TARO LEAF

24TH INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION
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"George Fielding Eliot is right. Firepower should *be sackerficed for mobility."*

Bill Mauldin's Willie and side kick Joe were born, full grown, in the 45th Division's Italian Campaign, during the IInd World Wide Unpleasantness.

The fact that Willie was not in "our war" made little difference - we loved him.. He never smiled; he badly needed a shave; and his clothes hung in weary folds upon his weary frame. We adopted him and pal Joe as they slogged along, took them to our bosoms on the other side of the globe, for here were citizen soldiers. Before their incarnation, they had presumably been peaceful citizens. Now they were veterans of war's hardships, its filth, discomforts and agonizing boredom.

War for Willie and Joe was bad weather, soaking clothes, and cold rations. War was mile-after-mile of tramping, getting just as tired advancing as retreating. War was praying between artillery barrages, pitying starved civilians standing in the midst of ruined homes, watching friends die, learning the ecstasy of wiggling a little finger just to see it move and know that you were still alive. War was hell for Willie and Joe.

Bill Mauldin's cartoons were serious and gay, ribald and sentimental, tough, touching and bitter. His lampooning was sometimes seditious, but it was fun, and we relished every one we were able to lay our hands on.

We offer Willie and Joe, with this issue, our "Pre-Convention Report Issue," as a reminder of "days when", and because of a conviction that they have a place forever in the heart of every man who ever soldiered.

FLASH
Maj. Gen. Wm. Verbeck
hospitalized Walter Reed.
Card or note recommended.

J A M E S N. P U R C E L L

We all have to come to grips with death, to know that it happens, to welcome it or fear it.

In this scientific age, most of us accept the biological doctrine that birth and death are the essential machinery of evolution, reciprocal phases that make it possible for a species to change.

But that takes none of the heartbreak out of it, none of the sense of needless loss.

And there are some few in every generation whom we would like to see exempt from the general law. Some few among us seem to be successful experiments, too valuable to be discarded lightly in the vast game of trial and error in which we are all brushed aside, never to be anything permanent.

If we were to choose out of the men we thought worthy to survive beyond their times, our lists would be brief, and none would be the same; but James N. Purcell would stand high in the balloting.

He probably saw more service in the Division than any other man, living or dead. His sleeve carried such a mass of yellow "Hershey Bars" as to give one cause to wonder why his shoulder didn't droop.

Not content to see his Division through with "the worst of it" between '42 and '45, he insisted on staying through the early occupation months in Japan, because - in his own words - "I can't let the Old Man down". So two years after the last volley rattled through the Mindanao Hills, Jim was still by choice, an active Taro Leafer.

And of this Association and its gestation, this too we recall intimately and well, for it was in August of '45, on the Taloma shores, that a handful of stalwarts, dedicated to "this thing called Division", looked forwardly to days when 24th service would be a matter of reflection - reflection with something of nostalgic pride. Jim Purcell stood head and shoulders above the rest - situation normal. To organize was the desideratum, and organize we did, under Jim's initial chairmanship, "that what we have endured, what all of this has cost in 'blood, sweat and tears' may never be erased from the memory of man". Inspirational words those, penned by him who so fully personified "this thing called Division" - whose very life was so entwined therearound that some of us were want to wonder if he had or wanted any life save for his life with "The Pineapple Kids".

Appropriately, 16 years later, the Association bestowed upon Jim its greatest accolade - its presidency - to lead the cause of insuring the fulfillment of those pledges, sworn to at Taloma Beach. It was a natural turn of events: Jim had come full circle.

Painful was the receipt of the news from his lovely mate, Mildred, that Jim was hospitalized. More painful was the receipt of the wire, received while Jim's Executive Committee was conclaved in Saturday morning session, a meeting over which he rightfully would have been presiding had the Fates been more kind. Convention Chairman Pat Ciangi, its addressee, read it to himself and, numb with shock, softly muffled that he could not read it aloud. The message was passed around, each man in his turn reading it, each feeling his own tragic sense of loss. Mildred was saying "Jim passed away. Please announce only after festivities". That the Division must come first was typically Purcellian; it was as though Jim himself had had a hand in its very composition.

Poignant it was that this wonderful man should pass to his reward as the men he loved so well should be gathered together under the aegis of that which he had been so singly instrumental in nurturing seventeen years earlier, almost to the very day.

When we say that we have lost incalculably in loyalty, dedication, intelligence, humor, and human kindness, we can envision Jim's face, brooding for a moment, before he would find and utter an implacable, unanswerable comment on these trite phrases. But find it and utter it, he would - with something of an impish grin, with every black hair on his massive chest bristling and pointing right at us.

He has escaped us now, as all escape into death. But the memory of his face, his voice, his wit that seemed to gather slowly like a storm and flash with its lightning, all of these are still strongly with us. And there is none among us who doesn't have a sentence or phrase or episode etched on his cortex to remind him of what manner of man Purcell was. No stranger could ever encounter Jim without becoming aware that he was in the presence of a formidable personality. No friend ever found him lacking in warmth, sympathy or time, when there were troubles to be met. Though he consistently said what was on his mind, he made few enemies. Many stood in awe of him because of his deft and pungent tongue: but apt as he was in attack or retort, Purcell was ready still to give mercy, happier to be tolerant than to be angry. And "Work" was his middle name. Jim never had to back up to the pay table. He gave Uncle Sugar his dollar's worth - and many times more.

Standing out, above all else, was his concern for his men. As Douglas Freemen said, in one of his biographical works on Robert E. Lee, Lee was great for many reasons but none had a priority over his concern for his men. So too was Jim Purcell great and for the identical reason. With him, it was an obsession - truly a magnificent one.

There is no disguising that the death of James N. Purcell is a heavy misfortune. We wish the dice could have fallen the other way. It was a better world when we had him with us.

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It's good to be back, after a 5 year absence; it's better still to know that some among you willed it.

May we tip our hat - respectfully and gratefully - to ROBERT J. DUFF (DIV HQ) and AUBREY S. NEWMAN (19th INF, 34th INF & DIV HQ) who so admirably burned the midnight oil that these issues might continue on their way to you, our faithful readers, during the years of our absence. We know something of the aches of the head, heart and belly that were theirs. Not to acknowledge, both to Bob and Aubrey, the gratitude of each and every one of you who have been exposed to their copy would be to betray our duty. Good and dedicated men they were and are, devoted to this cause, willing to endure personal hardships, moneywise and otherwise, to prove it, if proof there need be. Deep thanks, Bob and Aubrey.

We're back, we would add, primarily at the personal urging of one of our very closest Division friends, who buttonholed us at the bar at the Chicago Convention and begged. This is what comes from drinking. If we followed the dictates of our head, we'd have devoted this first issue to the worthiness of Alcoholics Anonymous. But we have followed the dictates of our heart, and we're back at the Editor's desk.

Nor shall we dwell concerning the reception the news of this added responsibility met with back here in Springfield. We didn't spring it for a week. When we did, we were about as popular as Nasser at a meeting of the B'nai B'rith.

