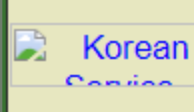
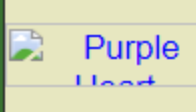



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| <h3>TF Dog, 3rd Infantry Div</h3>   |  |  |
| <p>The Chinese had blown up a key bridge on the Main Supply Route (MSR), preventing the Marines from withdrawing their supplies and heavy equipment until replacement sections could be parachuted in and a new bridge built. Hill 1081 dominated the bridge site, and was occupied by the Chinese. For continued orderly Marine withdrawal it was necessary to assault Hill 1081 and enable construction to proceed.</p> <p>The dug-in Chinese would fight to the last man, but someone had to make that assault. That someone was Task Force Dog.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 100px; width: 100%; text-align: center; line-height: 100px;">3rd Div arty support for Marine withdrawal from Chosin</div> <p style="text-align: center;">TF Dog, 3rd Infantry Div., Chinhung-ni, 12/50</p>   |  |  |
| <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">92d Field Artillery Battalion M-41 155 Self Propelled howitzers units provide powerful Artillery Support For Marines</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">3rd Infantry Division provided a vital safety point at Chinhung-ni, for the First Marine Division in its Fight-Out from the Chosin Reservoir.</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="#">COL GEORGE O. TAYLOR JR., USA Ret.</a></p> <p>TF Dog, as it was designated, was to be commanded by Brig. Gen. Armistead D. Mead, the assistant commander of our division. The major combat elements of TF Dog were our battalion and the 92nd Armored Field Artillery Battalion, which was equipped with 155 mm howitzers. The mission of the task force was to move on December 7 to Chinhung-ni, about nine miles north of Majon-dong, to assist the 1st Marine Division in its withdrawal. Initially, it was to relieve the 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, the most southern Marine unit. Thereafter, the 1st Battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. Donald M. Schmuck, was to attack to the northeast and seize key terrain.</p> <p>The advance party was composed of several soldiers from each company. The convoy consisted of eight to ten trucks. The day was dreary and extremely cold. The MSR was the only road to the reservoir area. It wound through a valley with high mountains on both sides which sometimes abruptly abutted one side of the road. The MSR was reported to be "open." That sounded doubtful since there were no friendly troops positioned between Majon-dong and Chinhung-ni and our patrols had encountered the enemy in the lower part of the area. The valley looked very ominous.</p> <p>There was cause to worry about the enemy occupying the high ground on both sides of the MSR. The resemblance to the 23rd Psalm's "valley of the shadow of death" was inescapable to us. All went well during the first part of the trip, but about a mile or two from Chinhung-ni, our convoy came under small arms fire from the left. The lead vehicle increased its speed, and all others moved out rapidly. A Marine outpost soon provided the chance to stop for a casualty assessment. One noncommissioned officer, an occupant of one of the rearward trucks, was found to be dead. There were no other casualties. Shortly thereafter, it was reported that a Marine convoy of 13 vehicles had been destroyed just minutes behind us on the MSR. Possibly, more enemy troops had come within firing range of the MSR soon after we had passed. Initially, our advance party had been told it would return to Majon-dong later that day. It was good news to us when we received instructions to spend the night with the Marines and wait there until TF Dog arrived the next day. TF Dog arrived at Chinhung-ni as scheduled on December 7. It had met only light enemy contact during the movement. The 3rd Division's 65th Infantry Regiment had assisted TF Dog by acting as its flank guard for the first two miles north of Majon-dong. Although the 65th returned to defensive positions at Majon-dong, its G Company later assisted the task force by occupying commanding terrain in the vicinity of Sudong.</p> <p>Our battalion promptly relieved the Marine battalion in place, freeing it to plan for its attack within the safety of the Army's perimeter. All of L Company's positions were on the west side of the MSR. My platoon's positions were on the north edge of the task force's perimeter on the valley floor, abutting the west side of the MSR on one side and rising partly up the mountainside on the other flank. Friedlander's and Smith's platoons were deployed well west of my platoon. We could see the MSR wind over the mountains as it ascended to our front. About three miles to the north and near where the MSR disappeared over the mountains, a large gap in the road was visible. The Chinese had blown up the bridge at that location. There was no way for the Marines to bypass this obstacle with their vehicles since there was a steep mountain on one side and a high drop-off on the other side. The Marines lacked the bridging necessary to replace the blown bridge. On December 7, several sections of bridging were dropped by parachute to them. It was thrilling to see the planes fly over with the bridge sections hanging underneath them. All was quiet in the perimeter that night.