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# GENERAL DEAN'S STORY

*as told to William L. Worden by*

MAJOR GENERAL  
WILLIAM F. DEAN

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*To the many friends  
who for three long years  
never gave up hope*

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## Photographs

Mrs. Dean receives from President Truman the Congressional Medal of Honor awarded to her husband

General Dean's daughter and his grandson waiting for the plane bringing the General home

Mrs. Dean receives congratulations after General Dean's name appeared on the list of prisoners of war

William F. Dean, Jr., looks at pictures of his father

General Dean at the airfield upon arrival

President Eisenhower welcomes General Dean

A lookout post on the 38th parallel

South Korean troops march toward the front

South Korean soldiers escort refugees from a burning town

South Koreans applaud American soldiers

Lieutenant General Walker and General Dean examine a map near the front lines

Three American soldiers who worked their way back through enemy lines

Infantrymen of the 24th Division rest in a field

This wrecked Red tank stands as a memorial to General Dean

Pictures of General Dean taken by the North Koreans

American soldiers captured by North Korean forces

General Dean during an interview with Wilfred Burchett, correspondent of *Le Soir*

General Dean and Wilfred Burchett

General Dean writing letters

General Dean taking his daily walk

General Dean playing chong-gun, a form of chess

General Dean arriving at Panmunjom

General Dean during an interview at Freedom Village

General Dean is interviewed by news correspondents



### ABOVE AND BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY

Mrs. William F. Dean of Berkeley, California, receives from President Truman, on January 9, 1951, the Congressional Medal of Honor awarded to her husband, Major General William F. Dean, missing in action in Korea. Brigadier General Robert Landry is at center. (*Wide World Photos*)





General Dean's daughter, June Williams, and his grandson, Robert Dean Williams, waiting at Travis Air Force Base, California, for the arrival of the plane bringing the General home. (Photo by Lonnie Wilson for the Oakland Tribune)

Mrs. Dean receives telephone congratulations at her home, December 18, 1951, after General Dean's name appeared on the list of prisoners of war held by the Reds in Korea. (Wide World Photos)

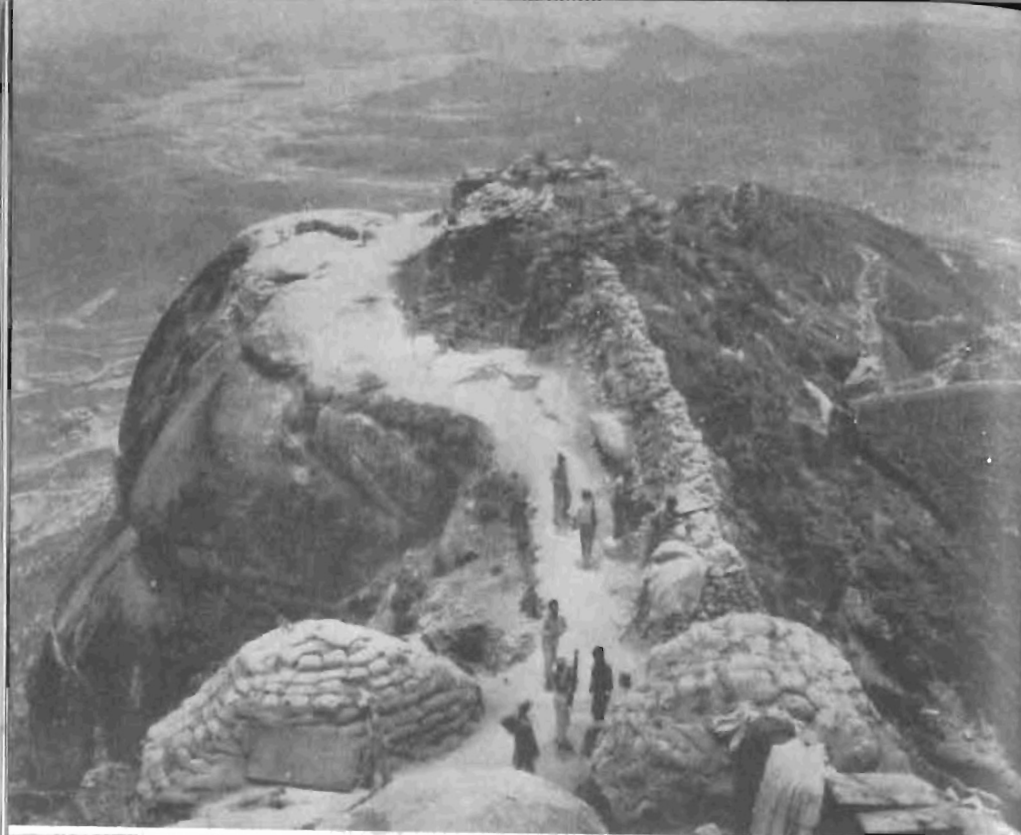


William F. Dean, Jr., then a second classman at the U.S. Military Academy, looks at some of the first pictures of his father to be made available after his release, September 4, 1953. (Associated Press Newsphoto)



(Above) General Dean embraces his mother at the airfield upon arrival, September 23, 1953. The General's wife is at the right. (Wide World Photos)

(Below) President Eisenhower welcomes General Dean during a visit to the White House, October 21, 1953. (Wide World Photos)



(Above) A lookout post on the 38th parallel. On June 24, 1950, North Korean troops invaded South Korea on a wide front. (*Wide World Photos*)

(Below) South Korean troops march toward the front on June 30, 1950. (*Wide World Photos*)

(Above) South Korean soldiers escort refugees from a burning town near the battle line, July 8, 1950. (*Wide World Photos*)

(Below) South Koreans applaud American soldiers as they arrive in an unidentified city shortly before moving into the front lines, July 8, 1950. (*Wide World Photos*)



(Above) Lieutenant General Walton H. Walker, Commanding General U.S. Eighth Army (left), and General Dean, Commanding General 24th Infantry Division, examine a map near the front lines, July 8, 1950. (Wide World Photos)

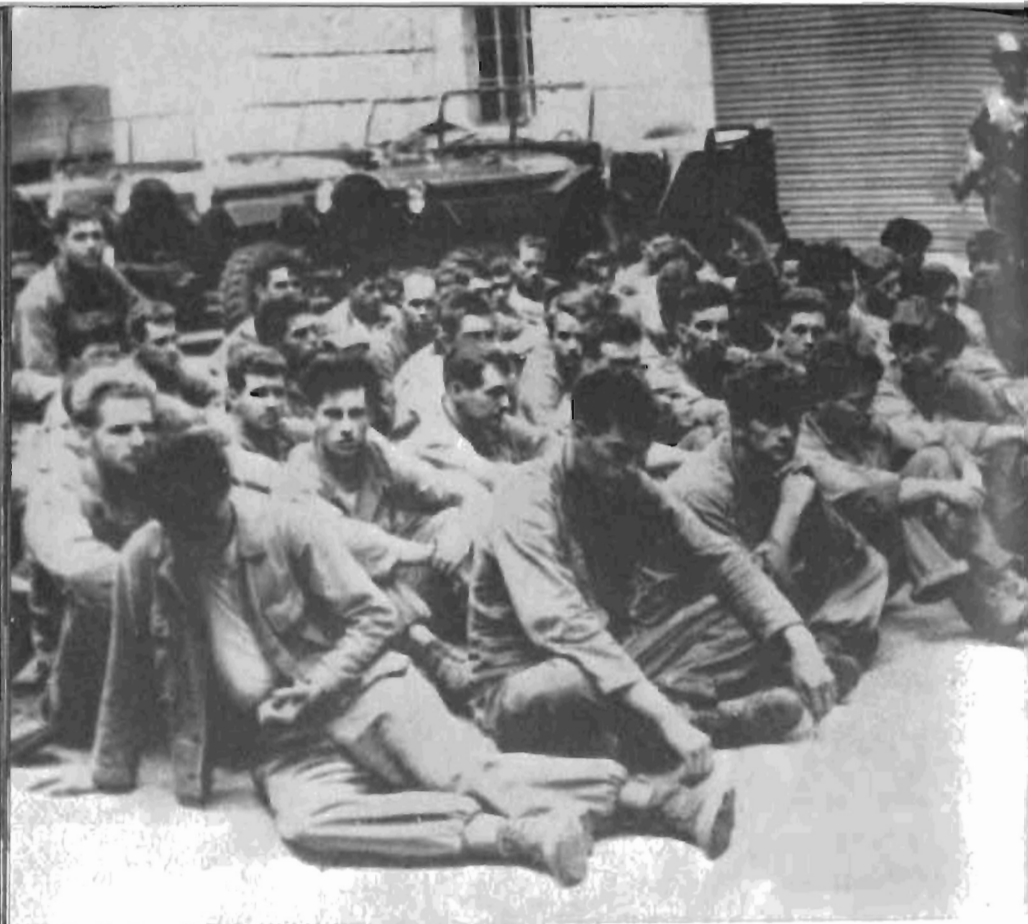
(Below) Three American soldiers, who worked their way back through enemy lines, are safe in Yongdong on July 27, 1950, one week after the fall of Taejon. (Wide World Photos)



(Above) Infantrymen of the 24th Division rest in a field, July 29, 1950. (Wide World Photos)

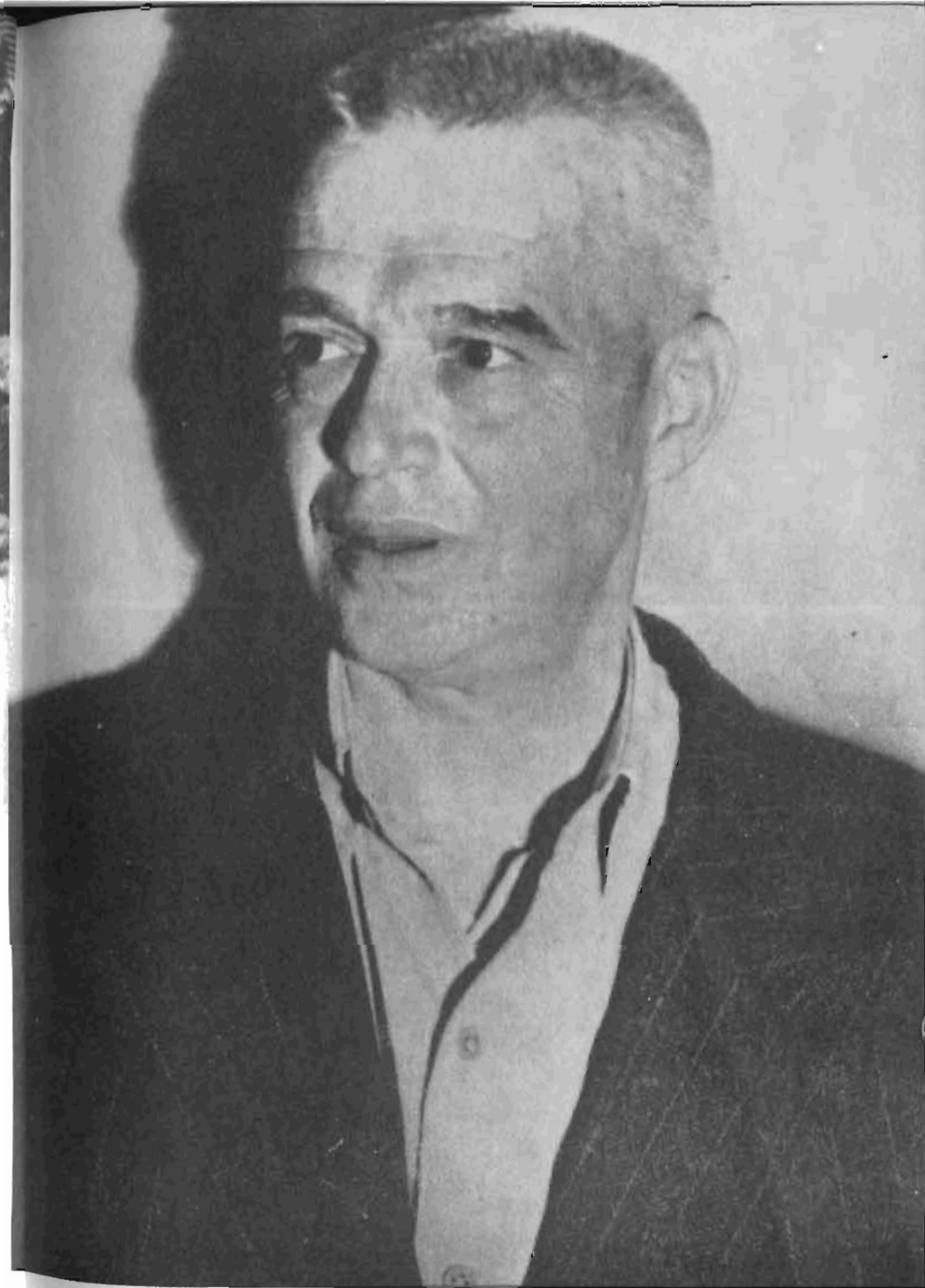
(Below) This wrecked Red tank stands on a Taejon street corner as a memorial to General Dean. After the battle he eluded the enemy for thirty-five days, until, weakened and sick, he was captured on August 25, 1950. (Wide World Photos)



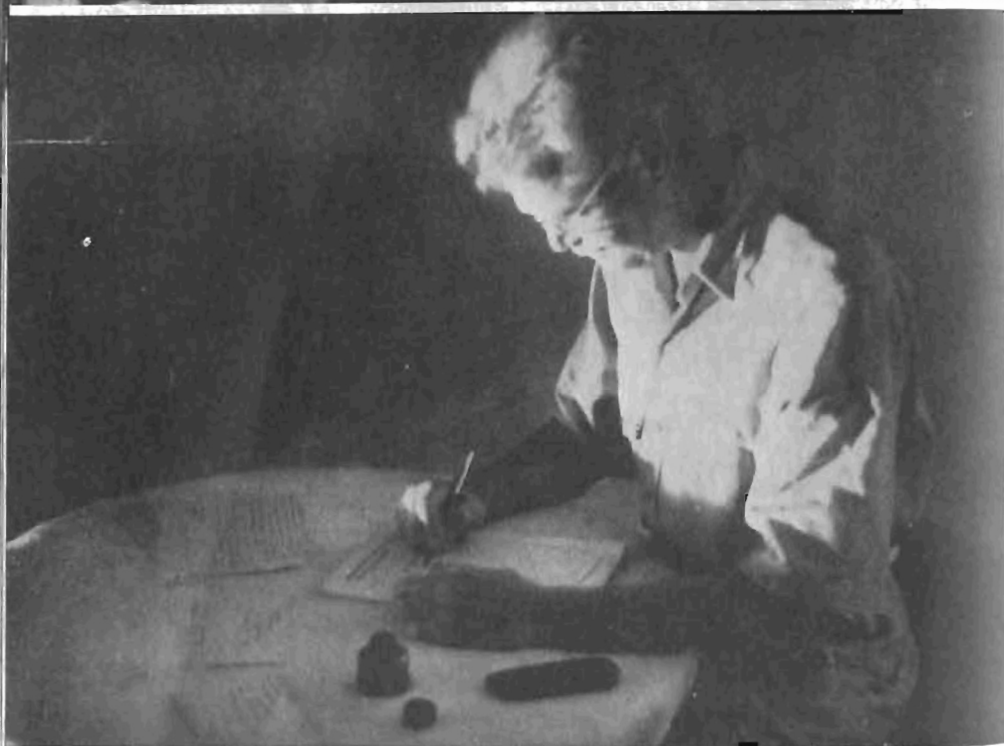


The official Soviet photo agency, which distributed this picture, describes the men as American soldiers captured by North Korean forces. (*International News Photos*)

When General Dean asked his interpreter, Lee Kyu Hyun, about other American prisoners, Lee replied, "Oh, the men in your camps are very happy, very merry, very cheerful, happy. They're whistling and singing and cracking jokes all the time."