As we were saying, it's good to be back.

BETWEEN THE LINES

JAMES B. JONES (19th INF and DIV HQ '43-'45) loves to tell the story of the two horseplayers who went nuts and were taken to the nut house, where they set themselves up as bookies. They didn't have any money, of course, and neither did the other inmates, so all the betting was in pebbles. The two bookies did very well and pretty soon they had one corner of the dayroom filled with pebbles from floor to ceiling. One day a fellow patient staggered in carrying a huge boulder. One partner looked at the other and whispered: "We don't want any part of this guy. He KNOWS something".

THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES

Robert Leckie - and we'll warn you right now that he was a Marine - has recently written a book titled "CONFLICT, The History of the Korean War" which will likely give you the chilly feeling that the Marines, and the Marines alone, did about the only things that were right in the sorry mess. Surely the Division suffers at his hands.

In this issue, we quote rather liberally therefrom out of that portion covering the opening days of the bitter and inglorious conflict. Preceded by the expected summation of how it began in the first place, with the establishment of that imaginary 38th, and of how Korea came, between '45 and '50, to be a couple of armed camps on opposite sides of that fanciful line, it works up to that quiet Sunday morning, June 25, 1950 - what is there about Sunday that makes warmongers light fuses the way they do? - when the Red hordes violated the Republic's independence.

Portions of Mr. Leckie's story follows, commencing on the next page. They tell of our part in those early July days.

To give the book such a tremendously high percentage of the total copy of this issue exposes us to charges of "boilerplating", we acknowledge. Nonetheless, we believe Leckie's words to be worthy, if not deserving, of the allocated space.

Ponder for a moment, if you but will: this man has put us under something of a cloud. If the world is going to read it - and the reading is going on at this very moment - at very least, we owe it to ourselves to be informed thereconcerning.

We beg that you not consider what follows to be the hallmark of a lazy editor. The choice was ours: publish it now, while it's on the lips of the man in the street, that we, who know, may do as circumstances may seem to dictate - and that, of course, includes using brass knuckles, if the going gets rough.

To repeat, we're rushing this to you - "boilerplate" or no - to the exclusion of any reporting upon the Chicago festivities of last month. Same will appear in our next issue which, as Ed Sullivan would say it, "is already on the drawing board".

A QUOTATION FROM ROBERT LECKIE'S CONFLICT, WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE PUBLISHERS, G.P. PUTNAM'S SONS

This was the nation's strength in that summer of 1950, and yet no one, from MacArthur down to the fuzziest-chinned teenager beginning his adult life in the heady role of garrison duty in a conquered country, had the slightest doubt that the crisis would be over in a few days, now that the Americans were entering the conflict. MacArthur himself, in the message requesting permission to use ground troops, had spoken of an "early counteroffensive" using just two of his understrength divisions. An Air Force officer, hearing MacArthur's plan, had snorted his derision of the need of as much as a single soldier. "The old man must be off his rocker," he said. "When the Fifth Air Force gets to work there won't be a North Korean left in Korea." And then there was a major of the 24th Division who remarked: "I figure that once the Reds hear Americans are up against them they'll stop and think this thing over a while."

Only one man in authority seemed not to share this ballooning spirit of optimism, and he was the man whose melancholy duty it had been to send those two bare companies of Americans up against a pair of North Korean divisions.

Major General William Dean once described himself as "an in-between, curious sort [of general] who never went to West Point, did not see action in World War I and did not come up from the enlisted ranks." He had commanded the 44th Infantry Division in Europe during World War II, and had come to South Korea in October, 1947, as military governor and deputy to General Hodge. In 1949 he was in Japan as chief of staff of Lieutenant General Walton ("Johnny") Walker's Eighth Army, and in June of 1950 he was in command of the 24th Infantry Division at Kokura, directly across the Tsushima Strait from Korea.

The night of the 24th of that month, as the North Koreans massed above the 38th Parallel, Major General Dean was at a masquerade ball for the 24th's officers, his strong six-foot, 200-pound frame swathed in the long robes of a Korean *yang-ban*, or gentleman, and the black stovepipe hat of that leisurely class perched awkwardly atop his close-cropped sandy hair. The next day General Dean heard of the invasion and concluded that World War III was beginning. Five days later he was under orders to go to Korea to direct a delaying action while other American forces were prepared for battle. He was to do what all commanders loathe doing, to commit his forces piecemeal in an effort to stave off the Communist rush. Which meant, in human terms, that his men must buy time with blood.

To accomplish this mission General Dean called upon Lieutenant Colonel Charles ("Brad") Smith of the 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry.

"I still can't figure it—are they high stomached or low breasted?"

The day the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, Brad Smith was a captain of infantry assigned to Schofield Barracks on Oahu, and he had been called from his bed to lead a company of riflemen to set up a defensive position on Barber's Point. The night of June 30, 1950, Lieutenant Colonel Smith was again in his bed when the telephone rang and Colonel Richard Stephens, commander of the 21st Infantry, told him quickly: "The lid has blown off—get on your clothes and report to the CP."

Smith obeyed, and found that he was to gather half his men immediately and take them, together with a handful of officers loaned from another battalion, to Korea. He was to meet General Dean at Itazuke Airfield and there receive further instructions. At three o'clock in the morning of July 1st what was to be known as Task Force Smith was on its way, riding by truck through a heavy rain to Itazuke 75 miles away. At the airbase General Dean told him:

"When you get to Pusan, head for Taejon. We want to stop the North Koreans as far from Pusan as we can. Block the main road as far north as possible. Contact General Church. If you can't locate him, go to Taejon and beyond if you can. Sorry I can't give you more information. That's all I've got. Good luck to you, and God bless you and your men."[1]

The general's blessing had an ominous sound. To men within hearing distance it seemed like a benediction for the doomed, and they shifted uneasily at the words. Some of them were already grumbling that occupation duty had never been like this before. Others cursed whatever it was that had caused them to be yanked out of warm beds and sent careening through a rainy night with rifles, bazookas and mortars in their hands and two days' issue of C-rations in their packs. They were gloomy, apprehensive, as they formed files to board the six C-54 transports waiting in the rain.

At a quarter of nine that morning the first of these squat gray transports had risen through the rain enshrouding Itazuke Air Base and pointed its nose north toward Pusan.

It was the great good fortune of the United Nations that Pusan, the finest port in South Korea, was also the city farthest removed from the onrushing North Korean armies. Pusan was at the southeastern tip of the peninsula. It had dock facilities capable of handling 45,000 tons daily, although it also had a shortage of skilled dock labor and would therefore never be pressed to capacity. It could receive 24 deepwater ships at its four piers and intervening quays, as well as 14 LST's on its broad beaches, and it was only 110 miles from the nearest Japanese port at Fukuoka. Pusan was also the southern terminal of a good north-south railroad system which the Japanese had built. Smaller railroads ran westward from Pusan through Masan and Chinju, or northeast to Pohang on the east coast. These railroads came to be the basis of the United Nations' transportation system, for the peninsula's roads were generally inadequate. Nowhere in Korea was there a road meeting the U. S. Army Engineers' "good" standard of 22 feet in width and two lanes. Korea's finest roads averaged only 18 feet in width, and because they had been built for the passage of oxcarts they were unpaved. Even so, many of these roads radiated out of Pusan, and these, complementing the rail system, helped to make the port the nerve center for the United Nations command. Pusan Airport on the outskirts of the city was another asset, and it was to this field that the American air transports brought the men of Task Force Smith.