</p> <p>Schmuck's battalion moved out early on the morning of December 8 and encountered strong resistance. It was assisted in its attack by Company A, 73rd Engineer Combat Battalion, a X Corps unit that accompanied TF Dog. The Marines were also assisted by TF Dog's self-propelled anti-aircraft and 155 mm artillery units. The 155 mm fire on Hill 1081, the Marine objective, was particularly effective. The Marines took a major portion of their objective December 8, but they were unable to secure the military crest of Hill 1081. By midafternoon of December 9, Schmuck's A Company succeeded in seizing the crest of Hill 1081. A few hours later, construction of the bridge was complete and the first of the Marine vehicles began to cross it. The stubborn defense conducted by the enemy on Hill 1081 illustrates the great importance the Chinese placed on retaining this position. The enemy fought to the last man, leaving 530 dead along A Company's path up Hill 1081. The attack had cost A Company 111 men, about half its strength.</p> <p>The enemy did not launch any major attack against our positions at Chinhung-ni. This was surprising since they had units well south of us. They did probe our positions on a few occasions, but none of these could be classified as heavy. One probe occurred about 8:00 p.m. on December 8 in the area where Friedlander's platoon was deployed. It started with rifle fire, automatic weapons fire and small mortar rounds. Within a few minutes the firing became intense and involved a large part of the western half of the perimeter. The next morning, it appeared Chinese casualties were minimal. Friedlander felt only a small enemy reconnaissance patrol had been involved. During the early morning hours of December 11, some of the batteries of the 92nd Field Artillery Battalion received enemy small arms fire. There was a lively fire-fight for about 30 minutes, but the losses were small on both sides. Although our patrols did not make any substantial contact with the enemy, the task force did capture a few prisoners. Rather than hitting TF Dog hard, it appeared that the Chinese were concentrating their efforts in the area of Sudong. The task force's reconnaissance platoon and artillery battalion and also G Company of the 65th Infantry were involved in several actions against the enemy in that area.</p> <p>Our mission became primarily one of watching anxiously and waiting for the Marines to come over the mountains and cross the bridge. Temperatures in the area dipped well below zero, reportedly as low as 35 degrees below zero. Each hour seemed like an eternity.</p> <p>The first Marines reached Chinhung-ni very early on the morning of December 10. It was evident that the brave men in the Marine column had experienced heavy fighting and terrible hardship. Ed Smith has said that "each vehicle had as many Marines as it could carry; if it had a bumper, ... a fender, ... or a gun barrel, dead Marines were [tied] to them." He feels that he will never "erase the sight from [his] mind." It is quite remarkable that they were able to survive the onslaught of the enemy's seemingly unlimited manpower and still remain a viable fighting force.</p> <p>The fighting was not over, however, for those in the Marine column. The enemy still tried to block their way between Chinhung-ni and Majon-dong. Army Lt. Col. John U. Page, an artillery officer, was part of that column. He had already performed a number of valuable services for the Marines after becoming entrapped with them at Koto-ni while assigned by X Corps to establish communication points on the MSR. When the 1st Marine Regiment's trains were ambushed by about 30 Chinese, he led two Marines in a charge straight into the enemy. The Chinese fled with Page chasing after them.</p> <p>At Chinhung-ni, many Marines boarded trucks of TF Dog's 52nd Truck Transportation Battalion for the trip south. This battalion was commanded by Lt. Col. Waldon C. Winston. When Page failed to return, Winston took over the leadership at Sudong and organized a Marine and Army counterattack. The fighting lasted for several hours. Shortly after the column moved through Sudong, Page was found dead with 16 dead Chinese bodies near him. Page was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross and Medal of Honor.