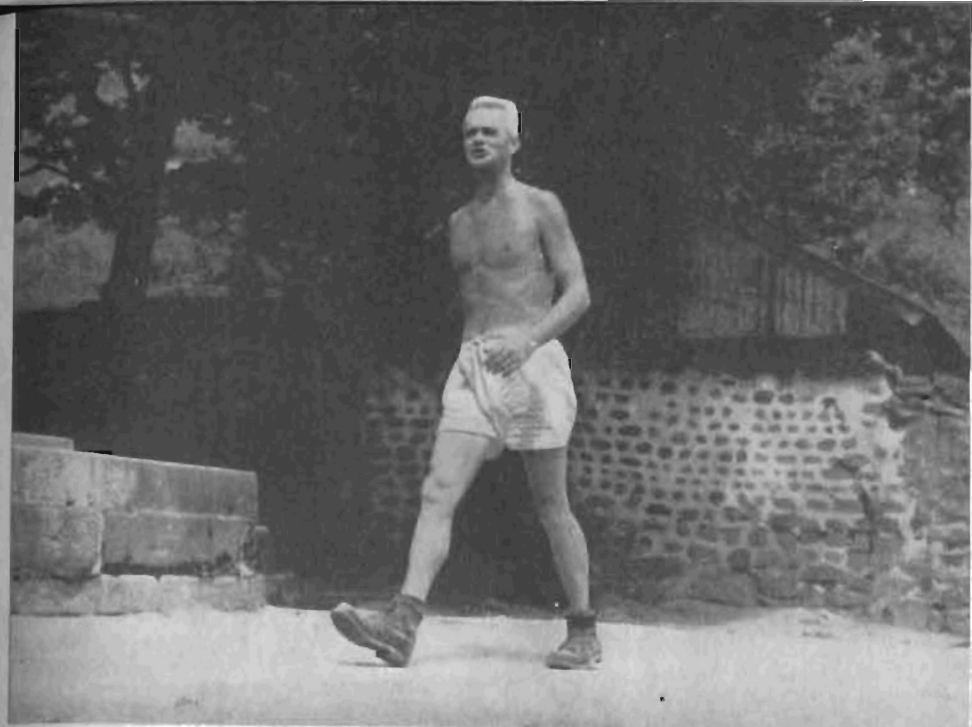


This picture of General Dean was taken on December 21, 1951, during an interview with Wilfred Burchett, correspondent of *Le Soir*. This was the General's first contact with the outside world since his capture. (*International News Photos*)



(Above) General Dean and Wilfred Burchett in the General's cramped quarters about ten miles from Pyongyang. (*Wide World Photos*)

(Below) General Dean writing letters—with difficulty. For more than a year he had been without writing materials of any kind. (*Eastfoto*)



(Above) General Dean taking his daily walk. Because of strict orders that he was not to be seen, it was only toward the end of his captivity that he was permitted to exercise. (*Wide World Photos*)

(Below) General Dean passes the time immediately before his release playing chong-gun, a form of chess, with an unidentified Communist guard. (*Wide World Photos*)



General Dean arriving at Pannunjom for repatriation, September 4, 1953. (*Wide World Photos*)



General Dean speaks during an interview at Freedom Village after repatriation. (*Wide World Photos*)



General Dean is interviewed by news correspondents at Freedom Village on the first day of his release, after having been a prisoner of the Communists for three years. (*Wide World Photos*)

## *Collaborator's Note*

When Major General William F. Dean and I sat down to put his experiences into book form, I was equipped with a tape recorder, various maps, some reference books, and materials for writing down quickly the things he told me before I should forget them.

General Dean, on the other hand, was equipped with nothing whatever but an astonishing and almost frightening ability to recall, without props, every single thing that had happened in three years. He had forgotten nothing. For more than fifty hours he told the story of his three years day by day, hour by hour, with places, dates, the quality and quantity of meals, Korean names, temperatures, crop conditions, house plans, speeches made to him, anecdotes, military details, bits of Communist theory and practice. Seldom did he hesitate, and never did he fail to recall an important fact. A single notebook finally was produced, mainly to help with translations of Korean words—but he had possessed neither this nor any other writing materials during the first year and a half of his captivity.

It may be heresy for a writer to admit it, but the fact is, General Dean wrote this book himself by speaking it. Not only are the facts his own, without additions from me, but the language is his own. The writing consisted mainly of removing from the tape-recorder report the pauses, occasional



repetitions, and sounds of rattling maps which interrupted or slowed the fascinating telling.

For two men of differing professions, I think we worked in remarkable harmony. I didn't force him to match my continual cigarette smoking; he did not insist that I arise at his customary five a.m., walk five miles a day, or run up stairways rather than use elevators.

On only one point did we have a serious disagreement. William Frishe Dean is an almost painfully honest man. I'm quite sure that he has stood off from himself in judgment, given himself the benefit of equitable doubts (but no more), and weighed his own conduct as a general, a fugitive, and a prisoner. The result is his considered and definite decision: he does *not* think General Dean is either a great commander or a true hero.

I think he is.

WILLIAM L. WORDEN

## GENERAL DEAN'S STORY



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## *Introductory*

If the story of my Korean experiences is worth telling, the value lies in its oddity, not in anything brilliant or heroic. There were heroes in Korea, but I was not one of them. There were brilliant commanders, but I was a general captured because he took a wrong road. I am an infantry officer and presumably was fitted for my fighting job. I don't want to alibi that job, but a couple of things about it should be made clear. In the fighting I made some mistakes and I've kicked myself a thousand times for them. I lost ground I should not have lost. I lost trained officers and fine men. I'm not proud of that record, and I'm under no delusions that my weeks of command constituted any masterly campaign.

No man honestly can be ashamed of the Congressional Medal of Honor. For it and for the welcome given to me here at home in 1953, I'm humbly grateful. But I come close to shame when I think about the men who did better jobs—some who died doing them—and did not get recognition. I wouldn't have awarded myself a wooden star for what I did as a commander. Later, as fugitive and prisoner, I did things mildly out of the ordinary only at those times when I was excited and not thinking entirely straight; and the only thing I did which mattered—to my family and perhaps a few others—was to stay alive.

Other prisoners resisted torture, but I wasn't tortured.

Others hid in the hills and finally escaped, but I failed in my escape attempts. Others bluffed the Communists steadily, whereas I was lucky enough to do it only once in a while. Others starved, but I was fed and even learned to like *kimchee*. Others died for a principle, but I failed in a suicide attempt.

I can justify writing this book only because mine was an adventure—without a hero—and because I did see the face of the enemy close up, did have time to study his weaknesses and his remarkable strengths, not on the battlefield but far behind his lines. I saw communism working—with men and women of high education or none, great intelligence or little—and it was a frightening thing.

Otherwise I can guarantee only to show how a grandfather came close to hating little boys, how important standing up is when you haven't been able to stand for sixteen months—and the best way to kill a fly. I ought to know. I swatted 40,671 flies in three years and counted every carcass. There were periods when I was batting .850 and deserved to make the big leagues.

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CHAPTER I

## *A War Begins*

As a general officer, I'm an in-between, curious sort, who never went to West Point, did not see action in World War I, and did not come up from the enlisted ranks. I was born in Carlyle, Illinois, on August 1, 1899 (almost between centuries). My dentist-father, Charles Watts Dean, was partially responsible for my interest in the Army. He took me to the 1904 St. Louis Exposition, where I saw West Point cadets and soldiers drilling—and I never quite rid myself of the interest they aroused.

Not that this interest did me any particular good for a long time. I spent my boyhood in Carlyle, much of it doing body-building exercises. I suppose I'm still something of a physical-fitness crank, in that I do daily calisthenics, try to walk at least five miles a day, and never ride an elevator if it's practicable to run up and down stairs. One of my first jobs was selling magazines to make spending money, and I developed quite a resentment against the *Saturday Evening Post* when its circulation men appointed a second agent in town during a small boom. I thought then that they had robbed me of a chance to make real profits, but I guess we're friends now. Early in 1954 the *Post* published six articles containing portions of this book.

After graduating from high school I tried for the Military

Academy at West Point and missed, which was a severe disappointment. I also tried to enlist for World War I, but my mother, Elizabeth Frishe Dean, refused her permission, so I missed on that too. (I was under-age to enter the Army without permission.)

The only military organization I could join was the Students' Army Training Corps at the University of California, where I enrolled in what now would amount to a pre-law course. The whole family moved west, and the surviving members still live in California—my mother in Berkeley; my sister, Mrs. Leonard Ver Mehr, at Antioch; and my brother David at Kenwood.

To stay in the university I earned money as a temporary stevedore on the San Francisco docks, as a trolley conductor or motorman, briefly as a restaurant dishwasher, and then as a beat-pounding patrolman on the Berkeley police force when August Vollmer, father of many modern criminology methods, was testing his ideas as chief of police.

I should have earned a bachelor of arts degree in 1921, but failed a course in legal contracts and so had to stay another year. I never did complete work for the doctor of laws degree toward which I was aiming, but I've never regretted this especially. I didn't care much for the law, and I've always been disturbed by the victories of technicalities over equity.

Besides, I just couldn't stay away from the Army. Perhaps it was my mother's German blood beginning to tell. I secured a regular commission as a second lieutenant on October 18, 1923, on the basis of my student reserve training and an examination. My first post was fairly indicative of what was to come—an assignment to troops of the 38th Infantry Regiment at Fort Douglas, Utah.

This was the period in which, contrary to the popular re-

frain, practically nobody loved a soldier. Enlistments were difficult, promotions for junior officers were slow to nonexistent because of the "bulge" of company-grade regular officers who had stayed in the Army after World War I, and relations between military posts and adjacent cities were cool, at best, and more often on the level of ignoring each other.

But we in the Army still did have some horses, and these brought about what was to me the most important event of my three years at Fort Douglas—a young lady fell off a horse on her head. The post commandant, as a gesture toward cementing understanding between people at the fort and in Salt Lake City, had organized a Saturday riding group, and young women from the town were invited to use the Army horses. Some of the younger officers kept polo ponies, and I had a couple of my own (they could be bought for thirty dollars each, and we schooled them ourselves), but for the civilian riders we usually saddled up some of the older, presumably safer Army-owned stock. One Saturday when I had the duty of assigning the riders, I took a look at a pretty girl named Dorothy Welch and decided she had a little too much daring for most of our horses. So I put her up on old Dick, an elderly crow-bait who was the non-moving champion of our stable. I thought not even she would be able to get him past a walk, but I was wrong. Somehow she got old Dick into a gallop, and he promptly threw her in a gully.

She suffered a skull fracture and went into a coma from which she didn't recover for twelve days. I felt terribly responsible for the accident and went to her home frequently to see her. There I met one of her close friends, Mildred Dern, of Salt Lake.

That old horse Dick was no friend of mine. After Miss Welch recovered and I had started taking Mildred riding at

Fort Douglas, he ran away with her too. But she clung to his back and ducked her head as he tried to brush her off on a stable door. Mildred married me, in spite of him; and the sale of two polo ponies helped to finance the wedding.

Immediately after we were married we were transferred to the Panama Canal Zone, for three more years of duty with troops. In both posts I coached boxing and basketball teams but never was a serious competitor myself—even though I seem to have a minor reputation as a boxer now, the result of a Communist photograph showing me shadow-boxing while in captivity.

The rest of my prewar duty was just average. I was a lieutenant for twelve years. At Fort Douglas I served with troops, then attended the Fort Benning Infantry School in 1931, serving with a tank battalion there and going on to a second course, at the Tank School. I returned to the Pacific Coast in 1932, with technical assignment to the 30th Infantry Regiment. But my actual duty was with the Civilian Conservation Corps, first as commander of Camp Hackamore, in Modoc County, California, while the corps built trails and roads, then in the CCC headquarters at Redding.

Back on more normal duty, I went to the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, then spent two more years with troops in Oahu, T.H. After that there were more schools: the Armed Forces Industrial College in Washington; the Field Officers course at the Chemical Warfare School; the Army War College.

I was lucky to make captain in 1936, and major in 1940, when I was assigned to a series of desk jobs in Washington—first on the War Department's General Staff as a junior member, then assistant secretary of it, finally executive officer of the Requirements Division in Ground Forces headquarters.

My temporary rank went up to lieutenant colonel in 1941, to colonel in 1942. In 1943 I became head of the Requirements Division, which is concerned with new weapons, electronics, training literature, and visual aids.

I finally got what I wanted—another job with troops, this time as assistant commander of the 44th Infantry Division, just preparing to go to Europe in late 1943—but I nearly missed my second war. During a demonstration of flame-throwers to division officers, the flame-thrower leaked on the lieutenant operating it. In agony as the napalm set his clothing afire, he struggled to rid himself of the weapon but instead flipped the hose, spraying napalm. Another officer and I, both rushing toward him, caught the slash of fire; but I was the lucky one. Both the other men died. I didn't even know my leg had been burned until I started to walk off after the others had been taken away in an ambulance. Then someone noticed that my trouser leg was in tatters below the knee. I too went to the hospital, but doctors saved my leg. I was still on crutches when the division sailed, but I sailed with it.

We landed in France on Omaha Beach behind the amphibious assault forces, and for the next several months moved generally east and south across France, Germany, and Austria. When Major General Robert L. Spragins was invalided home in December 1944, I took command of the division—a fine fighting group that had been trained and indoctrinated by Major General James I. Muir and brought to peak battle efficiency by General Spragins. I've always been proud of the 44th, which did fine jobs at Sarrebourg, Sarreguemines, Mannheim, and in front of Heidelberg, where one of the most outstanding artillerymen I've ever known, then Brigadier General William A. Beiderlinden, used mass time-on-target fire and a couple of other tricks to convince a whole sector of

Germans that surrender was the only course for reasonable men—and thereby avoided having to damage the city's famous old buildings. The division went on to fight at Göppingen, Ulm, Memmingen, Kempten, Fern Pass, and Resia Pass. When the war ended we were in the Inn Valley, with our headquarters at Innsbruck—and had lost only forty-two men by capture during the entire war. That minor detail especially pleased me. I've always thought that to say *Kamerad* was one of the most degrading things that could happen to a soldier.

The 44th Division came home shortly after V-E Day and was retraining to go to the Pacific when the Japanese surrendered. I left the division command almost immediately, going to Leavenworth again, this time to organize and direct new command classes.

In October 1947 I was sent to South Korea as military governor and deputy to Lieutenant General John R. Hodge, then commanding the American occupation forces. With headquarters at Seoul, I had the duty of making the South Korean civil government work during the final period before it was turned over to the Koreans and military occupation ended. I had over-all command of such activities as police work, rice collection to make sure that the hungry population had enough to eat, operation of railroads and telegraphs. The Korean constabulary was also under my command. Most of these activities were manned by Americans in executive positions, with Koreans sitting beside them to study their methods, and also filling most of the jobs on lower levels, without American opposite numbers.

This was a transition period for the Koreans. Under the Japanese, Koreans never had been allowed to hold executive positions or even jobs involving much responsibility. For example, Koreans could be railroad firemen or station agents,

but not locomotive engineers. In government, they never had held policy-making positions. The result was that no trained cadre existed, once the Japanese had been ousted. So U. S. occupation forces, in contrast to the situation in Germany and Japan, not only had to change the methods and philosophy of the previous government but also had to train Korean personnel for almost every job. The whole business was complicated further by the artificial division of the country on the 38th parallel, with disruption of the entire economy, blocking of railroads, and division of families between democratic and Communist regimes.

We also had the job of setting the new Korean government-to-be on its feet. Having had no government of their own for generations and never a free election in four thousand years of their history, the Koreans were completely lacking in machinery and training for holding an election. During the troubled months preceding the election in 1948, I traveled the American-occupied part of the peninsula many times, making speeches for our rice collection and other programs, setting up election boards, even arranging for polling places and protection of voters from coercion and Communist interference.

After the elections the newly chosen Korean officials took over their own government, on August 15, 1948. The occupation ended officially, and my civil job with it. I became commander of the 7th Infantry Division, with headquarters at Seoul still, but immediately began arranging the withdrawal of that division to stations in northern Japan. We completed that movement in January 1949; and my headquarters became the city of Sapporo, on Hokkaido island. But in May, Lieutenant General Walton Walker called me to Yokohama as chief of staff for the Eighth Army. In October, when a sud-

den transfer left the 24th Infantry Division without a commander, I managed to talk myself into the job, and moved once more, to Kokura, on Kyushu, the most southerly Japanese island.