The last of them had touched down by early afternoon of July 1, to the friendly cheers of hundreds of South Koreans who had gathered to greet them. Then the American soldiers were driven 17 miles by truck to the Pusan railroad station. They passed along flag-bedecked streets lined with thousands of happy, cheering Koreans who shook little flags and banners at them. At the station, Korean bands serenaded them as they climbed aboard a train waiting to take them north to Taejon. Already, some of these young soldiers—who had flown off to battle carrying loaded barracks bags!—were beginning to believe the junior officers who assured them that this was not war but "a police action" and that they would soon be snugly back in Sasebo, Japan.

The next morning Task Force Smith rattled into Taejon and its commander hurried off to confer with General Church.

"We have a little action up here," Church told Smith, pointing to a map. "All we need is some men up there who won't run when they see tanks. We're going to move you up to support the ROKs and give them moral support."[2]

Smith asked permission to go forward to inspect the ground himself. When it was granted, Smith sent his troops off to a bivouac and began driving over miserable roads toward the town of Osan, 90 miles to the north and only 20 miles below Yongdungpo, which one day later would fall to the North Koreans.

Below the 38th Parallel that same day, July 3, the Far Eastern Air Force was striking at North Korean columns from skies which had been American since the first of the Japanese-based Mustangs and Shooting Stars entered battle on June 27 to shoot down six Yaks. Unfortunately, the difficulty of distinguishing between friendly and enemy targets still plagued American fliers, as well as their rapidly arriving allies, for also on July 3, a flight of Australian Mustangs shot up the town of Pyongtaek, to which Task Force Smith had come on its trip north, blowing up an ammunition train and with it the railroad station. Many residents of the town were killed in this fatal case of mistaken identity, and the bewilderment of the men of Task Force Smith who witnessed it was increased.

The only good news, in fact, for Smith's troops was that a brother regiment from the 24th Division—the 34th Infantry—had come to Pusan by sea, and that Major General Dean had arrived at Taejon after a wild, mountain-dodging flight through a night fog.

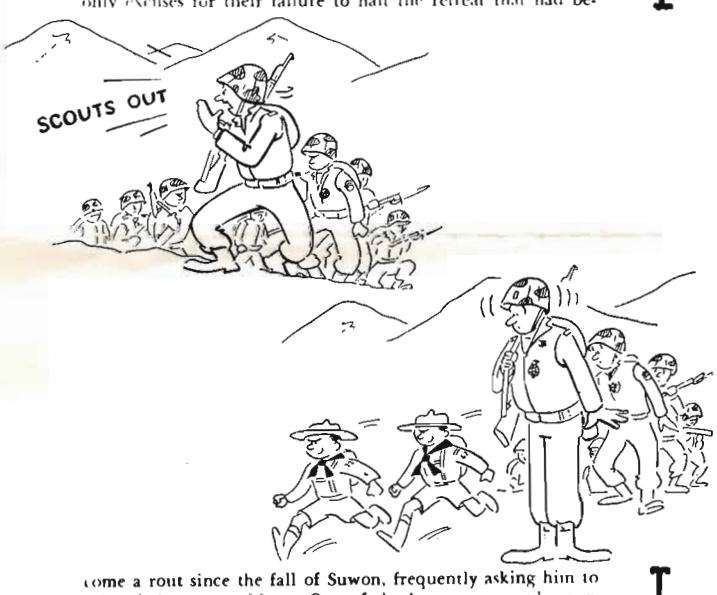
General Dean quickly realized the importance of Pyongtaek. It was a bottleneck which forced the North Koreans above it to keep to the Seoul-Taegu-Pusan road. Below Pyongtaek, the Korean peninsula flared out 45 miles to the west, and here the enemy would be free to maneuver against the United Nations' left flank. Pyongtaek, sitting astride the main road, was also highly defensible. Its left flank lay on an estuary of the Yellow Sea where UN ships were constantly on patrol and was thus secure against attack. On the right a few miles to the east lay the

town of Ansong, the right flank of which nestled under a rugged mountain range. And so, General Dean decided to hold at Pyongtaek-Ansong. To this end he ordered the newly arrived 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 34th Infantry to move north into positions there. The 1st Battalion dug in on the south bank of a river just above Pyongtaek, while the 3rd Battalion went east to fortify Ansong.

This movement relieved Colonel Smith's force, now grown from 406 to 540 Americans with the arrival of 134 artillerymen and five 105mm howitzers. Task Force Smith was sent farther north to a point above Osan under orders to intercept the advancing enemy at the position Colonel Smith had scouted a few days before. So his men again boarded trucks and rolled northward through the rain. Above Osan, Colonel Smith began fortifying two hills which bracketed the main road as it came down from Suwon. The only 105mm howitzer serviced with antitank shells—of which there were exactly six—was put into position directly behind the hill to the left or west of the road. This gun was to fire antitank along the road should any T-34s try to run the gantlet between the hills. The other four guns, all firing ordinary high-explosive shells, were placed farther behind this antitank position. They were to support Smith's men occupying the hills to left and right of the road.

Only a platoon of soldiers occupied the left or western height. Most of the men were on the right or eastern hill, with Colonel Smith himself. Smith's intentions, of course, were to halt and delay the enemy—not to defeat him. As long as Smith could delay, the Pyongtaek-Ansong fortifications could be strengthened and new troops and weapons brought into line.

Meanwhile, about 60 miles south in Taejon, General Dean had gone to ROK Army headquarters in the hope of persuading the ROK generals to clear the roads south of Pyongtaek, still streaming with southbound refugees and straggling soldiers. But the ROK generals were busy with internal squabbles, sometimes screaming "Communist!" at each other, offering Dean only excuses for their failure to halt the retreat that had become a rout since the fall of Suwon, frequently asking him to solve their own problems. One of the latter concerned a suggestion by General Lee Bum Suk, the man who had replaced General Chae as chief of staff only to be fired himself a few days later. Lee's idea was to allow the enemy tanks to penetrate the line of defense, then dig ditches behind them to cut them off from their gas supply. Dean thought it not a bad idea, but unfortunately by July 4 the enemy tanks had already blasted into Suwon of their own accord. Massing behind them were foot soldiers of the 4th Division, riflemen who would discourage all ditchdiggers.



Facing this force and its dash to overrun Pyongtaek-Ansong and turn the United Nations left was that 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry, which was still known as Task Force Smith.

