Korea and Formosa from a list of countries vital to U.S. strategic interests. The communists took him for his words.

b. **<u>The Communist Invasion</u>**

(1) In June of 1950, ten divisions of the North Korean People's Army (NKPA), supplied with Russian and Chinese equipment and advisors, charged across the 38th parallel and smashed the surprised South Koreans patrolling the border.

(2) The NKPA captured the South Korean capital of Seoul in 72 hours and the South Koreans reeled in a disorganized retreat southward. The Communist advance was crushing the Republic of Korea (ROK) army units.

(3) The U.N. Security Council assembled on 27 June and passed a resolution calling for armed intervention into Korea under a United Nations flag. General (Gen) Douglas MacArthur, commanding U.S. forces in the Far East, was authorized to commit U.S. Army units to the fight.

(4) The initial United States commitment was four under-strength and ill-equipped Army divisions from occupation duty in Japan. Hastily committed, these units were physically and psychologically unprepared for battle. Within a month, the U.N. forces were forced into a small perimeter around the port city of Pusan. There, eight divisions, four ROK and four American, held a thin line along the Naktong River, a wide, shallow river cutting through rugged hills 50 miles outside Pusan. The initial American forces into Korea were fed into the fight piece-meal and were badly beaten.

(5) MacArthur wanted Marines and requested a Marine Regimental Combat Team be sent on 2 July. Within days, the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade was created and less than a week later sailed from San Diego. The brigade was built around the 5th Marine Regiment and Marine Aircraft Group 33 with substantial supporting arms. Most of its officers and noncommissioned officers (NCO) had seen combat during World War II. In those early days, the Brigade's strength measured in expertise and supporting arms, was equivalent to that of a division.

c. **<u>The Pusan Perimeter</u>**

(1) The North Koreans had pushed the South Korean and U.S. Army units all the way back to Pusan, on the southern tip of the Korean Peninsula. The Marines, who had landed at Pusan on 2 August, saw their first action the following night. Five days after landing, the brigade went into action.

(2) Under General (GEN) Walker's 8th Army, the brigade attacked on 7 August 1950 with Army forces into NKPA forces massing for an attack on Pusan from the south. The Marine Brigade drove over 20 miles into NKPA occupied territory utilizing tank-infantry teams and close air support. For the first time since the invasion, U.N. forces had driven the NKPA back. The Marines were within four miles of Sachon, their objective, when ordered to disengage.

(3) During this first battle, the Marines also adjusted to the

Korean hills and summer heat. Throughout the defense of the Pusan Perimeter, they reinforced the U.S. Army's 24th Division and they were primarily used to fill the gaps and stop the communist advance. The Marines repeatedly beat the North Koreans back.