Kokura is only one hundred and forty miles from Pusan, the nearest point on the Korean peninsula, and faces the Korea Strait, across which Korean and Japanese fleets, armies, and fishing boats have warred for thousands of years. If you like history, this was the strait in which a divine wind—the *kamikaze*—arose to turn back a Korean fleet trying to invade ancient Japan, thus reinforcing the Japanese in their belief that the island peoples were invincible. It also provided both a rough precedent and a name for the Japanese pilots who flew their aircraft into American ships during the last days of World War II.

At Kokura, on June 24, 1950, the officers of the 24th Division headquarters staged a costume party. I am slightly more than six feet tall, and that summer I weighed two hundred and ten pounds. The black stovepipe hat of a Korean gentleman sat foolishly high on my head, and the long robes proper to a *yang-ban* (one of the people who do not work) flopped somewhere around my knees. My wife came dressed as a well-born Korean lady, and our double costume was a considerable success.

As a troop commander, I believe in hard work for officers and men; and it was quite obvious on this evening that the officers I had been working hard for several months enjoyed seeing the division commander looking thoroughly ridiculous. At the same time, the costume was a not-so-nostalgic gesture toward the short Korean chapter in my life. It had been interesting and troubling but was definitely over. I had no real

reason to expect to go to Korea again. I knew only a few words of the language. I never had found an opportunity to know Korean people outside of official circles and the major cities—and I certainly was not lonesome for the variable climate of that appendix of northeastern Asia.

So I wore the costume of a *yang-ban* but thought about Korea only briefly, if at all, during the long evening. It was an uneventful party, just one more officers' dance like thousands of others; and the main thing I remember was that the hard hat became highly uncomfortable before the evening ended.

The next morning, when I went to the division headquarters building after attending church, the only thing on my mind was the possibility of mail from my daughter June, then en route to Puerto Rico with her husband, Captain Robert Williams, or from my son Bill, who was taking examinations for entrance to the Military Academy at West Point. But as I headed toward the post office a duty officer hailed me. North Koreans, he said, had just crossed the 38th parallel, breaking the uneasy peace of the border between communism and the newest of the U. S.-sponsored free governments in Asia.

There was no further information. I went back to our quarters and told Mildred the news, adding my own prediction: this was the beginning of World War III. I could see war breaking out like wildfire over much of Asia—and the 24th Infantry Division undoubtedly sat right in the middle of it.

Naturally my concern at the moment was principally for the division. The 24th had a long and creditable history in World War II and had been in Japan since shortly after V-J Day. But the battle-trained veterans of the early occupation days had been whittled down by time and reassignment until they made up only about fifteen per cent of the men and



officers now on duty. The division strength was down to about two-thirds of its wartime total. Infantry regiments had only two battalions each; artillery battalions only two batteries. Other units were proportionate. Equipment was all of World War II vintage—2.6 bazookas and light (M-24) tanks.

We were training, but our program was greatly hampered by the fact that the division was scattered all over southern Japan. The 19th Infantry Regiment, based at Beppu, just then was on an amphibious maneuver near Yokohama. The 21st Infantry Regiment was at Kumamoto, the 34th at Sasebo, and the artillery near Fukuoka. The tank company, the reconnaissance company, and a company of engineers were at Yamaguchi on Honshu; the signal company, other engineers, and quartermaster and ordnance units were with the headquarters at Kokura. I found a light airplane essential to visit them all. To get them together in a hurry would be a major task.

Not that it was necessary at this time. On June 26 we had new information from Korea: the South Korean Army was counterattacking and the situation looked much better than it had the day before. Perhaps this would turn out to be only a slightly larger version of the many border incidents that had occurred since the 38th parallel had been established as a dividing line across Korea.

We had several South Korean officers on a tour of duty with our division, and I began to worry about them. But when I sent a message to Tokyo, asking whether we should get them back to Korea right away, I was told, "No. Have them finish their courses, and prepare to receive another group in July."

This was going to be a short and easy war.

But by the next day it looked less easy. We received word

to prepare to meet evacuees from Korea, a job assigned to the 24th Division in a long-standing plan for action in case of any major emergency in Korea. In my experience, few of these long-standing plans ever work out as plotted on paper, but this one did.

American women and children in the Seoul area were loaded aboard a Norwegian freighter at Inchon, and it started around the tip of the peninsula. But the Communist advance to the south was so fast that the men left behind had to be evacuated almost before the ship was out of the harbor. Many of them arrived by plane well before the crowded ship docked, about noon on June 28.

Incidentally, that ship gave me my first real fright of the war. I went down to the dock to meet it, but it failed to arrive on schedule and we weren't able to find out anything about it. When it was more than eight hours overdue I thought, "Oh-oh, a Russian submarine has hit it." It was one of those hazy days when a ship could not be seen from the air, and the Japanese Coast Guard at Fukuoka refused to send out a search vessel, so I asked the U. S. naval base at Sasebo if a destroyer could be sent out to look. We finally put an American officer aboard the Japanese Coast Guard ship, and he got them to go past the harbor entrance. Outside in the fog he found the Norwegian ship hove to, with a skipper thoroughly upset by orders which forced him to wait outside Fukuoka rather than to go in to Moji, where he would not have needed a pilot. The passengers jamming the ship had too little room in state-rooms or on deck, and almost all of them were immoderately seasick. It was no tragedy, but just one more confusion in a confused week.

Personally, I was especially disturbed when the incoming airplanes brought not only civilian refugees, missionaries, and

military families, but also quite a number of U. S. officers and men from the Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG). I found out later that a general order issued by the U. S. Embassy in Seoul for evacuation of Americans had somehow been so confused that these Army people thought they were included. Brigadier General Lynn Roberts, commanding KMAG, had completed his tour of duty and sailed for the United States on June 24; and the KMAG chief of staff was in Japan to see his own wife off to the States. So there was no one to correct the confusion before many of these people reached Japan.

The 24th Infantry Division did a fine job in the reception of evacuees. Officers and men worked around the clock to care for the distraught families, who arrived with nothing but a few meager belongings, and to get them started toward other points in Japan. We still had no knowledge that this job would have to be rushed, but rushed it anyhow.

That was just the start. On the evening of June 30 I received orders to go to Tokyo for a conference and started by sedan from Kokura to the airfield at Itazuki—but I never arrived. Outside of Hakata an officer intercepted me with new instructions: I was to return to my headquarters and await teletyped orders.

They came at midnight. I was to go to Korea, with two jobs: my usual division command, plus the over-all command of a land expeditionary force.

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CHAPTER II

## *Men Against Tanks*

I have run through all of this at the risk of boring readers, because it all made some sense in relation to the first days of war in Korea. I knew quite a bit—although not as much as I thought—about the Korean people and geography; and my division was the closest American battle unit when the fighting started.

My orders specified that a task force of two reinforced rifle companies, with a battery of field artillery, was to be flown to Korea immediately and to report to Brigadier General John H. Church, who had flown from Tokyo to Taejon, in the middle of South Korea, with a headquarters detachment. Taejon was well south of the battle line and an obvious choice for a defensive headquarters. The entire 24th Infantry Division was to move to Korea by surface transportation as rapidly as possible.

Lieutenant Colonel Charles B. (Brad) Smith was picked to command the task force. No commander likes to commit troops piecemeal, and I'm no exception, but Smith was definitely the man for the job if it had to be done. He had a fine World War II record in the South Pacific and was a natural leader. So he and his 406 riflemen, plus a few artillerymen, were on their way to a landing field outside Pusan on July 1. From there, they could move by train to the front lines, then



somewhere between Seoul and Suwon—the exact location depending on which Republic of Korea (ROK) Army intelligence report you believed. Meanwhile I tried to move a division, scattered near half a dozen ports, with no ships ready. It was an interesting assignment.

I myself started for Korea one day after Task Force Smith. My original effort was made in a C-54, a large four-motored aircraft, so I took along a jeep as well as various members of the division staff and my aide. We got over the airfield at Pusan without trouble, but there were stalled by a report that the mud field had been so cut up by the big planes carrying in Task Force Smith that no more large aircraft could land. So we flew back to Japan, changed to a C-45 (a much smaller plane), left the jeep and other equipment behind, and made a second try. This time we landed successfully and took off again, after a brief stop, for Taejon, where I would take over the command. It was nearly dark, but I had been over this area several times in 1948 and 1949, in a cub plane, and was sure I could recognize Taejon from the air. But when I pointed out a field to the pilot he only shook his head. If it was Taejon, the field had shrunk and no longer was big enough for a C-45.

At any rate, it was now dark and there was no lighted field in this part of Korea. We had to fly two hundred and fifty miles back to Itazuki in Japan. By the time we had something to eat, we could get only about three hours sleep, then took off once more, shortly after dawn, for Korea.

This time fog was covering that whole part of the peninsula, and we could not even see Taejon. But I was desperate, so we finally flew out over the Yellow Sea, bored down through the fog bank, then came back east, following the Kum River line and dodging mountains under the high fog, and eventually

~~landed.~~ I never thought I'd have so much trouble in getting to ~~a war.~~ But one thing was definite: I didn't need my yang-ban ~~hit,~~ then or later in Korea.

~~My~~ My first day in Taejon, July 3, I tried to get a picture of ~~what~~ what was happening, and it was fairly obvious. The principal ~~attack~~ attack was on the main road and railroad lines, which roughly ~~parallel~~ parallel each other through Suwon, Osan, Chonan, Taejon, ~~Kumchon,~~ Kumchon, Taegu, and Pusan. This was the historic military ~~route~~ route through Korea, followed in dozens of forgotten wars, re-emphasized by the Japanese in their invasions, and now ~~being used~~ being used in reverse by the North Koreans.

~~To~~ To the east of this route mountains prevented easy troop ~~movements,~~ movements, so there was no other great danger point except ~~on the extreme eastern coast.~~ on the extreme eastern coast. The Yellow Sea protected us to ~~the west~~ the west as far south as Pyongtaek; but below that the left ~~flank~~ flank would also have to be guarded.

South Korean civilians were thronging this road south from ~~Suwon,~~ Suwon, and unfortunately thousands and thousands of ~~national~~ national police officers and some military also were marching ~~south,~~ south, apparently making no effort to stand and fight. What ~~might~~ might be happening in the mountains to the east was anybody's ~~guess,~~ guess, although South Korean Army headquarters, ~~now~~ now beside our own in Taejon, repeatedly stated that their ~~Army~~ Army was fighting hard there, and occasionally brought in a ~~captured~~ captured armored vehicle or some other such token to prove ~~their~~ their claims. But they did not seem to be able to produce any ~~prisoners~~ prisoners of war for interrogation.

~~Our~~ Our own force obviously was too small to maintain adequate ~~communications~~ communications over such a large area, so we had to ~~depend~~ depend on South Korean civil telephones and telegraph for ~~wire~~ wire communications, and on radio to get our messages ~~through~~ through to front-line troop units. General Church explained

that he had ordered Task Force Smith to take up two positions—approximately one company at a road crossing at Ansong, another at Pyongtaek on the main highway. Theoretically these two positions blocked the two roads down which the enemy was most likely to come—but one company per road is not exactly a strong block, especially with South Koreans pouring past them by the thousands. All these Korean police and soldiers had their rifles and equipment, so it's no wonder that the sight of them was disconcerting to our own troops who had been ordered to make a stand.

I approved General Church's plans and asked him to set up the organization for an expeditionary force headquarters, then flew back to Pusan. The 34th Infantry Regiment had been arriving there on ships that day and was entraining for Taejon. We slept that night on the floor of a Pusan building that had more bedbugs in it than any other structure I've seen, before or since.

At this time my own organization was still scattered. G-2 (Intelligence) was at Taejon. The G-3 (Operations) section was operating from Pusan, but G-1 (Personnel) and G-4 (Supply) were still in Japan. The 34th was on the way north, but other infantry units and all support organizations were still at sea or in Japan.

On the afternoon of July 4 I flew back to Taejon. Still no American ground forces had been in action against the enemy; but there could be no doubt that it was coming soon. The positions Task Force Smith had reconnoitered in the vicinity of Osan (north of Pyongtaek) appeared to have such strength that I ordered the whole task force up there, to form one solid lump of Americans, which might help to stem the backward march of all these South Koreans. The ROK headquarters, now operating under its third chief of staff since the war

had started less than two weeks before, was torn by internal strife, with everyone shouting "Communist" at one another, and everyone apparently quite willing for me to make all decisions, especially theirs.

I tried to encourage some sort of ROK stand, but most of my efforts were lost in a fog of excuses for the backward march. They were short of artillery, they had nothing to stop the enemy tanks, they had been outflanked—there was always some good reason.

I don't think they ever did try the suggestion of their second chief of staff, Lee Bum Suk, that they let the enemy tanks come through, dig ditches behind them, and thus prevent them from getting back or getting gas. At this time many of the North Korean tanks were coming through alone, without infantry support, and the trick just might have worked.

At any rate, I got my first strong contingent of American troops when the 34th Regiment arrived in the fighting area late on July 4. I ordered this regiment to reoccupy the positions Task Force Smith had left, blocking one road at Ansong and the main highway at Pyongtaek, where an arm of the sea comes up almost to the highway, forming a natural defense on the left. The north-south mountain range approaches Ansong on the right, so these positions presented a minimum of flanking problems—and Task Force Smith still was out in front, to blunt any enemy attack along the main road before it even touched this line.

The morning of July 5 the attack came. The only word I received from the 34th was that there was fighting at Osan—then that we were out of contact with Task Force Smith. At this time our communications were not reliable. My aide, Lieutenant Arthur M. Clarke, and I drove through a blackout up to Pyongtaek, where I met Brigadier General George

Barth, who had been loaned to me from the 25th Infantry Division as an extra general officer. General Barth said that he had been at Osan; but that just after he left, tanks had been reported coming down the road. After that there was no further contact with Smith. Worse, a patrol from a battalion at Pyongtaek had just moved forward and run into North Koreans, losing one man. This indicated that the Communists had somehow by-passed Osan and that their forward elements were nearly to Pyongtaek. While I was there the battalion was planning to send out a heavier patrol, in a new attempt to reach Task Force Smith, but there was no report by one o'clock in the morning of July 6 when we left to drive back to headquarters at Taejon.

We arrived just about dawn and I had an hour's sleep. Then my headquarters was filled with Korean politicians, each with a different suggestion. I also received a disturbing report that President Syngman Rhee, now at Pusan, was anxious to come back north to Taejon—which would put him in personal danger and further complicate the military problems.

Then I received one encouraging bit of information: Task Force Smith, which we had about given up as overrun and lost, was coming back to Pyongtaek. They brought out the trucks and about half of the force, but had to leave the artillery pieces after pulling the breech locks and sights so that the guns would be useless. Both Smith and Colonel Basil H. Perry, the artillery commander, were with the party which fought its way through the Communists behind them. For the next two or three days men kept dribbling in, singly or in small groups, so that our eventual losses were much less than I'd feared.

A couple of the early arrivals from the task force also brought me the first direct word about enemy tanks—how

many of them had come down the road, rolling right up to what the Americans had thought were good emplacements, and then firing point-blank into them. The fact that they had been able to see our emplacements didn't surprise me (American soldiers are anything but masters at camouflage), but the number of tanks did. Up to this time I'd been inclined to discount the numbers reported by the South Koreans, but this was reliable information. The soldiers also told me how the infantry had managed to get four tanks, and how the artillery had knocked out four others, firing in direct lane.

All in all, it was not a discouraging story. It had been the first American action, we had lost it, but the enemy had paid a considerable price. I felt better—for all of a couple of hours. Then I received astonishing information: the 34th had pulled back south of Chonan—more than fifteen miles from the river defense line with its flank on the sea. Units that had been at Ansong were now a full twenty miles from where I had left them—without even waiting until the enemy hit them. I learned this at four o'clock in the afternoon of July 6, and I jumped in my jeep and rushed up toward Chonan to find out what was wrong, why they had not held on the river. But by the time I got there the whole regiment was south of Chonan, most of the men having ridden back on the trucks. I should have said, "Turn around and get going now"; but rather than add to the confusion and risk night ambushes, I told them, "All right, hold tight here until I give you further orders."