</p> <p>The last of the Marine column cleared Chinhung-ni early in the afternoon of December 11. It was several hours after that before our company started to withdraw. The mobile parts of TF Dog were the first elements on the MSR behind the Marine column. The engineers went first and were followed by the artillery battalion with task force headquarters, the small support detachments, and the command group dispersed between artillery batteries. TF Dog's movement order indicated that our battalion was to follow the last of these units. Lt. Col. Alvin L. Newbury, the task force executive officer, has stated that our battalion "simultaneously ... started southward afoot occupying and successively passing through delaying positions along the ridges." My platoon was not involved in providing that flank security. Rather, it was one of the last elements to leave Chinhung-ni. Because of our position next to the MSR, we were in the best location to act as a rear guard to cover the other units as they moved from their positions onto the MSR.</p> <p>The Marines had established a large stockpile of supplies at Chinhung-ni. TF Dog had earlier sent some of it to the rear by truck, but a large amount of canned food, ammunition and fuel remained. TF Dog left its reconnaissance platoon and a demolition party behind to destroy what remained.</p> <p>Shortly after my platoon moved onto the MSR, we came under rather heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire from our right. The enemy had wasted no time moving into the task force's former positions. We took cover in a narrow ditch on the left side of the road that abutted a mountainside. Before long the enemy fire was neutralized. We arose and started our march south again. The column stopped several times for what seemed like long periods. This was probably due to delays at Sudong where the enemy chose to make the most trouble.</p> <p>It was in the vicinity of Sudong where Gen. Mead's aide, 1st Lt. Harley F. Mooney Jr., was wounded by a mortar round that struck the hood of the vehicle he was riding in. Also at Sudong, Ed Smith found "the area strewn with dead Chinese and dead Marines." Some of the Marines had died in their vehicles, which had been pushed off the road. Most of these probably had been with the Marine trains. I did not see this since darkness fell before my platoon reached Sudong. Both Smith's and Friedlander's platoons were assigned an off-the-road mission during the withdrawal. Two of Ed Smith's Korean soldiers were killed on one of these.</p> <p>After darkness fell, the valley seemed even more foreboding than it had on the trip up. It was easy to imagine Chinese hordes, under the cover of darkness, streaming down the steep hills on each side of our vulnerable column. Fortunately this did not happen. There was intermittent firing after passing Sudong, but it was insignificant. It seemed as if friendly lines would never be reached. It has been reported that TF Dog crossed into Majon-dong at 8:00 p.m. on December 11 when it passed through the defensive positions of the 65th Infantry Regiment. It seemed much later.</p> <p>Possibly because of TF Dog's low casualty rate and short five-day participation in the Chosin operations, many authors have overlooked the importance of its role. With no intent to detract from the Marines and TF Faith, it seems appropriate to also assess the importance of TF Dog's contributions.</p> <p>Schmuck's battalion was positioned on critical ground at Chinhung-ni. On December 6, the Chinese had cut the MSR above and below Chinhung-ni which, according to one Marine author, made this battalion "the most isolated, vulnerable, and endangered unit in the division." Replacement of the blown bridge was essential for a successful Marine withdrawal. Otherwise, it would have been virtually impossible for them to escape with their vehicles. The Chinese occupied Hill 1081, which overlooked the bridge site. Before the bridge could be built, it was necessary for friendly troops to occupy that hill or, at least, divert the enemy's attention from the construction of the bridge. Distinguished Korean War author Roy E. Appleman in his book <i>Escaping the Trap</i> described Hill 1081 as the "most dominating and critical enemy position on the way down" from Koto-ni to Chinhung-ni. If Schmuck's battalion left its positions unoccupied at Chinhung-ni, the enemy would most certainly have occupied that key terrain from which they could have delivered effective firepower onto the bridge site and a large part of the MSR. As an added bonus, they also would have captured the large stockpile of Marine supplies located there. If Schmuck's battalion had not been used to attack Hill 1081, it may have been possible for a Marine unit moving southward from Koto-ni to do so, but that most likely would have substantially delayed the withdrawal and resulted in more Marine casualties. Thus, by occupying and holding the positions at Chinhung-ni, a small group from the 3rd Infantry Division ensured that the extrication of the Marines and their attached units from the Chinese entrapment was successful. That small force was TF Dog.</p> |  |  |
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