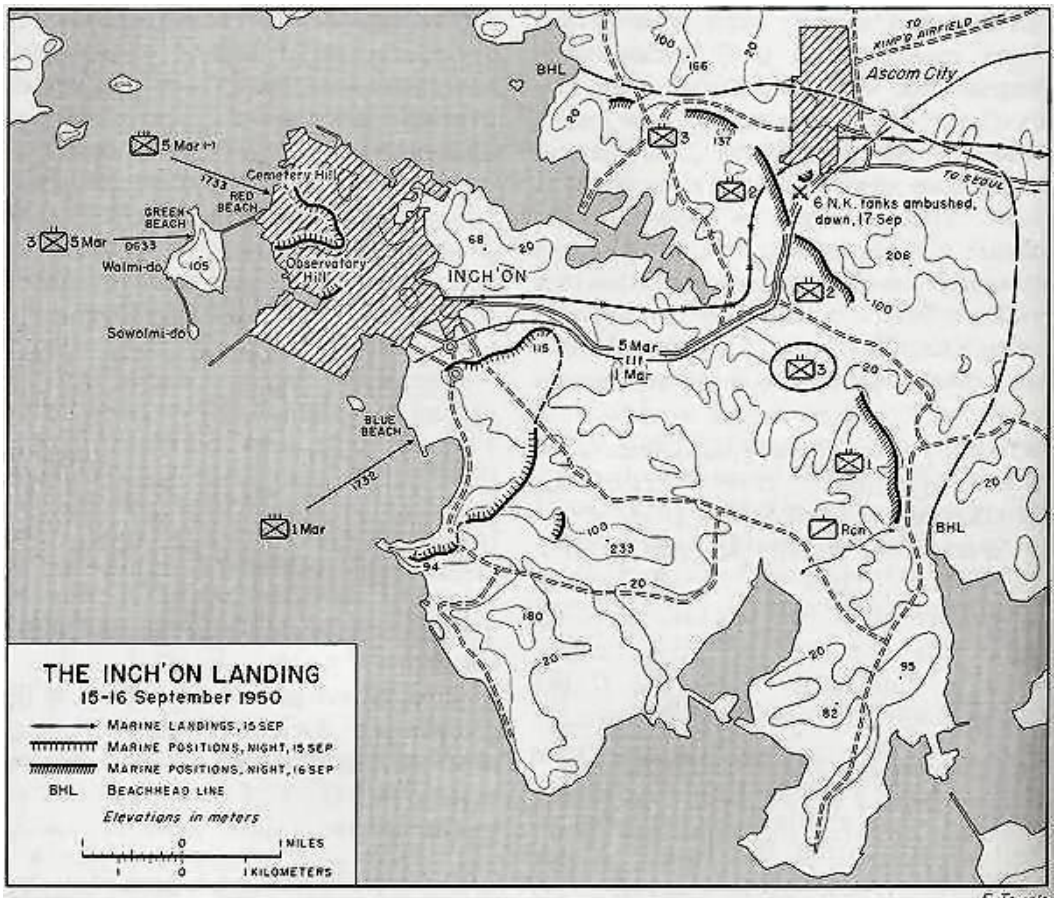
d. **<u>The Naktong Bulge</u>**

(1) In early August, the NKPA had forced a crossing of the Naktong River and by 10 August had almost a full division across at a place called the Naktong Bulge. This was an area east of the river and west of the cities Miryang and Yongsan. This bulge, inside the Pusan Perimeter, had to be eliminated. The Army was unable to eradicate it themselves and the Marine Brigade was sent to push the NKPA back across the Naktong. By 19 August, the Marines and the Army's 9th Regimental Combat Team had pushed the North Koreans back across the river. Marines pushed the Communists back from the Pusan perimeter repeatedly during August of 1950.

(2) Shortly after driving the NKPA out of the Naktong Bulge, the Marines were pulled out of the line for rest. The Army units that took the Marines' place were pushed back and the enemy was once again crossing the Naktong River. After their short rest, on 3 September, the brigade moved back to familiar ground in the Second Battle of the Naktong. The brigade launched a repeat performance of the battle two weeks prior. In three days, they drove the enemy back.

e. **<u>Inchon, 15 – 17 September 1950</u>**

(1) While the Brigade fought the Second Battle of the Naktong, MacArthur finished plans for a counter-offensive designed to blow the North Korean Army out of the war.



MAP 16

(2) GEN MacArthur had wanted to make a bold amphibious landing at the city of Inchon from the outset. With the Pusan Perimeter fairly stable and the remaining elements of the 1st Marine Division arriving shortly, he possessed the strength to do so.