When I reached my own headquarters once more I issued such orders: to advance until they made contact with the enemy, then fight a delaying action.

There is no point now in rehashing past mistakes endlessly.

I have always believed that when there is a confusion in orders, the person issuing those orders is at fault for not making himself entirely clear; so the fault in this affair was mine. But whatever the fault, the results were tragic. Chonan is a road intersection from which good routes lead to the west as well as to the south. Once we had lost Pyongtaek, we had opened up our whole left flank, defended only by some dubious forces known as the Northwest Youth Group—five hundred or a thousand dissident, non-Communist North Koreans who had been armed by the South Korean government but were not part of the regular Army. Other people had considerable confidence in them, but I did not share it—and the fact is, North Koreans harried our flank on that side from then on. There is no doubt that those Northwest Youths were blood-thirsty people who hated the Communists, but they did us very little good.

On the afternoon of July 7 I gave command of the 34th Regiment to Colonel Robert B. Martin. Bob Martin and I had served together in Europe in the 44th Division, and I'd observed his methods of commanding a regiment in combat. As soon as I had received my orders to go to Korea, I had asked Far Eastern headquarters for Martin by name. I knew Bob would want to get into the fighting, and Tokyo agreed to free him from his staff assignment.

When Martin took over the regimental command at three p.m. on July 7 I breathed easier once more. It's unfair to expect other people to read your mind, but I knew very clearly what I wanted, and that Martin was one man who could read my thoughts even before I said them out loud. He was also my very good friend.

In the meantime the 34th, following my orders, had moved north once more, setting up defense positions in and slightly

north of Chonan. But that night at ten o'clock, another message came through from the regiment: the situation in Chonan was bad, Colonel Martin had gone up from his command post south of the city to straighten it out—and now he was cut off. There were no communications with the one battalion still holding the town.

I got very little sleep that night, but about four o'clock on the morning of the 8th we received word that the situation in Chonan had improved and Colonel Martin was back at his command post.

That morning Lieutenant General Walker flew in from Japan and told me that the whole Eighth Army—including Walker himself—was coming to Korea. So I no longer would have to wear the double hat of division command and force command. Together we rode up toward Chonan to see what was going on. At the 34th's command post, south of the city, we were told that there was more trouble in Chonan and Martin had gone up again. Once more they were out of contact with their own front lines.

General Walker and I pulled on north, to the top of the last rise south of Chonan, with the town about six hundred yards ahead of us, out in an open valley. From there we watched our forces being driven out.

A sweating officer coming from Chonan told us that North Korean tanks were in the town, although we could not see them. He said Colonel Martin had grabbed a 2.6 bazooka and was leading his men with it, actually forcing the tanks to turn and run, when one tank came around a corner unexpectedly and fired from less than twenty-five feet. The shot blew Colonel Martin in half. Thereafter resistance had disintegrated and now our troops were bugging out.

Now a new decision faced me. The highway below Chonan

divides: one part follows the railroad to Chochiwon and the Kum River; the other goes straight south to Kongju, then angles eastward to rejoin the other highway at Yusong, just outside of Taejon. Both routes had to be defended. I ordered the 34th to back down the Kongju road and the newly arrived 21st Regiment to fight a delaying action on the route to Chochiwon. We were fighting for time. The 19th Regiment, which had come all the way from Honshu, was just getting into a reserve position. I already had ordered the tanks attached to it to come up on the line, and they came up while General Walker and I were watching the Chonan evacuation. These were the same little light tanks the rest of the division had.

As the commander of the first platoon came up the hill, General Walker stopped him and asked, "What are you going to do down there?"

The lieutenant said, "I'm going to slug it out." You could see that the boy was certain he was on his way to death. He'd heard what happened to other M-24 tanks against those heavy Russian-built tanks, but he had his teeth clenched and was going in.

But General Walker said, "Now, our idea is to stop those people. We don't go up there and charge or slug it out. We take positions where we have the advantage, where we can fire the first shots and still manage a delaying action."

Right there on the battlefield he gave this man as fine a lecture in tank tactics as you could hear in any military classroom.

We were still losing a war, but the delaying tactics did begin to delay a little. We weren't blowing as many bridges behind us as I would have liked—leaving them intact is a very brave thing to do when you're planning on a counterattack

along the same route, but when the enemy is pushing you all the time it's an expensive form of courage—but otherwise the retreat was being fought rather well.

The 21st Infantry, under Colonel Richard Stevens—"Big Six" to his "Gimlets"—did a magnificent job at Chochiwon. With its forward elements overrun by the enemy, the 21st counterattacked, regained the lost ground, and in so doing revealed the savagery of our enemy: they found the bodies of six soldiers with hands tied behind their backs and holes through the backs of their heads.

During this period Dick Stevens too gave me some anxious moments when for several hours he was well forward of his command post and cut off. Only after the 34th Infantry was forced across the Kum River at Kongju, exposing the left flank of the 21st, did that regiment withdraw in good order to Okchon in the hills east of Taejon.

On their way back they passed through the 19th Infantry, the "Rock of Chickamauga" Regiment, which had taken up positions along the Kum at Taepyong-ni on June 13. This regiment put up a determined fight along the Kum. They were almost completely enveloped and the regimental command post surrounded before the "Chicks" withdrew to Yongdong to reorganize. I've always had a soft spot in my heart for this regiment, with which I served as a captain in Hawaii in 1936-38. In the battles around Taejon, under the inspired and gallant leadership of Colonel Guy S. (Stan) Meloy, the Chicks did a lot of killing and made the enemy pay full price for the ground won. Colonel Meloy, badly wounded, came out on a tank late at night, just as I thought I had lost him.

The 34th held on the Kum at Kongju until North Koreans moving around the exposed left flank and attacked the 63rd

Field Artillery Battalion on its flank and rear. This forced the 34th to fight a delaying action, facing northwest, just east of Nonsan.

Now our front was narrowing again, and only the 34th was still in contact with the enemy. I sent a battalion of the 19th up to give them some added strength, and ordered the units in contact to try to hold along the curve of a Kum River tributary north and west of Taejon.

Various officers of the 25th Division already had been up to look over the front, and I knew that division would come to help us just as soon as they had secured a vital airfield on the east coast. The 1st Cavalry also was on the way. So I moved my own divisional command post east to Yongdong but stayed behind in Taejon myself, working out of the 34th regimental command post, located in a schoolroom. I had ordered the 34th to leave the river perimeter on the night of July 17 but countermanded those orders and decided to try to hang on to that river line.

My reasons for staying in the town were simple, although of course there can be much argument about them. (I spent a great deal of time later trying to second-guess myself about them.) But these reasons were compounded of poor communications, which had cost me one valuable position up at Pyongtaek, and the old feeling that I could do the job better—that is, make the hour-to-hour decisions necessary—if I stayed in close contact with what was happening. My staff was quite capable of operating the headquarters at Yongdong, under the direction of Brigadier General Pearson Menoher; and frankly, it was easier to get a message through toward the rear (or so it seemed) than toward the front.

None of which changes certain facts: I was forward of my own headquarters on the night of July 19; the situation was

so confused that I could not even be certain we still held a solid line northwest of the city; and very few important command decisions were made at that time. Very few of the things I did in the next twenty-four hours could not have been done by any competent sergeant—and such a sergeant would have done some of them better. I have no intention of alibiing my presence in Taejon. At the time I thought it was the place to be. Three and a half years later I still do not know any other place I could have been to accomplish any more. The accomplishments, I think, would have been virtually zero in any case.

On the night of July 19 I went to sleep to the sound of gunfire; and in the morning more gunfire knit a ragged and shrinking border around the city. I am no longer a young man, and so I awoke very early, although I had been short of sleep for almost a month. I heard the sound of the sporadic firing and inhaled the odors which no one ever escapes in Korea, of rice-paddy muck and mud walls, fertilizer and filth, and, mixed with them now, the acrid after-odor of cordite from the artillery, indefinable odors of thatch-roofed houses slowly burning.

There no longer was any great doubt: my forlorn hope that the 34th could hold the line long enough for more help to arrive was growing more forlorn by the minute. Spiteful rifles of infiltrators and turncoats spat from windows at the streaming refugees. The doom of Taejon was evident to them, to the lost and weary soldiers straggling through the town (the same soldiers who less than a month before had been fat and happy in occupation billets, complete with Japanese girl friends, plenty of beer, and servants to shine their boots), and to me.

Perhaps there is a certain somber poetry to any battle, and



the phrase, fight and fall back, has a brave sound. But a retreating army is no place to appreciate poetry; and for the people doing it day after day, fighting and falling back is a sorry business. Our first twenty days in Korea had been bone-wearying and bloody for the soldiers and frustrating for me (as such a battle must be for any commander who must tell soldiers when to fall back, when to turn and fight again). Any infantry officer must at times be ruthless. Part of the job is to send men into places from which you know they are not likely to come out again. This is never easy, but it's an especially soul-searing business when the only thing you can buy with other men's lives is a little more time. Sometimes I wonder now, when so many people are so friendly and kind to me, whether they realize that they are being kind to a man who has issued such orders in two wars, and to many, many men.

But these are thoughts which come after a battle, not during it. On that morning in Taejon I remember especially the hour of six-thirty. It was then that Lieutenant Clarke, whom I had as an aide partially because he was an aircraft pilot but who had been doing exactly no flying whatever since we hit Korea, relayed a report that North Korean tanks had been seen in Taejon itself, although the battle line was still presumed to be well north and west.

This was the sort of report with which the whole division was thoroughly familiar by this time—and of which every man in it was deathly sick. There was only one difference between this report and many previous ones like it—this time there were no immediate decisions to be made, for the moment no general officer's work to be done. So we decided to go tank hunting—Clarke, Jimmy Kim, my Korean interpreter, and I. We couldn't do anything at the moment about the fact that the 34th's headquarters had lost contact with two of its

leading battalions and did not know where its flanks were, or about the war in general. But perhaps we could do something about a couple of tanks.

We found them easily enough. Two T-34s had come into an intersection where the east-west road through the city meets the road from the airfield—but they wouldn't be going away again. Both were dead in the street. Behind them, one of our own ammunition carriers was burning, with much phosphorus smoke. A third tank was in a field near some housing built for dependents of American soldiers during the Korean occupation. This one appeared to be undamaged. As we approached it we received one round of high explosive, although we could not be sure of the source.

A three-quarter-ton truck mounting a 75-millimeter recoilless rifle was just backing toward the two dead tanks at the intersection, but I succeeded in getting the driver's attention and redirected him to back toward the tank in the field. But even though we reached a firing position we accomplished nothing. The gunner either was too nervous or was unfamiliar with his weapon, and none of the four or five rounds of his remaining ammunition scored a hit. The truck then pulled away, but the tank in the field still didn't move. We discovered later in the day that it already had been put out of action, although it showed no signs of damage.

This whole incident was only a repetition of an old story: we had nothing with which to fight this or any other tank. Lieutenant Clarke wrote an independent report of this day's activities and in it said that we returned to the regimental command post and ate breakfast. But I must confess I remember very little about the meal, although shortly food was to mean more to me than it ever had meant before in my life.

I do remember that after a time we went tank-hunting once

more, and this time located both a weapon and two more enemy tanks. The weapon was a bazooka, for which the soldier carrying it had just one remaining round of ammunition. The two tanks were on the same street as the two dead tanks, and behind the ammunition carrier, which still was burning. Our first attempt to get close to them ended abruptly when we began to receive machine-gun fire just over our heads, apparently coming from the turrets. We scuttled out of the line of fire and came up again from behind the buildings along the side of the street. This time smoke from the burning trailer and the protection of ruined buildings enabled us to get within ten or fifteen yards of the street, well behind the tanks. Just as we did, one of the live tanks managed to turn around in the narrow street and started back the way it had come into the town, and the other followed.

This was our day for bad shooting. The bazooka man too was nervous. His one round was fired at a range of a hundred yards but fell far short. The last tank rumbled right up to us and on past, within twenty yards.

There was nothing we could do to stop it. Some people who escaped from Taejon that day reported that they last had seen me firing a pistol at a tank. Well, they did, but I'm not proud of it. As that last tank passed I banged away at it with a .45; but even then I wasn't silly enough to think I could *do* anything with a pistol. It was plain rage and frustration—just Dean losing his temper.

After that display of disgust, all I could do was to have Clarke take a few measurements of treads and armor thickness on the dead tanks, then return to the regimental command post and call for an air strike on the fleeing enemy armor, if the planes could find it. Our withdrawal from the battle of pistol against tank was punctuated by white phosphorus shells

exploding from the burning carrier and falling much too close for comfort.

But we still weren't through with tanks. Very shortly a lone tank, without infantry support, calmly rumbled through the town, coming from the direction of Kumsan directly south of us, and going up toward the front lines to the north and west. It passed between our command post and the artillery area, not firing on either one and not being fired upon, waddled all the way up to the front line, then calmly waddled back again, still not firing. In passing the command post a second time, that tanker certainly must have seen more Americans milling around than he'd ever seen before, but he just kept going.

The only deduction we could make was that this tank must have come all the way around our left flank, leaving road-blocks of infantry as he came. I think he then went up to the battle line to report to his people, "Well, I've got these boys hooked from the rear now. Come on and make your attack."

In the days before July 20 I was getting intelligence reports from Korean Army sources and some of my own Korean agents. My private agents had said days earlier that the Communists would not attempt a direct attack on Taejon but would move around it to the west and south. It was also reported that civilians in captured areas had been ordered to make thousands of suits of typical Korean white clothing, in which North Korean soldiers would infiltrate our lines at Taejon itself. Then these, plus the turncoats already in the town, would capture it without a frontal assault.

I discounted this information in preparing for the Taejon defenses; but there is no denying such thousands of infiltrators did come into town and confuse the situation. Whether the final North Korean decision to make a frontal attack was based on the failure of these infiltrators to drive us out



entirely, or on such information as this lone tank could have provided, is anybody's guess.

At any rate, we decided to chase this tank with a headquarters group, in spite of our previous failures. Clarke, Captain Richard Rowlands, a division liaison officer, a ROK ordnance officer, and some casualties from the regimental command post made up the party. The latter were normally cooks, clerks, or messengers. On the way to the spot where the lone tank had last been reported we located a bazooka man and his ammunition carrier and a few other soldiers. Clarke's notes show that we killed some snipers on the way through the town; I think he's correct, because we certainly received a lot of sniper fire. I had reason again to note, as in Europe, that American boys really need to play more cops and robbers, as in the days of my own youth. They just don't know how to hide themselves any more, or how to sneak up on an objective—whether it be Willie Jones playing cop or a North Korean guerrilla firing out of a window.

When we located the lone tank it was parked at a business-area intersection, with two-storied buildings on all sides, perhaps half a mile south of the command post. The buildings were set close to the street but were not deep structures, so that the interior of each block formed a courtyard completely surrounded by shops and stores.

We approached by entering front doors of stores a block away from the tank, going through them and out into the rear-area courtyard, then into back doors of a building only yards from the quiescent tank. Immediately rifle fire splattered around us. The tankers had some sort of infantry protection now, and these riflemen had seen us. We withdrew through the stores to the courtyard, then tried to reach the street again at a different spot, but again the rifles found us.

This time I think our position may have been given away by a fat and stolid Korean woman who calmly stood on the street outside a building while all this firing was going on. One of the soldiers wanted to shoot her, but I couldn't be sure enough that she was a lookout.

Instead we went back to the courtyard once more, and this time moved directly behind the building at the corner. Only this one structure was between us and the tank. To get upstairs from the courtyard I had to chin myself on a window ledge, then clamber up. The bazooka man and I, moving very cautiously, entered a plastered room, about seven by eight feet. I think Clarke was in the next room, and others behind us.