It was still raining when July 5th dawned at Osan. American soldiers on the hills crouched glumly in their ponchos while spooning the wet slop of their C-rations from can to mouth. They no longer believed the myth of the "police action," popular though the phrase might become among Administration spokesmen at home. Nor could the Administration euphemism "Korean conflict" convince them that, in President Truman's phrase, "We are not at war." They believed only in their own misery: in the sodden ground beneath their feet and the rainwater filling the foxholes, in the incredibly constant reek of human dung wafted up from the surrounding pale green of the rice paddies, and in the sudden dry clutch of fear in the throat at the sight of eight squat shapes coming out of the rain mists below Suwon and rolling down toward their hills.

At approximately eight o'clock in the morning, Task Force Smith's forward observer called for artillery fire on the North Korean tanks. At sixteen minutes after eight, with the tanks a little more than a mile away from the hills, the first American Army shell of the Korean War howled toward the enemy. Quickly, the artillery observer marked its flash and adjusted range. More shells crashed out. They were landing among the tanks. The observer spoke into his telephone:

"Fire for effect!"

The barrage rose in fury, but the tanks waddled through it as though oblivious to the monstrous fireflies sparking and flashing off their thick hides. The American howitzers were useless as long as they fired nothing but ordinary high-explosive shells.

On either side of the pass, now, Colonel Smith's infantrymen could see a total of 33 squat shapes emerging from the mists. The first eight T-34s had been only the spearhead for the main body which followed in groups of four. Still, the infantrymen on the hills held their fire, for Colonel Smith had instructed the crews of his 75mm recoilless rifles not to shoot until the T-34s were within 700 yards range. Then the lead tanks entered that zone and the 75mm rifles fired.

Direct hits—but still the T-34s rolled down toward the pass.

At last they came abreast of the American infantrymen, and Lieutenant Ollie Connor in a ditch on the right or east side of the road opened up with 2.36-inch bazookas. Connor fired from 15-yard range at the supposedly weak rear of the T-34s. He fired 22 rockets.

The tanks rolled on. Two of them poked through the pass between the hills, and the 105mm howitzer stationed there lashed out with its antitank shells. The tanks lurched and came to a halt. They pulled off the road. One of them caught fire, and two soldiers popped from its turret with hands held high. A third followed and aimed a burp-gun burst at an American machine-gun nest, killing the gunner—the first American to die in the Korean War, though no one ever got his name. Other Americans killed the enemy soldier, but then more tanks shot the pass.

Time after time the American howitzers scored direct hits on the T-34s, but without armor-piercing shells they could only jar them. Each of the guns, firing point-blank from concealed positions 150 to 300 yards west of the road, hurled from four to six rounds at the invaders. But the first wave of T-34s, moving at full throttle with hatches buttoned down, firing so blindly that some of them even pointed their 85s at the east or wrong side of the road, swept past almost without harm.

One of them trapped two bazooka teams led by Colonel Perry and Sergeant Edwin Eversole in the stinking muck of a rice paddy between the howitzers and the road. Eversole's bazooka backlash streamed flame, but his shell bounced off the T-34, now looming above him "as big as a battleship." The sergeant flung himself into a drainage ditch as the tank's gun flashed, and a telephone pole crashed harmlessly across the ditch. Then one of the 105s put a shell into the attacking tank's tread. It stopped, and Eversole lay there while the remaining tanks of the first wave roared down the road. Colonel Perry took an interpreter up to the damaged tank and tried to get its crew to surrender. Failing to get a response, Perry ordered the 105 howitzers to begin battering the tank. Two men jumped out, and the artillerymen killed them.

But then the second wave of tanks arrived, and some of Perry's artillerymen began running away. Officers and noncoms had to load and fire the guns. Gradually, Perry managed to restore order, and soon the howitzers were hammering again at the second wave. Once they hit a T-34 in its treads and halted it for eventual destruction. They damaged a few others, though they did not stop them, and they killed many of the North Korean riflemen who rode the tanks or else blew them into the ditches where they were picked off.

But Task Force Smith had been unable to prevent the enemy armor from moving south to Osan. American firepower was not up to the assignment. More armor-piercing shells might have stopped the tanks, and well-planted antitank mines would certainly have blown up one or two of those recklessly onrushing vehicles and effectively blocked the road. But neither were available, and out of 33 tanks, 26 had run the gantlet in fighting shape and 3 others with slight damage.

By a quarter after ten they had begun to enter Osan unopposed, and worse, they had cut off the rear of Task Force Smith even then under frontal assault from more tanks and two regiments of North Korean infantry.

An hour after the last of the T-34s whined through the pass beneath him, Colonel Smith, on the right-hand hill, saw a long enemy column coming out of Suwon. Three more tanks were in the lead, then trucks loaded with soldiers, then columns of marching men stretching backward several miles. Smith did not know it, but he was looking at the North Korean 4th Division's 16th and 18th Regiments.

The American commander waited. In an hour, when the head of the column was about 1,000 yards away, Smith let go with everything he had. Mortars whuffled overhead, rifles cracked, .50-caliber machine guns chattered—and suddenly there were enemy trucks bursting into flame and tiny figures spinning through the air or jumping into roadside ditches.

The enemy reacted with speed and precision to what might

have been a demoralizing blow. The three tanks left the column, rumbled to within 300 yards of the Americans and began to rake the ridgeline with cannon and machine-gun fire. Behind the burning trucks some 1,000 soldiers began to deploy to either side of the road. Still farther behind them out of range of the American mortars and artillery—then firing as well as it could without direction from a forward observer—other truckloads of soldiers pulled over to the sides of the road and waited.

The first infantry thrust against Task Force Smith came from riflemen who occupied a finger ridge running into the main position on the right of the road. From this base two columns moved out from either side in an attempt to encircle the Americans. The attempt was broken up by Task Force Smith's small arms, artillery and mortars. The North Koreans then circled wide to the right or east in an effort to get behind the Americans. On the other side of the road, meanwhile, they seized a western hill overlooking the American positions and sent machine-gun fire plunging into them. Smith called these men to his side of the road.

By one in the afternoon, Task Force Smith had been defeated. Colonel Smith had no support from his artillery, had in fact lost contact with it and presumed it destroyed. A numerous enemy harassed both his flanks. A much larger force sat calmly to his front. An armored column held his rear. He had no hope of help from the air, for the weather would not allow it. He had communication with no one.

At half-past two Smith gave the order to withdraw and Task Force Smith began to fall apart as a military unit.

Colonel Smith had hoped to pull out in the classic leapfrog manner, with the forward unit falling back under the covering fire of the unit behind it, then the rear unit doing likewise, and so on, repeated until the men were safely out of the hills on the road above Osan. But the movement never got started. Accurate enemy machine-gun fire began raking Smith's men, forcing them to retire in a disorderly flight during which most of Task Force Smith's casualties were inflicted.

Smith's soldiers abandoned machine guns, mortars, recoilless rifles. Some threw their rifles away. Others tore off their helmets. Dead were left behind, and worse, 25 to 30 wounded—although an unknown medical sergeant volunteered to stay with them.