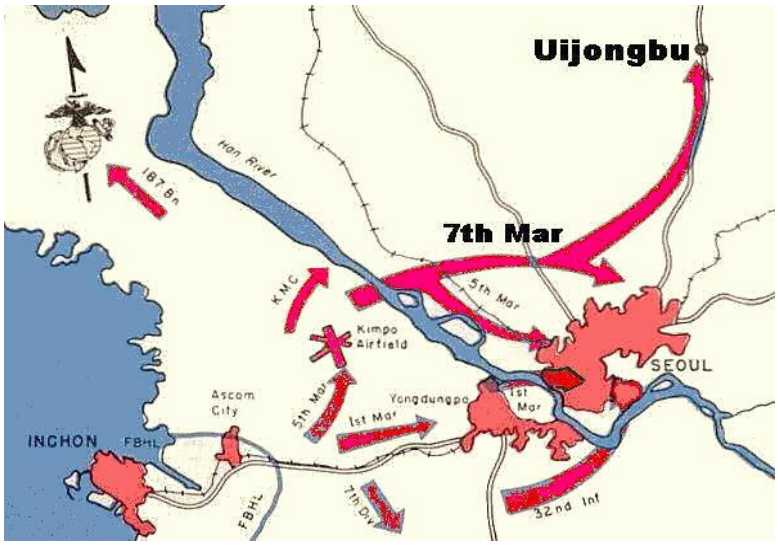
(3) GEN MacArthur named the 1st Marine Division, under Major General (MajGen) O.P. Smith, as his primary assault force. The main objective of the attack would be to cut the Koreans off from their northern supply routes. Inchon would be the first amphibious assault since World War II.

(4) There were many obstacles that had to be overcome in order to make the assault successful. The geographic and hydrographic conditions at Inchon made amphibious assaults almost impossible. MacArthur's staff, and even the JCS, argued against the operation. The lack of preparation time was questioned. Despite its

drawbacks, MacArthur believed only Inchon could turn the war around. Landings further south would have been easier, but ineffective.

(5) The Marines landed on 15 September. The Marines' first objective would be Wolmi-Do, a small island that guarded the entrance to Inchon's harbor. Two companies from the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines assaulted the island. After meeting little resistance, the island was secured by 0800.

(6) The main Inchon landing had to wait until the next high tide. At 1730, the remaining two battalions of the 5th Marines assaulted Red Beach. Machine gun fire raked the landing, but Marines battled into the city. After securing prominent terrain features in the industrial area with sporadic urban combat, they advanced inland to link up with the First Marines.



(7) The 1st Marines, commanded by Colonel Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller, landed at Blue Beach four miles south of Wolmi-Do. After advancing inland, they sealed off the city against retreat or reinforcement by the enemy.

(8) The landings were a huge success. They severed enemy supply and communication lines, the Marines were poised to recapture Seoul, and the NKPA was collapsing.

f. **Seoul, 24 – 26 September 1950**

(1) The Marines pressed inland towards Seoul. En-route, the Marines captured Kimpo Airfield. The 1st, 5th, and 7th Marines linked up outside of Kimpo and pushed together for Seoul.

(2) On 22 September, the 5th Marines crossed the Han River in Landing Vehicle Tracked (LVT) under heavy fire and attacked the hills above Seoul. They found 10,000 enemy troops dug in--the enemy had planned their defense of Seoul on this ridgeline. The enemy, many of which were veterans of the communist civil war in China, fought to the death. After a day of brutal fighting in the hills, the battalion met its first objective. Several of the companies were shrunk to platoon size--only 1 of the original 17 platoon commanders and only 1 of the original 6 company commanders who had landed at Inchon a week earlier were still in action; the rest had been killed or wounded.

(3) The 7th Marines fought through the city, and then attacked alongside the 5th through the hills. On the last day of battle, they were the only regiment with enough men left to break the final NKPA lines and pursue the enemy into the countryside.

(4) Col Puller's 1st Marines first cleared the industrial city of Yongdungpo, across the Han River from Seoul. Through minefields and into the burning city, Puller's Marines fought close-in battles against NKPA tanks and house-to-house battles with NKPA infantry. They crossed the Han and, after two days of sharp street fighting, raised the Stars and Stripes above the United States embassy.