Quietly I slipped up beside the street window and looked around the side of it with one eye—directly into the muzzle of the tank's cannon, no more than a dozen feet away. I could have spat down the barrel. I signaled to the bazooka man, who crept up beside me. Then I pointed to a spot just at the base of the cannon, where the turret and body of the tank joined. The bazooka went off beside my ear. Plaster cascaded from the ceiling onto our heads and around our shoulders. Fumes from the blast filled the room, and concussion shook the whole building. From the tank came the most horrible screaming I'd ever heard (although I did hear its equal later and under different circumstances), but the tank still was not on fire. I don't think I'm normally a brutal man, but I had just one idea. I think I said, "Hit them again!" and pointed to a spot on the other side of the turret. The bazooka fired and more plaster cascaded, exposing the cornstalks to which most Korean plaster is stuck. A third time the bazooka fired, and the screaming finally stopped. Smoke rose from the tank. It was very quiet in the street.

This was a day in which I had no sense of time. Time got

lost. Although I hardly had been conscious of any lapse of hours since early morning, it was almost evening when we came back to the command post for the last time.

There only details remained to be decided. Colonel Charles Beauchamp, the regimental commander who had joined us only three days earlier and had brought the 34th renewed spirit and fire, had been away from the command post most of the day, trying to re-establish his communications, so I issued my orders for evacuation to the executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel Robert L. (Pappy) Wadlington, another of the old 44th Division officers now fighting a second war with me. The temporary command of the 34th had fallen on Wadlington's shoulders when Colonel Martin was killed; and Pappy lived up to all my expectations. With his supporting artillery ambushed, he had kept his outfit in hand and fought a stubborn delaying action back to the Taejon perimeter, at which time Colonel Beauchamp, an eagle colonel sent from the 7th Division, had taken over.

A counterattack force was organized from kitchen police, clerks, and messengers when an artillery commander reported that snipers were preventing him from moving his pieces and that he might have to pull the breech locks and abandon the guns, which had happened all too often in the previous couple of weeks of our retreat. But this time Major S. C. McDaniel took out his headquarters people and managed to pin down the snipers until the guns could pull away toward the rear. This young officer had come to us as a replacement, also from the 7th Division, when Major John J. Dunn, the regimental operations officer, was reported missing in action at the same time Colonel Martin was killed at Chonan. I felt certain that Dunn had been killed too, but learned later that he was seriously wounded and captured. McDaniel had taken over a diffi-

cult position and had impressed me by his ability and outstanding courage. Later on July 20 he too was captured. I've learned from returning prisoners of war that he was relentless in his efforts to protect the rights of his fellow prisoners, despite the repeated threats of his Communist captors. He was so adamant that he finally was taken away from the prison camp, and his fellow prisoners are convinced that he was murdered.

All day Captain Raymond D. Hatfield, the division transportation officer, had been worrying about his supply train. We had a rolling supply point—that is, virtually all of our ammunition and supplies were kept on a train, so that they could be pulled out fast when we needed to retreat again, as we had from front-line points farther north. Hatfield was trying to get the train out of Taejon toward Yongdong, but reported that Korean engineers had uncoupled the locomotive and fled with it.

Fortunately my telephone line to division headquarters was still open, and division promised to send a locomotive back to Taejon. Hatfield went down to the railroad yard to meet it but soon returned, almost beside himself. The locomotive had come clear into the yards, then suddenly backed away again at full speed.

Once more we called headquarters. They told us a sniper had killed the engineer and the locomotive had been taken over by the fireman, but they would send it in once more, with a load of troops for protection. The last I saw of Hatfield (who really belonged at division headquarters, not up here in the burning town) was when he made another trip toward the railroad yard, still refusing to leave until the train did.

I added his name to a list I had been keeping. That day I had listed about fifteen names of men to whom I intended to award

medals the moment I got a chance—Bronze or Silver Stars for gallantry or heroic action. I even had a dozen actual medals—all the Bronze Stars the Eighth Army possessed at the moment—in my jeep, so that I could pin them on personally and on the spot. I knew I had been far too chary about awarding medals in World War II, and it hadn't been fair to the men. This time I wasn't going to hand them out like rations, but I didn't intend to make the same mistake over again.

Captain Hatfield never got out of Taejon. When American troops retook the town, much later, his body was found. He had been wounded, then bayoneted. I have recommended since my return to this country that he be awarded posthumously a Silver Star for heroic action. Most of the other men whose names were put on my list that day never did get their awards. I hung on to the list, but rain obliterated the names during the subsequent days and weeks. Three years later I couldn't remember them nor learn who the men had been. I saw my jeep again, under curious circumstances, but I have no idea what happened to the medals that were in it.

Just about dusk, light tanks from the 1st Cavalry Division, on temporary assignment to us, came up from the rear, and we organized a column of vehicles—the first of the regimental headquarters—to start out under their protection. But only moments after they left the schoolhouse, we heard them in a fire fight near the center of town.

Shortly afterward Pappy Wadlington suggested that it was time for us to go too. He showed me a last message he proposed to send to division headquarters, but I rewrote it because I thought it sounded, in his version, too much like asking rescue for me personally. As a substitute I wrote: "Enemy roadblock eastern exit Taejon. Send armor immediately. Dean."

In Europe I had ordered a lot of stations closed, without standing. This time I minded. If I had realized that this was the last formal order I was to issue for three years, perhaps I might have phrased it better—one of those ringing things that somebody would remember. But I didn't know then, and now I can't think of anything better to have said.

We organized the remaining miscellaneous headquarters vehicles into a rough column and started out toward the east, the way the previous column had gone with the tanks. As we pulled through the city we ran into the tail of this column, which had been ambushed. Some trucks were on fire, others moved across a narrow street where buildings on both sides were flaming for a block or more. Our own infantry, on one side of the street, was in a vicious fire fight with enemy units in higher positions on the other side.

We drove through, careening between the stalled trucks. It was a solid line of fire, an inferno that seared us in spite of our speed. A block farther on my jeep and an escort jeep roared straight past an intersection, and almost immediately Burke, riding with me, said we had missed a turn. But rifle fire still poured from buildings on both sides, and turning around was out of the question. I looked at a map and decided we should go on ahead, south and east, on another road that might let us make more speed than the truck-jammed main escape route. I had been away from my headquarters too long, and had to get back very soon. So we bore down the road in the general direction of Kumsan, while snipers still chewed us from both sides of the road.

We were all by ourselves.

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CHAPTER III

## *The Lonesome Mountains*

Our jeeps tried to barrel through the snipers' fire, but it blocked us time after time. At one spot, a truck lay partially on its side in a ditch with the driver slumped in his seat. We stopped and I ran over. The driver was dead, but under the truck were a couple of men talking to each other about surrendering. One said, "We might as well surrender. There isn't any use in this."

There were some walking wounded here too, and I filled my jeep with them, then started talking to the men under the truck. A Communist showed himself in silhouette on top of a hill, so I grabbed an M-1 and fired. I used to be good with a Springfield, but I hate to admit that I'm no great shakes with an M-1. I don't know whether I hit this man, but he dropped and the sniper fire let up a little. I signaled to Clarke in my jeep and to the escort jeep—now filled with casualties or wounded men—to go on; and the two men who had been cowering under the truck came out to join me.

I had hoped that there would be no more vehicles on this wrong road, but an artillery half-track rumbled up. I think that was the most heavily loaded vehicle I ever saw. It was so crammed with men that we couldn't get in—we just got on, hanging by precarious toe- and hand-holds.

We rumbled ahead and presently caught up with my jeeps.

## The Lonesome Mountains

They had been blocked and abandoned at a spot where the road made a slight S-bend as it approached a river and bridge. Here the Communists had set up a roadblock. Riflemen were along the S itself and at the left of the road, and apparently a machine gun was emplaced behind one of our wrecked vehicles at the bridge. Heavy fire swept the raised road, from in front of us and on the left side.

We tumbled off the road embankment into a ditch at the right for protection. Here I realized that I no longer had any weapon. I had left the M-1 on the half-track when I jumped for the ditch; my pistol had been lost somewhere, and the holster dangled empty at my hip.

Clarke was in the ditch with several other men. He had been an air officer, but now he showed infantry ability. When I asked him to make an informal muster, he counted seventeen Americans and a terrified Korean civilian who spoke English and later told me he had once worked for the U. S. State Department in Seoul.

We started crawling away from the road the Communist ~~fire~~ covered, around a small house, and through a bean or sweet potato field. On the way the little Korean, something of a dandy from his appearance, fell up to his armpits in a honey (fertilizer) pit and was absolutely speechless thereafter. We reached the bank of the river, well away from the bridge, and sat there in a semicircle, waiting. I remember delivering a small lecture to the men about keeping off the ridge lines, about using their halizone tablets to purify the river water with which they were filling their canteens (neither Clarke nor I had one), and about patience. I said that we'd have to wait until full dark to go on, and that patience was very important. A couple of years later, I wondered a time or two just how patient a man was required to be.

The group had only a few arms of assorted kinds. Clarke, who had been hit in the shoulder, insisted that I take his pistol. "I can't use it anyhow," he said.

Our bank of the river was low, but a mountain rose directly from the other side. Our plan was to cross here where the Communist fire did not bar the river to us, then swing over the mountain and down to the highway again beyond the roadblock. In full dark we got across, wading, and started climbing the steep, unstable slope. It was rough going. I was leading, and presently Clarke worked his way up to me and said, "We have a badly wounded man behind us."

Clarke and I went back to help the wounded man, who was hit in both legs, and Captain Rowlands, the liaison officer who had been with us on the tank hunt earlier in the day, took the lead.

I had carefully planned the withdrawal from Taejon to include the blowing of bridges and tunnels at exactly the right time. Rowlands—and only Rowlands—was to have given the word to demolition squads, but he didn't reach any communications for three or four days, so as far as I know the demolition charges never were fired. That's the sort of thing that happens to careful planning during a retreat.

Two soldiers already were carrying the wounded man. Another man staggered along beside them. At the first opportunity Clarke used his first-aid kit to bind the man's leg wounds, although his own shoulder still had not been treated.

This was sandy soil, very loose, and it was difficult for two men to carry another between them. I said, "Hell, get this man up on my shoulders. I can carry him more easily that way by myself."

But Dean is always forgetting how old he is. That one-man carry didn't last long. The soldier was too heavy for me, and

I was almost falling on my face. We went back to the two-man carry, and even then it seemed as if my turn came around every five minutes.

It was pitch-dark, and we were trying to move with as little noise as possible, to avoid stirring up North Korean patrols. The main group ahead kept moving too fast, away from us, simply because they had no way of telling that we weren't right behind them. The man we were carrying became more or less delirious; he drank all the available water and then called for more. We only hoped we knew where the party ahead was going; we kept struggling to catch up, but we had to stop for rest very often.

During one of the rest stops I thought I heard water running, just off the ridge to one side—I was sure I heard it. I started off in that direction, and the next thing I knew I was running down a slope so steep that I could not stop.

I plunged forward and fell.

A statement by Lieutenant Clarke about these events declared, in part: "About twelve, midnight, the general told me he was going down [the hillside] for water. I wouldn't let him and told him that we had seen North Koreans [by presumption] tracking us to the base of the hill, and we could assume they were still there. Also told him that there probably was a stream on the other side of the hill.

"The next day—1:15 a.m.—while leading the patrol, I found no one was following me, and no noise to the rear. So I returned to find five men asleep on the ground. I called for the general, and one of the men answered that he had gone for water. As I figured the round trip could be made in an hour, I set the goal of two hours as the maximum time that we could wait. The general didn't take a canteen or a helmet,

so I assumed he was going to try to find some stragglers rather than to get water. At 3:15 a.m. I woke the men and we headed to the top of the hill, arriving just before dawn. . . . Just as it was beginning to get light, I had the men spread out and posted two as guards for one-hour shifts. I figured we'd at least be able to see what killed us, as we had no weapons. I no sooner posted the guards when I checked and found them asleep. I awoke them and asked them if they wanted to be killed. I don't remember their exact answers, but they were to the effect that they didn't care whether they were killed or not. So I stood guard until they woke up. At daylight I searched the area with my field glasses, saw that our vehicles [the ones abandoned on the road the night before] were gone, and three Koreans were sitting on top of a hill to the northeast of us. We spent the day where we were, on top of the hill. It was scorching hot. We had the shade only of a few bushes about a foot high. During the day the men almost turned against me because I wouldn't let them start off until it got dark. As it did begin to get dark we started south along the ridge until we reached a cliff at the southern end. At this point we walked around the top of a ledge, about six feet wide, and then slid down a slope. . . ."

The remainder of the statement details his party's further experiences in getting back to the U.S. lines, which they reached two days later, on July 23.

When I awoke I had no idea how long I had been knocked out, and at first didn't realize that I had a gash on my head. But when I tried to rise on my hands and knees I found I had a broken shoulder. My abdomen where I'd had an operation a year before hurt fearfully. I was dazed and groggy. I looked

at my watch, which read twelve-thirty a.m.—or that's what I thought it said, although now I believe it must have been later. I was down in a dry creek bed with very steep sides; and all I could think of was, "My God, what's happened to those people up there? I don't know where I am."

I don't think I had walked more than twenty yards or so from the rest of the party, but I couldn't tell how far my involuntary run had taken me, or how far I'd rolled in my fall. I've tried dozens of times to reconstruct that run and fall in my mind, but I simply don't know how it happened. My present guess is that I was a hundred yards down the hill—not a cliff, but a very steep, sandy slope.

I heard water again, and I needed it badly. I crawled along the dry stream bottom and finally found a trickle oozing out of the rocks. I scooped out a hollow with my hands, and when it filled with water I stuck my face down in the dirty puddle and drank, not worrying at all about halizone tablets. I remember that I then started back up the barren hillside, perhaps on my hands and knees or just scrabbling, but I don't know what happened next.

I must have passed out again, because when I regained consciousness I was lying on my side—and an eight- or ten-man North Korean patrol was moving no more than ten yards from me. This was false dawn, just a faint glow over the eastern hills; but even in the improved light they failed to see me. I can't imagine why they missed me, but they kept right on going, scrambling up that steep incline like so many mountain goats, in the same direction that I had been headed.

I thought, "Oh-oh, this is the end for Clarke and the others. They're gone now." That was the lowest moment I've ever had in my life. I could see all those people on the hill being



killed; and the realization that Clarke didn't even have a pistol—I had his—made me feel even worse. But there was absolutely nothing I could do about it.

I was also tortured by the thought, not new, that I should have done something about him earlier. Both Clarke and my other aide, Captain David Bissett, were married men with young children; and ever since we had come to Korea I had been trying to figure out some way to fire both of them without hurting their feelings. They were good aides and good officers, but my experience with aides and drivers for division commanders in wartime is that they are very likely to get killed. I felt I shouldn't have men with young children taking the risks they had to take. I had been able to keep Bissett at headquarters most of the time, although he was thoroughly angry with me and even had told me, "General, I don't appreciate this. Why can't I have a company?"

But I had not done anything else about relieving either of them, and now I thought, "Well, Clarke's gone; and if I don't get back to headquarters myself, Bissett will ask for a line company for sure, and probably get killed too." They were both very fine men, and I'd never been so proud of Clarke as in the last few hours when he'd been organizing that column and keeping people together.

When the North Koreans were out of sight I crawled back to the trickle of water and drank again. I was dead tired, but I thought, "Oh-oh, I can't stay here. Other people may know about this waterhole." So I crawled up into some bushes fifteen or twenty feet away from it, just as daylight was coming on, and stayed there all day, only about half-conscious. I could hear trucks and people over on the highway we had left, a lot of noise, as if the Communists might be working on their vehicles, and some firing.

As soon as darkness came I started out again, first crawling back up the hillside, then along the top of the ridge, without seeing any sign of the party I'd lost the night before or of the Communist patrol of the morning. My shoulder was useless, so scrambling up the hill was difficult; on the top I was able to stagger along more easily. Then the ridge suddenly ended in a sheer cliff. A trail zigzagged down, but it was extremely steep, almost a hand-hold trail, and I had great difficulty with it. Walking itself seemed to do something to my insides; and it was especially hard for me to get to my feet after I had been sitting or lying down to rest.