Colonel Smith himself, meanwhile, hurried west in search of the artillery. He came upon a wire team trying to string wire up to him, and was directed to the guns. To his astonishment he found them still standing and only Colonel Perry and another man wounded. But there was nothing to do but direct them to join the withdrawal, and the howitzers were also abandoned, after breechblocks and sights had been removed and carried to trucks.

With Smith and Perry aboard, the trucks drove toward Osan, hoping to find a road east to Ansong at the southern end of the town. They assumed that the enemy armor had struck farther south toward Pyongtaek, but in southern Osan, they blundered into a trio of Communist tanks, and the little column wheeled around and sped back north. There they found a dirt road running east and came upon small parties of Smith's shattered force struggling over hills or wading through rice paddies—bareheaded, some of them barefooted with shoes tied together with laces and hung around their necks, a few of them coatless. About one hundred men clambered aboard the trucks, and the column moved on through the enveloping night to arrive in Ansong and continue south to Chonan.

Behind them were the stragglers. For the next two days American soldiers drifted into cities as far south as Taejon. Some trudged west to the Yellow Sea and one went aboard a sampan and sailed down to Pusan. Others walked as far east as the Sea of Japan. Approximately 150 men were killed, wounded or reported missing (probably captured) from Task Force Smith on that first day of American action in Korea. That night a North Korean private wrote in his diary: "We met vehicles and American POWs. We also saw some American dead. We found four of our destroyed tanks. Near Osan there was a great battle."

"Yes, your papa-san is very strong—I can smell him from here!"

AT OSAN the North Koreans and the Americans met for the first time and the result was a decisive victory for the North Koreans. It might be said that as great battles are measured this was but a skirmish with armor and artillery involved. But great battles are the sum of many little ones, and Osan, because it was the first of a string to be fought along the road south, was vastly important.

It had an exhilarating effect on North Korean morale and caused American spirits to sink. "Everyone thought the enemy would turn around and go back when they found out who they were fighting," an artilleryman of Task Force Smith said later. But after Osan it was the Americans who began to turn and go back, sometimes without waiting to see who it was they were fighting.

The first such voluntary withdrawal occurred the following morning at the Pyongtaek-Ansong line. The 3rd Battalion, 34th Infantry, pulled out of its positions at Ansong on the right flank and moved south toward Chonan. On the left, at the river above Pyongtaek, the 1st Battalion of the same regiment also withdrew after briefly engaging North Korean tanks and infantry in an action which was characterized on the American side by the inability or reluctance of many riflemen to shoot at the approaching enemy. Fire from the American 4.2-inch mortars which began well by knocking out a truck ended poorly when the mortar observer was stunned and no one took his place. American communications varied from poor to nonexistent, either because the distances between command points were too long for radio contact or because southward-flowing South Korean soldiers and civilians cut the telephone wire into strips from which they fashioned pack harnesses.

The Pyongtaek-Ansong withdrawal continued south for 15

"I see no cause for alarm. I always sleep in pajamas!"

miles, and General Dean himself has described his rage and astonishment when he heard of it:

> 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."[1]

The next day General Dean relieved the 34th's commander and turned the regiment over to Colonel Robert Martin, an aggressive officer who had served with Dean in Europe. But Chonan also fell, on July 8, and Martin was killed while attempting to rally his troops. He had seized a 2.6-inch bazooka and was dueling a tank with it when a shell from the tank's 85mm cannon cut him in half.

So now the 24th Division had suffered three sharp reverses in a row, each of them multiplying the problems of General Dean's delaying action. At Osan it was shown that the North Korean armor could not be stopped by inferior American arms; at Pyongtaek—the worst of all because it opened the western bulge of the peninsula to North Korean maneuver—it was made clear that the general's troops were lacking in ardor; at Chonan the North Koreans were given a choice of attack routes by the fact that the road divided below the town. One arm ran east to Chochiwon, the other continued straight south to Kongju. Both had to be defended, and Dean put the 34th Infantry at Kongju and sent the newly arrived 21st Infantry (which reclaimed the remnants of Task Force Smith, its 1st Battalion) under Colonel Stephens to fight a delaying action between Chonan and Chochiwon.

On July 8, while Chonan was falling, Dean also sent General MacArthur an urgent request for quick delivery of antitank shells and urged immediate airlifting of 3.5-inch bazookas from the United States. He also told MacArthur: "I am convinced that the North Korean Army, the North Korean soldier, and his status of training and quality of equipment have been underestimated."

"Let's wait until he's finished—I haven't heard any music since I left Tokyo!"

The next day MacArthur himself considered the situation grave enough to begin using part of his B-29 bomber strength against battle areas and to send a message to the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

> The situation in Korea is critical. . . . His [the enemy's] armored equipment is of the best and the service thereof, as reported by qualified veteran observers, as good as any seen at any time in the last war. They further state that the enemy's infantry is of thoroughly first class quality.
>
> This force more and more assumes the aspect of a combination of Soviet leadership and technical guidance with Chinese Communist ground elements. While it serves under the flag of North Korea, it can no longer be considered as an indigenous N. K. military effort.
>
> I strongly urge that in addition to those forces already requisitioned, an army of at least four divisions, with all its component services, be dispatched to this area without delay and by every means of transportation available.
>
> The situation has developed into a major operation.

General MacArthur's estimate—especially his concluding line—jolted Washington. Although MacArthur had earlier asked for Marines, and had been given the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade even then embarking for Korea, it had been thought that this force was to spearhead an "early counteroffensive" with just two divisions. But now the Far Eastern Commander was talking of a full army composed of "at least" four full-strength divisions.

The Pentagon's reply to this message was to order the 2nd Infantry Division to begin movement to Korea, along with the supplies of the shells and armor requested by General Dean. MacArthur, meanwhile, his earlier optimism cooling, decided that he would have to use his entire Eighth Army under Lieutenant General Walton Walker if Pusan was to be saved.

For above Pusan the North Koreans were pressing steadily southward. The ROK Army, holding off all but the western thrust down the Seoul-Taegu-Pusan road, was battling desperately with the support of U. S. warships off the east coast road and some American air strikes in the Chongju and central corridor sectors. But the western drive was still the most perilous, and here the 21st Infantry had begun its delaying action above Chochiwon. On July 10, at a place called Chonui, the enemy was strafed and rocketed by low-flying F-51 Mustangs and F-80 Shooting Star jets. But when the planes disappeared, the North Koreans attacked and broke the American lines. The 21st counterattacked savagely and recaptured the lost ground, where the American soldiers found six of their comrades with their hands tied in back and bullet holes in their heads. This was only the first of numerous North Korean atrocities discovered in the early days of the Korean War, although later the Communists would take great care to prevent the harming of prisoners, whom they hoped to "convert" in their prison camps.

At Chonui on July 10 the American tanks also entered the battle, but these were the lights which had never been considered the equal of the T-34s, and they were of little help. That same day the Fifth Air Force scored one of its greatest successes in Korea. A flight of Shooting Stars swept beneath the overcast at Pyongtaek and found a North Korean column of troops, tanks and trucks halted north of a blown bridge. A report to Fifth Air Force headquarters in Japan brought all available light bombers and jet fighters to Pyongtaek, and the column was scourged in a massive air strike. Although reports of 38 tanks destroyed, along with 7 halftracks, 117 trucks and hundreds of troops, were probably exaggerated, the Pyongtaek strike—together with the air attacks launched at Chonui the same day—produced the greatest destruction of enemy armor in the entire war.