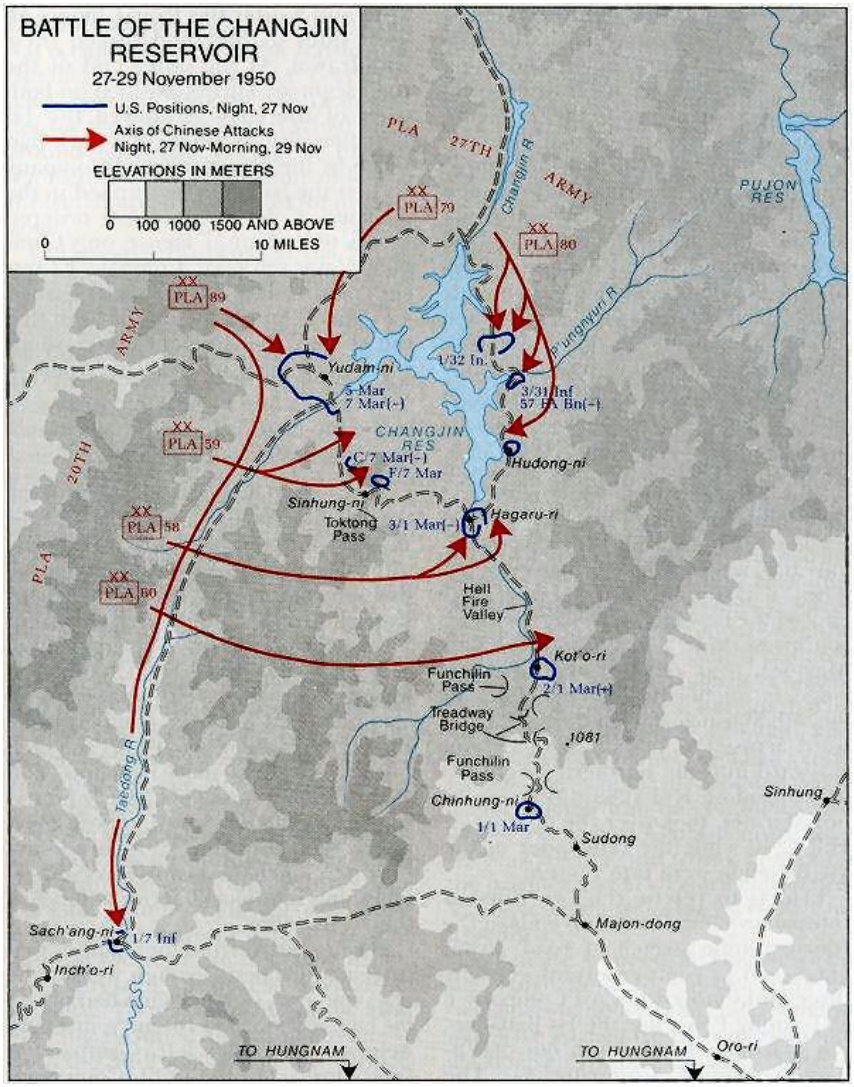
(5) The rapid progress made from Inchon to Seoul obscured the fact that the capture of the South Korean capital was one of the toughest fights in Marine history. It was a tough switch for Marines more at home in the South Pacific jungles or Korean rice paddies. Casualties from Inchon to Seoul amounted to more than 400 killed and over 1,000 wounded, with two-thirds resulting from the fight for Seoul.

(6) By 30 September, Seoul was entirely in U.N. hands. MacArthur had bragged at the war's beginning that he would recapture the South Korean capital within 90 days of the North Korean invasion. He missed the mark by a mere 4 days.

(7) When the Marines broke out of Seoul and into the countryside, they led a pursuit of a shattered army. As word of the Marine landings spread throughout the NKPA forces, already crumbling under a determined counterattack from U.N. forces from the Pusan Perimeter, they dissolved as a fighting force.

g. **<u>The Movement North, 27 September – 27 November 1950</u>**. GEN MacArthur's next move was to crush the NKPA once and for all. He continued to push north. President Harry S. Truman, concerned about the possibility of Chinese intervention, was very uneasy about pursuing the NKPA to the Chinese border. MacArthur insisted that the Soviets and Chinese would keep their distance. Truman conceded but warned him not to go all the way to the Yalu River, a broad, deep river that outlines the border between North Korea and China. MacArthur sent the 8th Army north towards the North Korean capital of Pyongyang, while he landed the Marines, as part of X Corps, on the east coast of North Korea at the port of Wonsan. The two armies would trap and destroy the remainder of the NKPA.