Working at it a long time, I finally managed to get down about ten feet on the trail, where it flattened out in an escarpment, a sort of shelf on the side of the mountain. The trail went along it for a short distance, then dived another ten feet down to a second shelf. These ten-foot slopes were murder to get down. I barely managed to reach the foot of the second when rain started to pour down, as I think it can rain nowhere except in Korea. It came in torrents, and I was almost overcome by the desire for something to drink. There had been no water on top of the ridge. I found a big flat rock, perhaps six feet across, sticking up a foot above the ground level. I wanted to keep going but couldn't make it just then, so I lay down beside the rock and stretched my handkerchief out on top of it in the pouring rain. When it got soaked with water, I squeezed it out into my mouth, a few drops at a time. I think I spent most of the night doing that, instead of moving on toward our lines.

I was still lying there in the morning when I heard a noise, something scrambling down the same path I had used. I got around behind the rock and pulled my pistol, just in case it might be a North Korean.

But the man who lurched into view was a young American. He had not seen me yet—he was too busy making his way down that brutal path—when I called to him. “Who are you?” I said. “What outfit are you from?”

He jumped when he heard me but sighed with relief when he got a look and saw that I too was an American. He said, “I’m Lieutenant Tabor—Stanley Tabor—from the Nineteenth Infantry. Who are you?”

I tried to get up from behind my rock but had trouble. Then I said, “Well, I’m the S.O.B. who’s the cause of all this trouble.”

Tabor said he had been with Easy Company of the 2nd Battalion, which I had thrown into the river perimeter to bolster up the 34th’s strength. In the retreat he’d been cut off and had started walking south by himself.

We started walking again that morning, Tabor carrying his carbine and I with Clarke’s pistol banging against my leg. I’ve enjoyed walking all my life and usually can outwalk many young people. But not on this day. I had to keep stopping to rest because of the pain under my ribs and in my abdomen. I just wanted to sit down. After each rest Tabor would pull me to my feet, and we’d make a few more yards.

I said, “You go on ahead. One person can get through a lot quicker. I’m stove up, and there’s no use pooping around here.”

But he always would say, “No, two have a better chance,” and would refuse to leave me.

About one o’clock that afternoon we found the highway again. But it was bordered by open fields, and every time we’d try to cross we would see vehicles or soldiers of the Inmun Gun (North Korean term for “People’s Army”). So we kept heading south through the brush, toward Kumsan, waiting for

an opportunity to turn toward the east, in the direction of Yongdong, where I had left division headquarters.

That afternoon we stumbled into a family of refugees from Taejon, a mother and two teen-aged sons who had strung a ~~rude~~ tent—just a piece of canvas, really—beside a stream. None of them could speak English, but they gave us some of their rice and made us understand that we should stay out of sight under the canvas until dark. We got the idea that there were many North Koreans in the area, but none of them bothered us.

Both of us got some sleep. When we awakened we asked the family if they would guide us toward Yongdong that evening. They made us understand that this town—more than twenty miles east of Taejon—had also been captured by the Communists. The military situation, then, was in even worse shape than I had feared. We had to assume this news was true; and if it was, Tabor and I were in a bad spot. I knew it would be terribly hard to get all the way east to Kumchon, which would be the next logical place for division headquarters to move if Yongdong was lost. We would have to pass through a defile; and the hill country around Yongdong always had been full of Communists. Even in the occupation days hunters passed up this fine deer country because of the many guerrillas.

So I said, “We’ll have to head south toward Kumsan, then try to get to Chinan, and east toward Taegu.” In other words, I thought we’d make a big swing south, then cut to the east well below the main invasion route. This was to be my general plan for a long time.

That evening we started south again. There were no stars or other guideposts for holding our direction, and we didn’t make much time. This was on the evening of July 22, and I



guess my various injuries affected my mind, because the next days are more or less a blank. I know we had no food and that we did keep going, but the rest is just a haze of weariness, trying to get to my feet and failing without help, and everlastingly stumbling along one trail after another. Tabor must have kept us both going by will power, because I don't remember having any.

This may have gone on for one day or three. At last we reached a small town. I think we had turned around somehow and were heading west rather than south. This village may have been near Chinsan. At any rate we stumbled into it, and within a few minutes the whole population was around us. We asked for food, and someone brought us water with some kind of uncooked grain ground up in it. I've never seen or heard of it elsewhere. They also gave each of us two raw eggs. Two men in the crowd spoke some English, one of them well and one just a few words. The people seemed friendly, so we asked about where the Inmun Gun was, and whether they would guide us to Taegu. I offered them a million *won* (approximately \$1100—the exchange then was about 860 to 1) if they would take us through. Even when Koreans speak English well, they often confuse figures, so I drew the figure in the dirt.

We should have noticed that the man who spoke better English had disappeared, but we didn't. The one who spoke less well said, "Okay, okay, come with me." He indicated that we should come to his house to get some rest, and that he would take us to Taegu in the morning. He led us to a house at the far edge of the village, where we took off our boots and entered an unfurnished room. The Korean sat on the floor with us and in his very broken English asked whom the village people should support. He diagrammed it: the Amer-

icans pushing one way, the North Koreans the other. It was all very confusing, he indicated, and I'm afraid we didn't help his confusion much. Instead we went to sleep on the floor.

Several hours later—it must have been early in the morning—we heard a rifle shot just outside the house. At the sound that little Korean never hesitated. He went out a door like a rabbit out of a box. He was gone, without any preliminaries.

Outside a voice called, "Come out, Americans! Come out! We will not kill you. We are members of the People's Army. Come out, Americans!" The English was the best that I'd heard a Korean speak.

Tabor said, "This is it," and reached for his carbine.

"We didn't 'come out.'" I said to Tabor, "Come on, get your boots on, in a hurry," and we both did. We left by another door—away from both the rifle shot and the door the Korean had used, and jumped into some high weeds right beside the house.

"I'll lead," I said as we started crawling up a little hill in the dark. "With the carbine, you can cover me better than I can cover you with a pistol. I'll be the point." I remember I also said, "I'm not going to surrender, Tabor. There won't be any surrender for me."

"That's the way I feel too," he said.

There were more shots. They heard us in the weeds and fired in that direction. We reversed our course and went right back through the village, which was in pandemonium, everybody in the street and everybody yelling. We went right through town, past those Korean civilians, but none of them did anything. Crossing back-lots and skirting around houses, we finally came out in a rice paddy at the other edge of town. These paddies are divided into small cells, perhaps thirty feet across, with high dikes between. The water was about four

inches deep and the rice stuck up another four or five inches.

We dived into the rice and the water, crawling on our bellies, using our elbows to inch us forward in the old infantry fashion. Two soldiers were across the paddy on a dike; they did not see us at first. I led out in the crawling, crossing one cell, then scooting over a dike and into the next, while the soldiers—wearing Inmun Gun uniforms, I think—continued to search from their vantage point on a parallel dike.

We crossed three of these cells, with the intervening dikes. Tabor was still with me. Then I went over another dike and crawled some more, but when I looked back, Tabor was not behind me—and I was not to see another American for three long years.

During the thirty-five days I spent in the hills of South Korea several subjects cluttered my mind: food, inability to tell time of day or day of month, worry over my friends and aides, and the frantic necessity for getting back to United Nations lines with new information I had gathered about the enemy. These varied in importance from day to day, but all of them were there, all the time. So was an hour-to-hour, day-to-day concern about a pistol and just twelve rounds of .45 ammunition. Those twelve rounds were the most important in the world, because they were all I had.

While I lay in that rice paddy waiting for Tabor to catch up with me, I thought the time had come when I'd have to use that ammunition. I couldn't imagine what had happened to the lieutenant. We'd been doing very well, inching forward on our elbows and bellies, and there had been no sounds of firing or pursuit. Finally I crawled onto the edge of the paddy, where only a dike separated the rice land from a stream and a path beside it. Still he hadn't caught up.

I called, "Tabor! Tabor!" The only answer was from one of the Communist soldiers on a nearby dike. He fired at the sound of my voice. I clung to the ground and took out the pistol, getting ready to use it. I knew that I'd see the soldier's silhouette on the dike in the dim pre-dawn light before he could see me. But he must also have realized this, because he never came closer. I waited quite a long time, then called, "Tabor! Tabor!" once more. Again, shots were my answer. After half an hour with nothing whatever happening, I crawled back to look over into the last paddy cell we had crossed together; but Tabor wasn't there either.

It was almost full daylight now, and my advantage over the Communists hunting me was gone. I felt like a sheep-screaming dog, but I had to go on. I crawled along the path beside the stream and finally found some foxholes, evidently dug by Communists for a roadside ambush. I was still within hearing distance of the village, but I figured that the last place pursuers would look for me would be in one of their own foxholes. I crawled down into one, past drying watermelon rinds the former owners had thrown out from some feast they had held while waiting for somebody to ambush.

I have never figured out what could have happened to Tabor that morning. It's difficult to keep going in a straight line when you're crawling with heads down, as we were, and the paddy cells were oddly shaped, never square. He may simply have become confused and changed direction, losing sight of me, then was unable to find me where I stopped beside the path. It's also possible that he dropped into one of the drainage or fertilizer holes which are in nearly every rice-paddy cell. For a day or so previous to this, we had been arguing a little about these. Tabor thought we should come down to the paddies, using the holes to hide in when neces-

sary; but I had vetoed the idea, insisting that the only way to get anywhere in Korea is to keep to the high ground. It could be that he merely decided, once we were separated, to use his own judgment. However, I am convinced that he lost direction while crawling.

I learned in 1953 that Tabor had been brought into a prisoner-of-war stockade at Taejon on August 4, 1950. Our flight from the village was in the early hours of July 25 or July 26, so I don't believe he was captured that day. The village people certainly would not have waited so long to turn him over to the nearest Communist headquarters for whatever reward was then being offered for lieutenants. I think he may have remained free several days after we lost each other, but no positive check is possible. He was in such bad shape when taken prisoner that he finally died, from malnutrition and pneumonia. Returning prisoners in 1953 told the story of his death to his wife, whom he had married three months before going to Korea, and also relayed his report of having been with me for two weeks in the hills. Actually our time together was two or three days, not weeks; but the story had passed through many hands before it came back to me.

I'm still heartsick about him. Perhaps I should have gone back even farther that morning in the paddies, but I don't think I could have found him. My recommendation that he be awarded a Silver Star for his disregard of his personal safety in staying with me was made after my return to this country.

No sooner had I dropped into that foxhole by the roadside than I saw a farmer carrying a little girl, about three years old, on his back. Thank God he was not coming from the direction of the village; presumably he did not know about the hue and cry for me. He definitely saw me, so there was

no point in trying to hide. I tried for the first time what was to become a regular practice—when your hiding place in Korea is discovered, ask for food.

I got out of the hole and made signs. The word *pop*, made with a sharper sound than in English, means rice in Korean. I said, "Pop," and placed a hand on my stomach.

It worked. He made signs that I was to get back down in the hole and stay there, then went on. In about an hour he came back with a big bowl of rice, more than I could eat. After I had my fill I tore off the North Korean part of a map I had in my pocket (not being at all interested in North Korea just then) and wrapped what was left of the rice in it. Then I crouched in the foxhole and took out the pistol again. When I tried to fire it, empty, nothing happened, which gave me special cold chills as I remembered my plan to use it against the soldier on the dike a couple of hours earlier. I spent the day stripping it all the way down, cleaning it as best I could of the mud and water it had picked up.

I had the twelve rounds of ammunition and the two clips. Then and later, I was torn by indecision: I'd burnish those shells every day, but I never could make up my mind permanently which was the better way to keep them. Should I have one shell always in the pistol chamber, and the other clip full—that is, carrying eight rounds—not worrying about the three remaining shells? Or should I put six shells in each clip and depend on having time to change clips in the midst of a fight? Neither system suited me, really, because neither could insure that I'd be able to use eleven for knocking out Communists and one for knocking out Dean. I figured this out was essential. Even if I could have stomached the idea personally, I knew that I couldn't afford to surrender, because of my rank. The Communists would be sure to capitalize on

the surrender of a general, just as we had in Europe. They might even put out the information that I had gone over to their side, and there wouldn't be anything that I could do about it. I remembered that in Europe we had captured a German SS general who got lost in a retreat; and immediately our propaganda people had made capital out of him; telling the Germans in leaflets and broadcasts that he was just smart, he'd realized it was "a quarter to twelve" and had surrendered deliberately. That was not going to happen to Dean—not if bullet number twelve could prevent it.

I stayed in the foxhole all that day. Toward evening the farmer came back with more rice. When I showed him the rice I'd saved he grimaced and threw it away. When you want to keep cooked rice, you wrap it in a cloth so that it can "breathe." Wrapped in a tight paper, it sours within hours. I was to learn a lot about rice, and that was the first lesson.

After dark I left the foxhole and started walking again, still holding to my project of going south to get out of the way of the main troop movements, then east toward Taegu. I kicked myself for being without a compass. Traveling only at night, I could not use the sun effectively to check my direction; and the old Boy Scout system of getting a bearing from a watch was no good to me. My watch had stopped days before. Most nights the stars were obscured, and I had to go by guess-reckoning, which was often wrong. I think I made almost a complete circle during the next three nights, accomplishing nothing.

The only thing was, I did feel better. I could get up by myself now; and dysentery, which had bothered me during the first twenty days in Korea, was gone. In fact, my elimination came to a complete stop for thirty-two days. I thought

was a medical curiosity, but when I told my story years later in a Tokyo hospital nobody was impressed. Army doctors said anything under a hundred days was nothing to brag about. Nevertheless I'm still amazed.

On the night of what I think was August 1, I started walking early. I was up in the mountains by this time. I was making distance every night, and I thought, "All's well. I'll get through."

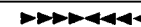
I was on a ridge, approaching what I think must have been Gumsan, although I wasn't coming from the proper direction. It seemed to be traveling east, from the direction of Chinsan, rather from the south. That was what made me certain I must have been going in a circle. In the early evening I passed some women working in the fields. As I went by I noticed that a little boy of about nine left them and was following me. I went over a rise and slipped into some bushes, sure that I had eluded him. After some time I came out again and reached a hill overlooking the town. From my vantage point I picked out a house detached from the others and decided that when full dark came I would go there and ask for food. I had not eaten since the farmer gave me rice on July 25 or 26.

For some reason not clear now, I was quite certain the people in this particular house would feed me. But just as I got to my feet to go down and try my panhandling, a youth carrying a rifle came out and started running up the hill—running like mad. Pretty soon another came out and also ran up the hill. I thought it fortunate that I had waited as long as I had to case the town. Then at least three more youths ran out of other houses farther down the street. I couldn't tell whether they were armed, but none was in uniform. They all were heading more or less away from me. I hunched down in the bushes and was just about to congratulate myself on

my hiding place when I heard a rustling behind me—and here was this nine-year-old, pointing down at me and trying to signal to the men. He wasn't more than a couple of yards from me.

I lunged at him, and I'm afraid I wasn't very pleasant. I really cussed him out. He turned and ran; and I crawled out of there fast and went the other way. There was shooting all around me, and bullets clipped the bushes above my head. Somebody yelled as if he'd been hit, but Dean was on his way.

When I'd come to Korea I had hoped I soon would be a grandfather, but I didn't feel grandfatherly then. If I could, I'd have wrung that moth-eaten little buzzard's neck.



## CHAPTER IV

### *The Capture*

I still had nothing to eat. I walked on through the night. On the trail the next day I met a Korean man. Again there was no chance for concealment, so I walked up boldly and asked him for food. This time my system didn't work. He would have nothing to do with me, turning abruptly and walking away as if I didn't exist. I was worried for a while after that, but there were no sounds of pursuit. I decided he probably had told no one of meeting me. I think now this was a typical Korean act: to do nothing, to take no responsibility. If he had either fed me or reported me he would have been personally involved—and that's usually the last thing any Korean wants. I've been told that this fear of personal responsibility accounts for the fact that most Koreans will walk around a person dying in the street without making any attempt to give aid. So long as they act as if the dying person didn't exist, or the accident had not happened, they personally aren't responsible for it.