Even so, the 21st Infantry could not hold Chonui against the blows of an enemy desperate to reach Chochiwon. The 21st began withdrawing just before midnight of July 10, setting up new positions a few miles north of Chochiwon.

"Hold in your new position and fight like hell," General Dean ordered Colonel Stephens. "I expect you to hold it all day tomorrow."

The 21st fought well, but it could not hold, and on July 12 Colonel Stephens sent Dean this message:

> Am surrounded. 1st Bn left giving way. Situation bad on right. Having nothing left to establish intermediate delaying position am forced to withdraw to [Kum] river line. I have issued instructions to withdraw.

With that the 21st retreated across the Kum River and Chochiwon was lost, thus becoming the fourth straight victory of the onrushing North Korean 3rd and 4th Divisions. Still, Chochiwon differed vastly from Osan, Pyongtaek and Chonan. These three points along the road had been chewed up in four days in roughly 20-mile bites. Chochiwon, the next 20-mile bite, took three days alone. It had produced rising North Korean tank losses under mounting American air pressure, and had shown the North Koreans an American regiment fighting doggedly. It had also given General Dean time to bring up his third and final regiment, the 19th Infantry under Colonel Guy Meloy, to fortify the Kum River line which he held vital to the defense, of Taejon. The 19th went into position at Taepyong-ni, holding the right flank of the 24th Division, while the 34th, still at Kongju about eight miles to the west, protected the left. General Dean hoped to hold at the Kum, because this river, the broadest south of Seoul, flowed like a great curving moat around Taejon some 15 miles southeast of Taepyong-ni. Taejon, small city though it was, was a vital geographical and communications center second in importance only to the Taegu or Pusan areas themselves.

This had been the tactical value of the 21st Infantry's stand at Chochiwon. Strategically, the defeat there had other more far-reaching effects. It impelled General MacArthur to send the 29th Infantry Regiment from Okinawa to Korea, as well as to instruct the Far East Air Force under Lieutenant General George Stratemeyer to use B-26 and B-29 bombers against the North Korean thrust down the central mountains.

Elements of the U. S. 25th Infantry Division had already begun to arrive in Korea as reinforcements for the collapsing central sector, while on the east the American Navy was placing more naval gunfire at the assistance of the embattled ROK divisions. On the east also, it had become increasingly important to hold the little fishing harbor of Pohang, approximately 60 air miles northeast of Pusan. The U. S. 1st Cavalry Division, which MacArthur had been hoarding for his "early counteroffensive," was going to be rushed to Pohang by sea.

That was the situation on July 12, the day the 21st Regiment retreated across the Kum, the day also that all ground operations in Korea passed under the command of Lieutenant General Walker.

Two days later Walker flew to Korea to join General Dean on a hill below Chonan to watch the retreat of the 34th Infantry Regiment. He saw a platoon of light tanks approaching the front and stopped the youthful lieutenant leading it to ask, "What are you going to do down there?"

"I'm going to slug it out," the lieutenant said in a strained voice, eloquent in his conviction of what would happen when his little M-24s met the big Russian T-34s.

"No," Walker said gently. "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."[2]

These, in small, were the tactics which Walker would use on a large scale when, on July 13, he began the delaying action with which he hoped to save the United Nations foothold in Korea. From that date on, both the ROK Army and the Eighth Army, as well as the United Nations troops which would subsequently be included in the latter, came under his command. Formal notification of his command of the ROKs did not come until July 17, when MacArthur sent word that Syngman Rhee had made a verbal agreement to this effect. MacArthur was by then, of course, the Supreme Commander of the United Nations Command in Korea, a force which consisted of the U. S. Eighth Army and attached UN units on the one hand, and the ROK Army on the other. MacArthur in turn received his orders from President Truman and the Joint Chiefs of Staff acting as executives of the United Nations Security Council. The field executive of MacArthur's orders was the commanding general of the Eighth Army, in this case Walker, whose directives also controlled the ROKs. And so, on July 17, as General Walker displayed the United Nations flag at his headquarters for the first time, the United Nations Command came into being.

But these were the formalities. The reality on July 13, the day of Walker's arrival, was that a force of 76,000 men—58,000 ROKs and 18,000 Americans—had been thus far powerless to halt the North Korean rush to place all of the peninsula under

Communist rule. This force was badly in need of such things as antitank mines, antitank shells, heavy tanks, high-velocity cannon, heavy mortars, trucks, illumination shells, trip flares, spare gun barrels, radios, and, among the ROKs, ample rations of rice and fish. These deficiencies, especially in mines and antitank shells, were at least as corrosive of Eighth Army fighting strength as the well-advertised lack in "guts," if they were not in fact largely responsible for it. Walker's job was to get these weapons into Korea and into the hands of his troops, either by sea or air directly from Japan, or by air from a fleet of about 250 four-engined transports already operating from the United States.

That was the logistics problem. The battle situation on July 13 was as follows:

On the far west, the North Korean 6th Division had fanned out below Pyongtaek and was battling a ROK division and a force of police on a drive south aimed at turning Pusan's left flank. East of this the North Korean 3rd and 4th Divisions continued to strike south along the road from Seoul through the U. S. 24th Division, and still farther east the North Korean 2nd Division was advancing on Chongju against two battered ROK divisions.

In the central mountains three North Korean divisions were pushing back the remnants of two ROK divisions.

On the east coast the North Korean 5th Division was coming down the narrow coastal road against a ROK regiment.

"That's enough firewood, Kim."

One of Walker's first moves was to begin feeding elements of Major General William Kean's 25th Infantry Division into the central mountains. The 27th (Wolfhound) Infantry Regiment under Lieutenant Colonel John ("Mike") Michaelis had landed on July 10, and Walker ordered it to Andong in a blocking position behind the ROKs. He also charged General Kean with the security of Pohang on the east coast and Yonil Airfield below it.

Pohang was still vital, and thus far the North Korean 5th Division had not been able to capture it. Although the ROKs had not fought well on the east coast road, U. S. naval gunfire had battered the North Koreans and the monsoon rains caused landslides which blocked the road. The 35th Fighter Group at Yonil Airfield also harassed the 5th Division. Nonetheless on July 13 the 5th entered Pyonghae-ri, 22 miles north of Yongdok and 50 miles above Pohang. Obviously, Yongdok would soon be under attack. If it fell it would unmask Pohang.

And yet, with the east coast defenses collapsing, with the ROKs in the central mountains crumbling and the southwestern threat to Pusan at hand, the main road from Seoul guarded by the 24th Division remained Walker's most vital concern. If the enemy 3rd and 4th Divisions got their armor across the Kum River they could race through Taejon toward Taegu itself, with very little between to stop them. And so Walker ordered General Dean's 24th Division to hold the Kum River line.