h. **<u>The Chosin Reservoir, 27 November – December 1950</u>**



(1) U.N. forces continued to advance north, driving the broken NKPA before them. MacArthur ignored his orders and had U.N. troops drive all the way to the Yalu River and the southern border of China.

(2) The 1st Marine Division had landed at Wonsan on 25 October 1950 and moved north. The 1st Marine Division fought northwards to the Hungnam-Hamhung area of the coast.

(3) The Chinese intervention began five days after U.N. troops crossed the 38th parallel. They began crossing the Yalu River moving south.

(4) In the last week of October, the 7th Marines, commanded by Col Homer Litzenberg, launched their drive north from Hamhung along a 78 mile long road which wound through steep mountains to a man-made reservoir called Chosin. On 8 November, gusting winds carried snow in from Manchuria and drove down the temperature from 32 degrees to -8 degrees. An 80 mile gap opened between the division's left flank and the 8th Army to the west. The division became strung out along a single, vulnerable mountain road. On Thanksgiving night, over 20,000 men of the 1st Marine Division were positioned along the main supply route. The 5th and 7th Marines held Yudam-Ni on the western side of the reservoir. The 1st Marines, commanded by Col "Chesty" Puller, were south of the reservoir protecting the majority of the main supply route down to Koto-Ri. East of the reservoir were two U.S. Army battalions and a field artillery unit. All huddled in the below-zero temperatures and wind to eat a cold holiday meal.

(5) During the night of 28 November, in minus twenty degrees weather, Marine units all along the main supply route were attacked by massive Chinese forces. Two Chinese divisions from the Communist Chinese Forces (CCF) struck the 5th and 7th Marine regiments at Yudam-Ni, while another division cut the road south of the valley. The Army units across the reservoir from the Marines were destroyed, with few survivors. In the blowing snow and bitter cold, the Marine positions held, often only through the close-in combat of Marines and Chinese using frozen

weapons as clubs, while Marine artillery pounded the enemy around the clock and Marine and Navy air napalmed massed Chinese attacks by day.

(6) Further south, five more Chinese divisions seized blocking positions from among 1st Marine positions across the main supply route. The 1st Marines were cut-off and isolated into small pockets, 70 miles from the sea and support. The Chinese were counting on destroying America's most successful division to reap a stunning military and psychological victory.

(7) All along the front, MacArthur's U.N. forces were reeling from a massed attack of almost 300,000 Chinese. On 30 November 1950, the X Corps commander (of which 1st Marine Division was a part), MajGen Edward M. Almond, ordered 1st Marine Division to withdraw to the sea. When Gen Smith who was in command of 1st Marine Division was asked by a reporter if he was retreating, he responded: "We are not retreating, we are attacking in a different direction." It was a testament of the Marines' fighting spirit.

(8) Thus the Marines began their epic advance to the sea. The Marines fought not only thousands of Chinese but the bitter weather as well. Without Marine close air support and Air Force medevac flights, the ground units could not have come out as they did. It took thirteen agonizing days to reach the waiting ships at the port city of Hungnam. Despite the overwhelming odds, the 1st Marine Division had virtually destroyed seven Chinese divisions.

(9) At Hungnam, the U.N. fleet evacuated the Marines. The 1st Marine Division escaped the Chinese trap with nearly all their equipment, and a lot of U.S. Army equipment, at a cost of 6,000 Marine casualties, over half from severe frostbite and weather related injuries. Estimates place Chinese casualties around 37,000 troops lost. Historians generally consider the Chosin Reservoir Campaign the most successful withdrawal in military history.