By that night hunger was beginning to be a vital problem. When I spotted some smoke rising I figured there must be a village near and I worked down toward it cautiously, remembering the small boy of the day before. It was a good thing I did. Just after I had scooted across a highway I saw at least ten big North Korean tanks rumbling through that

village, heading south. This was obviously a main highway, and that village was no place for me.

I got better at sleeping by daylight and traveling by night, but I still wasn't making much progress. Those mountain trails wind around so in the ridges that you walk miles to make what is a short distance in a straight line. I was walking more easily now; although my abdomen still hurt and I couldn't raise my left arm. I wasn't suffering—except from hunger.

By this time I had changed my first objective to Chonju, even farther south and slightly west of Kumsan. My reasoning was that some South Korean officials just might be left in that town, with some sort of transport. Perhaps I could get a ride to Taegu, or even along the extreme southern route all the way to Pusan.

The ridge trails were such slow going that I began to get down on the roads more often. When I'd approach a village in the early evening or late in the morning I'd leave the road and circle around the village through the hills, although this had to be done without trails in most instances. It was frustrating and took endless time.

About three nights after my experience with the small boy I started walking in the early evening and saw a village ahead. It was still light and I should have started another circle, but I was a little overconfident and stayed on the road.

Then I met another little boy. This one was five or six years old. As soon as he saw me he turned tail and ran back to the village screaming as if his end had come.

Well, I knew what that would mean. Instead of turning off the road, I hurried after him, almost running myself. Close by the first houses I jumped off the road into a ditch and a bunch of weeds.

Sure enough, here came all the males in town. I noticed only one rifle and one burp gun, but a number of the other men had bamboo spears. They all followed the little boy back along the road to the point where he had seen me—I could see the little devil pointing out the exact spot—then spread out and began the hunt.

Fortunately for me, this town was huddled between a hill on one side and some kaffir fields (maize) on the other. Beyond the kaffir was a stream. I crawled through the fields to the stream, walked along its bed in the same direction I had been going previously until I was well past the town, then came back up on the road. The last I saw of that place, the men were still beating through the weeds with their guns and spears, and all the women were standing out on the main street waiting for somebody to bring me in.

I still didn't like little boys, Korean variety.

Thereafter, whenever I came on a village in the middle of the night, I just walked right through it, paying no attention to the dozens of dogs barking at me. Even when it was pitch-black I had no trouble knowing the villages were there. You always can smell a Korean town before you see it. You always can recognize the police stations too, because they're all built alike: a big stone wall, perhaps eight feet high, around a compound, double wooden gates at the front, and a twenty-foot round stone tower, like a silo, somewhere inside. Usually, I just ignored them. But one dark night when I was hiking along a rather good road, by Korean standards, someone challenged me from the shadows just as I passed the gates of the town jailhouse. He yelled one word, which must have meant "Halt!" from a spot no more than eight feet away.

I had no previous warning that he was there, and he startled



me. He did more than that. He scared me half to death, and made me mad too—at myself for being careless and at him for being alive. I was so flustered that I did a foolish thing. I whirled and yanked out my pistol and walked right into him. He was just a youngster, I think, armed with a rifle that had a long thin Russian-type bayonet on it. I shoved my pistol right in his guts, hard, and he backed up. I backed him right into the gate. He was so surprised that he didn't do anything.

Just as he got inside the gate I turned and walked very fast in the same direction I had been going. It was only a few yards to the corner of this jailhouse compound. Here I turned to the left, ran along the wall all the way to the rear of the compound, turned left again along the back wall of the compound, made one more left turn, and came back to the road—on the side of the compound from which I had come originally. I waited there to see what would happen.

Inside the compound there was a lot of yelling as soon as the guard recovered enough to give the alarm, and a whole squad, some in uniform, some in civvies, poured out into the road and headed the way the guard had seen me go. As soon as I saw the direction they were taking, I walked back up the road on which I had entered the town. I'd noticed a Y fork off the main highway a short distance before I hit the town. I went back to it and took the other arm of the Y—in the same general direction I wanted but not on the highway. I never did get back to that highway again.

The only explanation I have for the guard's failure to act is that he was just rushed off his feet. If he'd ever lifted that damned rifle to his shoulder I would have had to kill him right there. But he didn't. When I thought about it later, I could see that what I'd done was a fine way to get killed for sure—but that one time the bluff worked.

I had one other close call, also in the middle of a black night. This time I stumbled into a town before I'd noticed, and I was again in front of a police station. There had been a guard post in the road, I guess, and I walked right into a little coal fire they'd left burning. I don't know where the people were, and the only thing I could do was to keep on running. I guess they never saw or heard me, because nothing happened.

None of the village dogs really bothered me. But up in the mountains, miles from anywhere, the big dogs kept by the coal burners around their huts sounded so ferocious, so hungry and thirsty, that I stayed away from those huts even though I needed food badly. Those dogs sounded as if they were capable of tearing me apart. I also wanted to avoid the coal people. Many of them had been Communist sympathizers and outcasts even in the old days, and I was afraid of them. I think now this was a mistake; but at the time I didn't feel that I could take the chance.

At this time my equipment was getting in very bad shape. I was wearing an oversized pair of coveralls—which I had gotten in exchange for my combat suit, too small for me, from a forward air observer at Okchon a few days before Taejon. These coveralls were quite cumbersome and bulky and were bound to be stripped off entirely when I forded a stream. My combat boots also were the worse for wear, and one was rubbing the top of my foot badly. I had a watch that didn't work; a fountain pen that did; a pair of reading glasses; the remainder of my map of Korea; forty dollars in U. S. Korean occupation scrip, which nobody wanted; and the pistol. I had no rain gear. When it rained I got wet. And it did rain, heavily and with fervor. When rain and dark combined, I didn't know where I was going for more than a few feet.



ahead. And when it rained during the day I lost sleep.

My hunger was becoming dangerous, but there was nowhere to get food. Up here in the mountain area I seldom found a house standing—the result of the South Korean government's prewar campaign against the guerrillas, which had consisted largely of burning the house of anyone the constabulary or police even suspected of harboring or cooperating with guerrillas. And I was afraid to go down to the villages. During the day I could see that the Communists already had organized the whole area. Labor had been impressed all over the place. Men worked in big gangs, mostly on the roads; and old Japanese or Russian rifles and burp guns had been given to a few youths in each town. These kids were swelled up with the importance of their jobs as home guards and just itching for a chance to fire those weapons. I couldn't take any more risks.

I had found out some things about the Korean countryside too. It didn't pay me to start walking early in the evening or to walk very far into the dawn. In the evenings children and dogs were all around the villages; and in the early morning old men would come out, often with small youngsters trailing along, to look at the fields. They didn't work in those early hours but just walked out to look, as if planning the day's work. And like old men everywhere, they awoke very early. If I walked in the evening or after the first flush of dawn I was in danger of meeting somebody.

I also found that I had to pick my daylight hiding places well away from villages. During the day brush- and weed-gathering parties—old men, children, sometimes women—worked the untilled areas around the towns. Few Koreans can afford wood to burn in their homes, and they use the

brambles and grass for cooking fuel and to make smudge against the mosquitoes in the evenings. Each village at nightfall looks as if it is on fire, each a sort of little Pittsburgh under its own pall of smoke.

These bramble-gathering parties cover a lot of ground. Large children also play away from the houses, so I had to cover far out to be at all safe.

When I didn't, the results weren't good. One morning I stopped to take a bath in a stream as I was crossing it, and when I got started walking again—this was somewhere near a dam—women already were coming down to the river to wash clothes. I couldn't reach good cover and had to crawl into some bushes much too close to the community laundry. The women were not more than fifty yards from me, and I didn't dare to sleep, fearing that children wandering away from their mothers might find me. If they did, I wanted to be awake to know it.

Across the river and back from it about a quarter of a mile I could see a village, evidently the hub of the universe in this area. Soldiers came and went from the police station, and civilians constantly were reporting to the same headquarters. The women washing their clothes in the river had come from behind me, not across the stream, so I assumed there must be another village, out of my view but very close and on my side of the river. Three or four paths converged on the river bank where the women did their washing and exchanged continuous gossip.

I got through the day all right; but that evening one woman did not follow the paths the others had taken away from the river. Carrying a big pile of clean clothes on her head, she came up a path I had not seen before, not more than four feet from me. As she passed she looked right at me. If I had a face

like hers, I could make a million dollars playing poker. There was no facial expression at all. Not a muscle twitched. She just looked and kept on walking.

I was still trying to decide whether that old girl with the washing on her head could possibly have failed to see me when my question was answered by the arrival of two young men who came from the direction in which she had gone. They walked right to my hiding spot. Again there was no use in trying to hide, so I asked for food, going through the "pop"-plus-stomach-gesture routine once more.

They answered "Okay, okay," and made signs for me to stay down, just as that first farmer carrying the baby girl had done days before.

I thought, "Boy, after a long time I'm in luck again." I could just taste that rice which would be along in a minute. Both youths went back up the path the way they had come.

The next thing I knew, I heard a terrific commotion, and rifle shots started coming over my head.

This place was an old orchard, all grown over with the weeds that sheltered me. When I raised up enough to look, I could see that in addition to the paths fanning out from the river bank, a wide path higher up paralleled the river some distance back. Beyond the path were houses, the village I had not been able to see while down in the weeds. Upstream from me was a ford across the river.

When the shooting started, so did a lot of yelling—and in the end that saved me. My two chums had brought out the home guard force in force. Men were already all around me in a big half-circle, and all the women and children in the world were standing up there on that raised path to watch the fun.

I could hear these men starting to close in toward me and

the river, but it was a funny thing. I guess I was tired or something. I went to sleep between close-ins. I'd wake up with a start and think, "Dean, you damned fool, you can't sleep this way! They'll be on top of you in a minute." Then I'd drop off to sleep again.

But finally I did wake up enough to start crawling. I faded back up the stream, beside a fill. These people had known where I was when the show started, but they handed me one selling advantage, because every time a man in the half-circle would take a few steps forward to a new position, he'd yell like mad to let everybody know where he was. That helped. Once a man yelled just as I was about to crawl toward the very spot where he was. I waited, and presently he went on past me.

It was just dumbness on their part, but the fact is I slipped through the circle. They were still yelling and closing in, but I wasn't there any more. I just got out on the road and walked away, not stopping to say good-by.

I think this date was about August 15. I made good time that night, walking about twenty miles. When I didn't have anything else to think about, I'd go back to my worrying. I was desperate to get back to our lines and the division, and I knew my information—that there were far more Communists on the south flank than anybody thought—would be too late to do any good. I just wanted to get back into the fight.

Then I'd worry about my aides and their families, being in my mind that both Clarke and Bissett were dead by this time, their young families fatherless because of me. I worried about those families and my own. By this time Mil-lard would know not only that I was missing but that chances for my return were dwindling. I hoped that some of her

friends would have talked her into leaving Kokura, perhaps going to the States or to Puerto Rico to be with June. Much later I found this was just what our friends did do, although they were not able to convince her to leave Japan until August 15. She was in Puerto Rico when I was captured.

I also found that my hunch about Bissett had been partially correct. As soon as he was sure I would not return he tried to get himself assigned to a line company—he was an ex-enlisted man and always believed that was where a fighting man belonged—but another headquarters grabbed him for G-1 work and never let him go. So he, like Clarke, survived the Korean war.

Sometimes I prayed for these people, as well as for the families of Bob Martin, whom I felt I certainly had sent to his death, Hatfield, and others I knew or thought were dead. These were actual prayers, repeated many times.

But when I dreamed it was mostly about food. I thought, "When I get back to headquarters and a lot of people are running around wanting to know what happened, I'll say, 'Now just a minute and I'll tell you all you want to know about it. But first bring me one of those fruit compotes from a ten-in-one ration. I want one of those cans of apricots or plums, in that thick sugary syrup. Then I'll tell you about it.'" I could just see that can of fruit and smell the juice.

One night I walked in the pouring rain, making wonderful time, and found a spot to sleep in some bushes on a hill across from a mill and a village. But when day dawned I realized that I'd been walking the wrong way all night long. I was so disgusted that I took to the hills immediately and walked back practically all day. I think I made up most of the distance I'd lost during that blind night's hiking.

The next night I decided to quit fooling around, trying to

follow roads or trails. I'd go right over the mountains and ridges to the east. I decided at least to stick to one plan of action. I told myself, "Damn it, you're walking in circles, you're wasting time. You've got to get back to division. You should go straight east until you hit the railroad, then follow it south—and no matter how tough it is."

Well, that sounds good, but when you start crossing some of that country it's awfully rough. The mountains average only a couple of thousand feet in height, but they come right up off sea level, not by plateaus, so you have to climb every inch of every mountain.

That same night while I was lying down to rest on a very steep trail that went almost straight up the side of a ridge, I heard a clatter. Before I even could move a deer jumped right over me. If I had raised my head, his hoofs would have clipped me.

One problem up on the ridges was water. Very few have any water on them; and where there was a stream the Koreans had tapped it with an aqueduct to take the water down to the rice paddies in the flats. Once I wasted a whole day going down to the foot of a ridge to get a drink. At other times I'd head for patches of dark foliage, hoping that they would indicate a stream or pool, but often I found none when I got there. For food, I tried kaffir stalks and grass, both of which made me throw up. It was too early in the Korean summer for many of the crops to have ripened; and I had no weapons with which to catch game—in any case, I saw very little except some pheasants, and never got a standing shot at one of those. I did find one variety of wild berry several times. This was a sort of cane berry, somewhat like the salmon berry of the Pacific Northwest, without much taste. I suppose I ate a hundred of those, all told, while I was in the

mountains. Once I also found a field from which potatoes had been dug—and located four, each about the size of a walnut, which the diggers had overlooked. I ate them raw.

As I grew weaker, my stomach regurgitated even water. I kept looking for corn, and could not understand why I couldn't find any. I knew it was grown in this part of Korea. Later I discovered that in South Korea the corn is almost always planted right in the dooryards of the houses, almost never in the fields. The same is true of melons and squash, so I had no chance to get any of these. Several times I saw the rude towers which growers of ginseng root (beloved of the Chinese as a tonic that will cure virtually anything from flat feet to unripe old age, and also the principal component for a 150- or 170-proof liquor which will blow the top off your head) build around their fields for the guards. But the guards are unfriendly to practically everybody during the seven years the ginseng requires to mature.

Although I continued to pass many burned houses in the mountains, it was not until August 19 that I finally found one lone house far up in the mountains and intact. I spotted this good-looking structure in the night; but I knew there seldom was any use asking for food at a Korean house between meals. With no refrigeration or other storage for cooked foods, they simply don't have anything to eat except when the family meal is being cooked.

I flopped down in a path about two hundred yards from this house and slept.

In the morning I was awakened by another man carrying a little girl on his back. These fathers carrying small daughters were my luck charms, I guess. I asked for food—and my luck was in. He led me back to the house and the whole family came out to greet me. The man turned out to be the eldest

father, about thirty-four. The family included another married brother, about thirty-two, their wives and children, and two younger single brothers, twenty-two and eighteen.

They brought food out to me right in the yard—rice and pork fat. I don't know what happens to the lean part of pigs in rural Korea, but the only part ever served by the country people is the fat. I ate this ravenously, although I never had argued for any kind of fat (much of my youth had been spent in arguments with my elders about the amount of it I left on my plate in Carlyle, Illinois).

With signs I then told the brothers that I wished to stay there four days. I'd lost weight and was terribly weak. I said to myself, "If I can just have four days I'll be all right. Just give me four days of rest, and I'll make it." I thought I had put over the idea and that they had agreed.

These people had an unusually nice house, and I was led to a lean-to, built against the back of it. But this lean-to was covered with flies, just infested with flies, thousands of them. Nevertheless I lay down on the mud floor—and fought flies. I layed only five minutes. Then I had to crawl to the door and throw up everything I'd eaten. This was August 20, and the food was the first since July 25 or 26. I guess the pork fat was just too much for a stomach ignored so long.