By the time the North Korean 3rd and 4th Divisions launched their attack on the Americans holding the Kongju-Taepyong line south of the Kum, these divisions were in near-desperate condition. Rising American air power had destroyed much of their armor, the long fighting march south from Yongdungpo had thinned their ranks, and the lengthening supply line was making it increasingly difficult to bring reinforcements or food down to the vicinity of the Kum River. Worse, American air had made it impossible to move by day, and the plan to forage off the countryside was upset when South Korean farmers began hiding their food. The 4th Division opposite the American 34th Infantry at Kongju had done most of the fighting since the Han River was crossed at Yongdungpo and it was down to 5,000 to 6,000 men, about half strength. It had also lost much armor. The 3rd Division, which would strike at the American 19th Infantry holding Taepyong on the right, was not as badly depleted, but nevertheless its troops were battle-weary. The 3rd's propaganda officers told the men that they would get a long rest after they took Taejon, assuring them that the Americans would surrender if the city fell.

So the North Koreans came on with the ardor born of desperation, and quickly turned the American left at Kongju.

Here the 34th Infantry had blown all the bridges over the Kum to keep the 4th Division's 16th Regiment at bay on the north bank. But with daylight of July 14, the North Korean artillery began pounding the Americans on the south bank, and then troops began to cross by barge. A large force crossed on the 34th's left and began attacking the artillerymen of the 63rd Field Artillery Battalion.

The North Koreans overran this entire position, and captured ten 105mm howitzers, together with all their ammunition and 60 to 80 trucks, as well as 86 American soldiers. The artillery battalion ceased to exist as a fighting force, and once again stragglers struck out for safety by twos and threes. The 1st Battalion, 34th, ordered to counterattack to recapture this equipment as well as to retake Kongju's fallen left, moved forward only to retreat at dusk after being briefly fired upon. The 3rd Battalion on Kongju's right had already collapsed. Kongju was lost, and General Dean's hopes of a long delay there were smashed. Worse, the enemy had a bridgehead on the south bank of the Kum, meaning that the left flank of the 19th Infantry holding on at Taepyong-ni had been turned.

The news of Kongju's fall was received at Taepyong-ni on the afternoon of the 14th, and it soured whatever jubilation Colonel Meloy felt over a fairly good fighting day. Minor enemy crossing attempts supported by fire from tanks dug in on the north bank of the river had been repulsed. Nevertheless, the 19th hung on at Taepyong-ni during the next day, the 15th, falling back only after the North Koreans crossed under cover of the early-morning darkness of the 16th.

At three in the morning, a North Korean plane flew over the Kum and dropped a flare. It was the signal for a fierce North Korean artillery barrage. Then, shortly before four o'clock, the North Korean soldiers began crossing the river on boats or rafts, wading or swimming. The failure of an American 155mm howitzer to fire flares at this time made it impossible for the 19th's soldiers to spot the enemy and pick them off.

But the assault was not irresistible. At first platoons held all along the line. When C Company's Lieutenant Henry McGill called Lieutenant Thomas Maher to ask how he was making out, Maher replied: "We're doing fine." Thirty seconds later a Red soldier fired a burp-gun burst into Maher's head and killed him. Gradually, the North Koreans began forcing the 19th's right, and then, on the left and below this position, other enemy troops which had simultaneously crossed to the southwest set up a roadblock.

Like the 34th Infantry, the 19th began to withdraw. Colonel Meloy ordered his units to begin falling back on Taejon to the southeast, while down at Eighth Army headquarters in Taegu the news of the Kum River disaster was received with deepest alarm.

Since his arrival in Korea, General Walker had frequently studied terrain maps of the peninsula, while asking his officers: "When and where can I stop the enemy and attack him?" The Kum River defeat answered his question, for it compelled him to review his strength. Taking what he already had in Korea, together with what reserves could be mustered in the next ten days, Walker concluded that his Eighth Army could hold only a line generally following the Naktong River from its mouth west of Pusan and running north to a point west of Andong, then turning east again to Yongdok on the coast. This line would eventually become famous as the Pusan Perimeter, although it was somewhat larger as Walker considered it after the Kum River setback.

To hold this line he needed time for the 1st Calvary Division to sail from Japan to Pohang, about 30 miles below embattled Yongdok, and move west by rail to save Taegu from the approach of the North Korean 3rd and 4th Divisions. Spearheads of the 1st Cavalry would arrive on July 18, and Walker did not immediately worry about keeping Pohang open to receive them.

Taejon, not Pohang, was Walker's concern. It must hold out until the 1st Cavalry could come west to reinforce the collapsing 24th Division.

And so, on July 18, a few hours after Rear Admiral James Doyle's ships risked the wrath of Typhoon Helene to enter murky Pohang Harbor with men of the 8th Cavalry Regiment, General Walker flew north to speak to General Dean.

General Dean had not planned a last-ditch fight at Taejon, realizing that the North Koreans could now get their armor over the Kum and envelop that city of 190,000 persons. Dean hoped only to delay again at Taejon, while preparing another stand, probably at Yongdong 28 miles to the east. He had already, on July 15, sent his 21st Regiment eight miles east to Okchon with instructions to prepare to blow the railroad tunnels running out of Taejon. Dean planned to use the 34th Infantry—now led by Colonel Charles Beauchamp on loan from the 7th Division in Japan—to fight the delay. The 19th Infantry, Dean thought, had been too badly mauled in the Kum River fighting, and he had sent it east to Yongdong for rest and reequipment.

But then General Walker flew up to Taejon on July 18 to ask Dean to hold the city an extra day while the 1st Cavalry took its

position at Yongdong, and Dean's plan changed.

He postponed evacuation of Taejon to July 20 and ordered the 2nd Battalion, 19th, to return from Yongdong. Then he began blocking the chief approaches to the city. On the east or right flank, the road was already held by the 21st Infantry at Okchon. On the north there was a rail line and a small road, and Dean sent a platoon to block it. On the northwest was the main highway to Pusan, covered by the 1st Battalion, 34th. Directly west or left was a good road from the town of Nonsan, and this was to be temporarily held by a 34th Infantry platoon until the 2nd Battalion, 19th, arrived the next day to take over. To the south along the main road was the Division Reconnaissance Company, and Dean moved it up to the city and turned it over to Beauchamp, thus giving the 34th's commander a scouting force to watch the roads. Unfortunately the effect of this move was to leave Taejon's back door open.