(10) Blunt-spoken Col Puller received his fifth Navy Cross. Thus, he became the only Marine ever-awarded five, for "superb courage" commanding the division's rear guard out of Koto-Ri.

(11) In February, plans for a new offensive were drawn up. The Marines acted as the spearhead for the assault and pushed north. As the Marines pushed north they did so without air cover. Higher headquarters decided to pull the close air support away from the Marine Division for employment elsewhere. As a result, casualties began to increase all along the front. The United Nations halted ground offensive operations, and planned to bomb the Chinese out of the war.

i. **Stalemate**

(1) The Chinese advance drove MacArthur's forces as far south as Wonju. U.N. forces counterattacked to retake Seoul in March 1951. Afterwards, the front stabilized roughly along the rugged terrain of the 38th parallel. During the summer of 1951, Marines fought in several highly mobile operations across the parallel to keep the enemy off guard and force them to the peace talks. President Truman replaced GEN MacArthur as Supreme Allied Commander.

(2) Trench Warfare. The winter of 1951-1952 was relatively quiet. In March of 1952, the Marines departed the Punchbowl to man a trench system along the 38th Parallel. The Korean War had stagnated. In a throwback to World War I, the war became a routine of patrolling, bunker life, raids, and artillery barrages.

j. **Ending the War.** On Monday morning, 27 July 1953, the armistice agreement was signed at Panmunjom. The war was finished after three years, one month and two days of battle. The Marines had 4,262 killed in battle and 20,038 wounded. When the armistice became effective at 2200, thousands of white star cluster shells illuminated the sky all along the 155 mile front.

3. **DEVELOPMENTS FROM THE KOREAN WAR**

a. The first of these was the development and use of lightweight body armor in the latter stages of the war. This is the origin of the flak jackets used in the Operating Forces today.

b. The second was the introduction of the thermal boots. Because of the intense cold, frostbite injuries, and the problems of fighting in an arctic environment, all Marine replacements for Korea were sent to Bridgeport, California for extensive cold weather training prior to departure to Korea.

c. Third and probably most important was the introduction of the helicopter into a combat environment. The Marine Corps pioneered the doctrine of Vertical Envelopment, also known as the helicopter assault.

d. **Public Law 416, Douglas-Mansfield Act**

(1) On 20 June 1952, Congress passed the Douglas-Mansfield Act. This amended the National Security Act of 1947 with Public Law 416, which stated that the Marine Corps would never be smaller than three active duty divisions, three active duty air wings, and the necessary service support. This would prevent the U.S. Armed Forces from being as militarily unprepared and undersized as they were before the Korean War started. Furthermore, Public Law 416 made the Commandant of the Marine Corps a non-voting member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

(2) The Marine Corps emerged from the Korean War with its greatest peacetime strength. This strength was not measured in personnel, but on its firm establishment as a "force in readiness."

e. **Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps**

(1) Wilbur Bestwick was born on 27 November 1911 in Sabetha, Kansas. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1934 and went to boot camp in San Diego, California.

(2) Prior to World War II, Bestwick served in Bremerton, Washington, San Diego, California, Camp Elliott, California and aboard the *USS Louisville*. He was appointed Sergeant Major in 1943. During World War II, he saw combat action in the Bougainville and Guam campaigns while serving with the 3d Marine Division.

(3) In December of 1944, Bestwick became Sergeant Major of the Mare Island, California Shipyard until 1945 when he became Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Depot of Supplies. In 1949, he transferred to the east coast where he became Sergeant Major of the Parris Island Marine Corps Recruit Depot.

(4) From 1952 to 1953, Sergeant Major Bestwick served with the 1st Marine Division in Korea where he earned a Navy Commendation Medal with a Combat “V.”

(5) Bestwick served as Sergeant Major to the Secretary of the General Staff until 23 May 1957, when he assumed the new post of Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps. He served in this capacity until his retirement on 1 September 1959.

NOTES:

REFERENCES:

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3. Enlisted Professional Military Education Policy CJCSI 1805.01