At noon the family gave me more rice and some kimchee (fermented cabbage, with garlic). Again I threw it up. All of them were quite concerned about me. That afternoon I pointed some chickens in the yard, pointed to them, and tried to indicate by signs that I wanted some eggs. The family misunderstood (the most fortunate misunderstanding on record) and instead killed one of the chickens. The result was some of the best chicken soup I've ever eaten, full of potatoes and with chicken fat. This I kept down. And the next day

I kept down all three meals, each of which consisted of rice, roasted corn, and potatoes.

From the beginning I could tell that the second brother wasn't enthusiastic about having me there. In a combination of a few words of Korean and sign language he kept talking about the Inmun Gun, and appeared very much surprised when I indicated I had no desire to see any members of the Communist Army. It's possible that up until that time he had thought I was a Russian, but afterward he was increasingly nervous. On the second day the two brothers brought up an old man to look me over. He was a smiling old fellow, apparently friendly, but the Inmun Gun kept coming up entirely too often in their conversation. I thought he was some old *harabachie* (grandfather, literally) whom they'd brought from a neighboring town to give them advice about me. I also thought the signs were bad. I gave my watch (which wouldn't work) to the younger brother, and my billfold (minus an insert with my identification in it) and my fountain pen to the elder brother, to buy the remainder of that four days of food and rest.

That evening the bad news came. The elder brother, still kindly, nevertheless told me I would have to go. Evidently he was afraid that they'd all be shot if the Communists found me there, and perhaps he was right. I didn't feel that any of these people loved the Inmun Gun especially, but they undoubtedly were afraid of it and wanted—like most Koreans—to keep out of trouble at any cost. The elder brother had been in Muju when our aircraft bombed that town, and he demonstrated to me how terrible it had been: "Oo—umphh, umphh, umphh!"

Previously I had asked directions to several different towns, trying not to give out too much information about where I

usually was trying to go. So on this night the elder brother gave me four ears of parched corn and some rice wrapped in cloth and led me out on a path about half a mile from the house. There he left me.

It was a black night. I couldn't see; and perhaps in reaction I was more tired than I'd been before. I'd taken only a few steps before I stepped into a hole and fell on my face. I managed to get about fifty yards farther, then just dropped down on the trail and went to sleep. I wasn't especially low in my mind, just tired.

I could tell when this man left me that he felt I wasn't going to make it. I could tell by his look that he thought, "You poor fellow, you're finished."

But I thought, "Well, you sad character, you just don't know. I'm going to surprise you. I *am* going to make it."

The elder brother had showed me the direction toward the main road and had said "Taegu" often enough so I got the idea that this was the proper route to that town, seventy miles away as the crow flies. But I didn't worry about it the rest of the night.

In the morning a highly important event occurred. Dean's position began to work again, all the way. I've always thought of this as the day of the great passage, although for a while I thought it also might be my last. I was still being happy about the whole thing when the second brother and one of the younger ones, out to gather wood, found me—and they weren't at all happy about the fact that I still was only a mile from their house. They led me another half a mile along the trail to make absolutely sure I was headed right—and going away. We were far up in the mountains, and they took me to a spot from which we could look out and see in a distance a valley at least ten miles away, with a highway

running down it. Very carefully the second brother showed me the routes—to Muju, to Chinan, to Taegu. He wanted me to get away, almost anywhere, but away. You might think this is difficult to convey when neither person speaks a word of the other's language, but he managed.

I went on alone again. Frankly I never did find the road he had pointed out. But long before I came even close to it I did find more food. As I was walking along the trail I heard a commotion ahead. I slipped up for a look—and there was a whole gang of youngsters, twelve to sixteen years old, all beating peach trees in the orchard of a burned-out house. They were whaling the trees and of course knocked down and took away all the good peaches. After they left I managed to fill my pockets with the culls—wizened, half-ripe, and the size of walnuts, but food nonetheless. Then rain began again. I spent the night in the shelter of a piece of corrugated iron which had not collapsed when the shack was burned.

After that I began to make time toward the east. I walked all through the daylight hours of August 23, ate my parched corn, and felt so good that I walked all night too. I found another orchard and again filled my pockets with peaches, rested a while, then took off again, walking all the afternoon of August 24. That evening I hit a main highway. In the woods above it I rested until it was dark enough to start walking the road. I think I made twenty or twenty-five miles that night, and the only interruptions were when I had to hide out now and then to let groups of highway workers pass me on their way home. Fifty men were in one group, sixty-five in another. I just lay in a ditch and let them go by.

Early in the morning, following the hairpin turns of the highway, I saw a big village ahead. Evidently this was a particularly good farming area, because there were stables, barns,

and silos, in addition to the shacks common to most villages. I couldn't imagine what the people were raising, but I took my chances and made a big swing around the town.

But again I walked too long. Daylight caught me just opposite another village, on a brand-new, improved road, which I was sure must have been built with ECA money from the United States. I thought, "Well, these people should be as favorable to us as any Koreans, having had all this built for them." So I wasn't too much worried when daylight caught me. I just went off the road and up into some brush under chestnut trees, a spot from which I could see the village, less than half a mile away.

For quite a while previously I had been bothered by the increasing number of our aircraft in the skies, and had long since abandoned my early dream that a plane would one day fly low enough to see me wave. For days none had been even close, although after my repatriation I learned from Lieutenant General Earle E. Partridge that he personally had spent long hours flying over the very area where I was wandering, searching for me from a light (AT-G) training plane. But I was doing most of that flying during the daylight hours when I was asleep.

While I rested under the chestnut trees my spirits were rising. I figured that I could walk the hundred and twenty miles to Pusan in ten days on the strength my two-day rest had given me. I was confident I'd be able to last through it. And there was one new wonderfully reassuring factor. Away over to the east I could hear the rumble of artillery—definitely guns, not bombing. I had not heard this since we'd left Taegu, so it was like hearing from an old friend.

"I'm on my way back," I thought. "I'm going to make it." I slept fairly well during the morning. In the afternoon an



old man and some boys came through the chestnut grove, carrying little pint-sized sickles with which to cut brush. They saw me. Once again I worked my system, asking for food. I thought, "Well, damn it, things are breaking my way now. I've been well fed and I'm on my way back. Everything favors me, so I'll just continue to ride my luck."

The old man smiled as if we were long-time friends and gestured toward the village. I rose and boldly marched down that new highway to the first house. The village was a one-street affair, with the street at right angles to the highway, and I stopped at the house that had the highway right beside it.

The man of the house was in the back yard, making straw shoes. His wife and children were watching. I made signs for food and got vigorous and friendly affirmative nods. The woman had no rice ready but put some on to boil. While I waited for it to cook the householder went right ahead making straw slippers. When he completed one he would put it on and dance around in the yard to show me how good it was. The children laughed, the shoemaker laughed, and so did I. This was my lucky day.

Then the woman brought out the rice, with garlic beads as a side dish. It was delicious. I ate all I was given and asked for more to wrap in my handkerchief.

I left there about five o'clock, and had gone only a short distance along the highway when a short little Korean passed me, hiking along as if he were going to a fire. He got about twenty feet ahead, then suddenly stopped, waited for me to catch up, and walked along beside me without saying a word. Just to break the silence I started asking him the route to Taegu and other towns in other directions. When we sat down to rest at a bridge he picked up some rocks and in the dust marked the routes to Taegu, Pusan, and Chonju.

Although he spoke no English we managed to understand each other. I was still trying to cover up a little about where I intended to go, but I was beginning to be impressed with him. I made him the same offer I'd made back in the village before I lost Tabor—a million won to guide me to Taegu.

He sold me. I thought he understood everything. I asked him where the Inmun Gun was, and he told me they were at Inman. He intimated that I shouldn't worry, everything would be okay—he would take me right past the Inmun Gun. I don't know how I got all that without any English, but I did, or so I thought. I was sure that's what he was trying to tell me.

We went farther down the road and came to a river where bombing had knocked out a bridge. He pointed that out, laughed as though he thought it exceptionally funny, and said, "Pi-yang-gi" (airplane). He seemed pleased that the bombing had been so good.

To ford the stream I had to take off my coveralls. I undressed fully. He offered to carry my pistol for me, but I wouldn't let him.

When we reached the far bank and I had dressed again, we climbed up the bank—and there was trouble waiting for us. The village came right to the river at this point, and waiting for us was practically the full manpower of the village, ten or fifteen men in native clothes and all armed with clubs or spears. They'd seen us crossing and were waiting for us. The man in front, carrying a club, had an especially ferocious expression on his face and motioned to me to go back, that I shouldn't even go through their village.

Well, I didn't want to undress again and cross that river a second time. I pulled my pistol from the holster and pointed it at them. As I walked toward them, making threatening



motions with the pistol, the whole group backed away slowly.

Meanwhile the little Korean by my side kept jabbering to them, and I had the definite impression that his talk had more to do with their retreat than my pistol. I thought, "He's fast-talking them." Still with their clubs and spears but just standing there and not doing anything about it, the whole gang let us go through the town.

Before we had gone more than a fraction of a mile a second Korean caught up with us. I realize now that this was the same ferocious-looking character who had been at the head of the village mob, but at the time I failed to recognize him without his club. He seemed to be great pals with Han, the man who was guiding me; and Han made me understand that this new chum was "okay, okay." We three walked down the road together until we reached a bend.

Han said suddenly, "Inmun Gun!" and signaled to me to get down.

I thought, "Boy, this is bad. There's something around this corner." I jumped into some bushes beside the road, holding my pistol ready.

Han went on ahead but came back in a few minutes, saying, "Okay, okay."

"This boy is all right," I thought. "This is working out fine."

We went ahead, and around the bend found fifty or a hundred Korean civilians filling holes in the road. This was a big project, really a major industry, and they all were working fast, although I saw nobody with guns keeping them at it. We walked right past, just as if we all had a perfect right to use the highway. Some of them looked up, but no one said anything or interfered with us.

When we came to another bend a little farther on we went through the same routine—the Inmun Gun! warning, Dean jumping into the bushes with his pistol, then an okay and another stroll right past a working party. This time I noticed two men with rifles, and there was an uncomfortable feeling along my spine when we turned our backs to them. But again nothing happened.

I thought, "This Han is a pretty good boy. He is going to let me through." But he did a couple of strange things, which should have warned me. One was walking so fast. He walked as if he were going to a fire, and I couldn't keep up with him. Finally I just sat down. I said, "All right, you people go ahead." But they both stopped with me, and Han tried to explain. He indicated that he was hungry and wanted to stop before we reached Chinan. It was getting late in the evening, and we had walked about eight miles, at full speed. When we started again, however, we went only a short distance, then turned into a house beside the road. I understood that Han wanted to stop there for food. Once inside, they served us *sake*, but only a plate of garlic beads for food. I took one little glass of the liquor but ate all the garlic beads they brought. The people in the house wanted me to take more *sake*, and Han too urged it on me. I should have been warned by this. I did think, "What are these people trying to do? Get me drunk?" But my thinking didn't go any further than that.

While we were sitting in the house, and after a lot of conversation, a third man joined us. He walked along with us when we left. At the next bend we did the same routine a third time, with two men going ahead and one staying in the bushes with me. The stumbling block ahead was a small town,

not a road crew. The two scouts finally came back and gave us the okay. We walked right through the town.

Just as we got on the other side of town there was some yelling behind us. I got out of sight while Han and his second friend went to talk, this time to our rear. Then Han called something to the fellow who had stayed with me (Little Ferocious, who had led the village gang), and he motioned me to come out. I did, once more putting my pistol back in the holster, then sitting down on the edge of the road. The road was on a cut above a stream, and we hung our feet over the edge. The night was warm and there was bright moonlight.

All of a sudden, around a corner from the village came about fifteen men, and somebody fired a rifle over our heads. I reached for my pistol and got my hand on it, but the little devil sitting beside me grabbed my wrist with both his hands.

I struggled to my feet, with him still hanging on, but I couldn't get the gun out. I fell in the dirt, he with me, and we rolled around in the road as I tried to get him over to the edge of the cut again, to kick him down toward the river. I thought the fall would break his hold, even if we both went over, and I'd have a chance.

But the gang had only about twenty-five feet to rush us, and before I could get this character to the edge they were on top of us. About three rifle barrels were on my head, and as we wrestled around, they kept bumping me. It was very annoying.

They were all yelling, and I suppose they were telling me to surrender, but I kept on fighting with this fellow who had a hold on my arm, and trying to kick somebody where he'd never forget it. But he never let go. I yelled, "Shoot! Shoot, you sons of bitches! Shoot!"

I remember thinking, "This is an ignominious way to have our lights put out, but this is it."

Then they were twisting at my arms. There were several of them doing it, and they weren't easy with it. They had both my arms twisted, and that shoulder of mine really hurt—but no physical pain hurt so much as the thought, "Well, these miserable devils have you as a prisoner."

They tied both hands behind me with sashcord, pulled so tightly that the circulation was cut off, then jerked me to my feet and shoved me back toward the town we'd just passed. I still thought there was no use in being a prisoner. I tried to run. I wanted them to shoot me. But I was so weak that I made only a yard or so before somebody danced up and shoved me from behind so that I fell on my face again. They all laughed.

As they pulled me up I said, "I can't walk." They kept shoving me, but I wouldn't walk. My shoulder hurt too much, and those bonds on my hands. I indicated I wouldn't move so long as they had my hands tied that way, and this must have confused them. At any rate they finally took the ropes off entirely.

Then we all marched toward the police station. Han was standing there beside the door, looking pleased with himself, and so were the other two whom I had thought were helping me. I did wish I could have one last kick at a couple of them, but there was no chance. In the station somebody searched me. I had my identification tags, some cards in the part of my billfold I hadn't given away (I still have the same A.G.O. card, which was given back to me eventually), an immunization register, and some snapshots of my son and daughter. They took all these, and one character reached into my shirt pocket. I wear a partial denture, but my mouth had been

hurting so that I had been carrying this denture in my pocket.

About the only smart thing I did that night was to grab that denture, just as the searcher took it out of my pocket, and pop it into my mouth where it belonged. That denture had been painful; but I never put it in any faster—and never mind the pain. I knew that if anybody ever had time to see how much gold was in it I'd never get it back.

While they were searching me I was standing in front of a desk, and behind the desk a Korean calendar with Arabic numerals hung on a wall. I pointed to it, and one of the men put his finger on the figure twenty-five.

It was the twenty-fifth of August, my wedding anniversary.

Three years later, in September 1953, Han Doo Kyoo, aged forty, and Choi Chong Bong, twenty-four, were arrested by South Korean police and accused as my betrayers. Police said the pair received the equivalent of five dollars for turning me in to the Commies. On January 12, 1954, both defendants were convicted. Although the prosecutor had asked only five-year prison terms for them, the judge sentenced Choi to death and Han to life imprisonment. I had previously written to President Rhee, asking clemency for the two men if they were convicted, but the trial judge declared the court had not received any official notice of my request. Their defense statements indicated that they had intended to take me through to United Nations lines but ran into so much trouble in getting me past the various barriers that they decided they should turn me in to prevent my death in a hopeless fight. Having had no method of communicating accurately with them at any time, I'm simply not in a position to guess whether this might have been true. I did not feel that further punishment of these men would accomplish anything.

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CHAPTER V

## *A Small Boy from Texas*

repent that night in a cage—quite literally.

This object, sitting in a corner of the main room at the police station, was about four feet long and the same height, but built like the letter L—that is, the high portion was only high enough for my head and shoulders. I could sit in one position with my knees drawn up slightly but could not lie down or stand up. This was nothing they had dreamed up specially for my benefit, but equipment of much age and frequent usage. I suppose they ordinarily kept the town drunk in it on his bad nights.

I made one horrible mistake that night and learned one important lesson. The mistake was to take off my combat boots. After I'd been in the cage for a while I pulled them off. They had chafed my foot until my instep was infected and had been bothering me for a couple of weeks; also, they smelled awful. I made signs to the guards that I'd like to have my boots set outside to air. Frankly, I didn't want to smell them in my cell.

This suggestion was greeted with startled enthusiasm. If those people could have spoken perfect English, they couldn't have said more plainly, "Boots? Oh, my goodness, that's something we overlooked." They took them out of the cage, and somebody else had them on within five minutes—and I didn't