But Dean, of course, was still not planning a diehard stand at Taejon. He was merely extending the delay there by twenty-four hours to enable the 1st Cavalry to arrive in Yongdong on the east, and then he would retire again with his forces intact. Dean was confident he could hold off the advancing North Koreans without great loss, if only because of the arrival of the new 3.5-inch rocket launcher in Taejon. This was the weapon which General Dean had urgently requested on July 3. Its ammunition had gone into production only fifteen days before the Korean War began, but by July 8 supplies of 3.5-inch launchers and shells, together with an instruction team, took off from California and flew to Korea. They were in Taejon on July 12 and that same day Dean's men were instructed how to fire the launcher's 23-inch, 8½-pound rockets. Dean hoped to stop the T-34s with this big bazooka, and he also hoped to encourage his men to do it by staying in Taejon himself. He later explained his other reasons for staying 28 miles forward of his headquarters:

> . . . 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.[3]

So the general was in Taejon when the two-pronged North Korean onslaught began on July 19, and it was well that he was. When the enemy's 16th and 18th Regiments struck along the western road from Nonsan, Dean rushed to the front with two tanks to help the little platoon roadblock hold out until the 2nd Battalion, 19th, arrived under Lieutenant Colonel Thomas McGrail. This force counterattacked immediately and regained lost ground.

To the northwest along the main highway the North Koreans overran a company which Beauchamp had posted west of the Kap-chon River and hurled one of their heaviest artillery barrages into the lines of the 1st Battalion, 34th. They did not strike with their armor, though—chiefly because they had come to respect American air and had ceased to move boldly along the roads. By nightfall, Beauchamp had come to the optimistic conclusion that he could hold the road another day.

But during the night the North Koreans moved their tanks up, and at three o'clock in the morning of July 20 they struck hard with infantry and armor, coming down both sides of the highway and quickly turning the American right flank. The 1st Battalion, 34th, was driven into the hills in disorder.

On the west, the 2nd Battalion, 19th, was also sent reeling back.

Confusion began to spread among the 24th Division's scattered units, for numerous communications failures had left them leaderless and bewildered. Then, at daybreak, the T-34 tanks rolled into Taejon.

The first of them came down the main highway, but they also began to appear from the west and up from the south through that unguarded back door, and on their decks many of them carried riflemen who jumped to the ground to scoot into deserted buildings and begin the rifle fire that scourged retreating Americans and civilian refugees alike. Hundreds of North Korean infiltrators dressed in civilian clothes joined the sniping. Smoke drifted through the streets from burning buildings and everywhere the smell of cordite mingled with the stench of human dung. Here and there a North Korean tank was burning, for the big new bazookas had proved their worth. General Dean himself had gone tank hunting, moving through town with a bazooka team in a deliberate attempt to inspire his men, to prove, as he has since said, that "an unescorted tank in a city defended by infantry with 3.5-inch bazookas should be a dead duck." The general did get a tank, but unfortunately his gallantry in Taejon that day was not as contagious as he had hoped.

By nightfall the city was completely encircled and much of it was in North Korean hands. An enemy roadblock between the city and Okchon cut the main escape route east, and a mile-long stretch of that dusty, poplar-lined road—littered with burning vehicles and wounded or dying men—became the graveyard of the 34th Infantry.

Only capture or death awaited those Americans who chose to stay in a city from which the huge sign, WELCOME UNITED NATIONS FORCES, had long since been removed. General Dean himself prepared to dash for safety and his headquarters at Yongdong.

> 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 slewed 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 [Lieutenant Arthur] Clarke, 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 bored down the road in the general direction of Kumsan (south), while snipers still chewed at us from both sides of the road.
>
> We were all by ourselves.

Thus ended the 24th Division's fifteen-day ordeal that began when Task Force Smith went up the road to intercept the enemy at Osan. During the next two days the shattered division regrouped at Yongdong. Then, on July 22, it turned its Yongdong positions over to the 1st Cavalry Division and went into reserve.

"Now that's what I call a real liberty!"

THE 24th Infantry Division's performance along the Osan-Taejon road in July of 1950 has been variously described and frequently debated. President Truman has called it "a glorious chapter in the history of the American Army" while in the words of General Douglas MacArthur it was a brilliant holding action conducted with "skill and valor." Elsewhere, in certain newspaper accounts and books on the subject, the retreat to Taejon with its subsequent defeat has been held up as the Exhibit A of the alleged "softness" of the American youths who fought in Korea.

It was, in fact, what MacArthur called it, shorn of the adjectives: a successful holding action, which might have been as much the product of the North Korean failure to exploit the Han crossing as of any brilliance on the part of the Americans. It was very far from being "a glorious chapter" in the annals of American arms, and it did produce sufficient grounds for the charges of softness.

American soldiers, and officers, did retreat against orders to hold, sometimes in disorder: they did abandon artillery and trucks or throw away their rifles and helmets; they did refuse to fight; they did leave their wounded behind; they did sit down to await capture. And it might be well for the people of America, who seem to regard battlefield defeat as being contrary to the will of God, to understand some of the reasons why these things happened—not constantly, it must be understood, but frequently enough to characterize the early fighting and give it its tone. Here is General Dean again, describing Taejon:

> The doom of Taejon was evident 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.

Philip Deane, the British war correspondent who was captured along the Pusan road, quotes one of those riflemen sent out to hold it.

> "Gee, back in Sasebo I had a car, only a Ford, but a honey. You should have seen my little Japanese girl. Gee, she was a honey. Lived with me in my little villa. It was a honey, my little Japanese villa."

Again Philip Deane quotes a conversation with another GI on the road:

> "I don't get this. They told us it was a sort of police action. Some police action! Some cops! Some robbers! What is this police action?"
>
> "Didn't your officers tell you?"
>
> "Naw. We don't talk of such things with Bob."
>
> "Who's Bob?"
>
> "Bob. You know Bob. Our lieutenant."
>
> "Well, didn't Bob tell you?"
>
> "Naw. Not sure he knows himself. You tell me. What's Communism, anyway? Why are we here?"

Another observer who was in Korea, and has since become one of the foremost authorities on the early fighting, was the historian Colonel Roy E. Appleman. Here is his report on the performance of these soldiers who called their officers by their first names:

> There were many heroic actions by American soldiers of the 24th Division in these first weeks in Korea. But there were also many uncomplimentary and unsoldierly ones. Leadership among the officers had to be exceptional to get the men to fight, and several gave their lives in this effort. Others failed to meet the standard expected of American officers. There is no reason to suppose that any of the other occupation divisions in Japan would have done better in Korea than did the U. S. 24th Division in July, 1950. When committed to action they showed the same weaknesses.
>
> A basic fact is that the occupation divisions were not trained, equipped or ready for battle. The great majority of the enlisted men were young and not really interested in being soldiers. The recruiting posters that had induced most of these men to enter the Army mentioned all conceivable advantages and promised many good things, but never suggested that the principal business of an army is to fight.

Colonel Appleman then quotes the commander of the 24th Division's 21st Infantry, Colonel Richard Stephens:

> "The men and officers had no interest in a fight which was not even dignified by being called a war. It was a bitter fight in which many lives were lost, and we could see no profit in it except our pride in our profession and our units as well as the comradeship which dictates that you do not let your fellow soldiers down."

But this "pride in our profession and in our units" applies chiefly to professionals such as Colonel Stephens, in command or in ranks; it does not cover the bulk of the men who fought in Korea, if only because Korea was so different from any other war in American experience.

In other words, the citizen-soldier or nonprofessional who is the American ideal only kills for a cause. He fulfills Newman's dictum: "Most men will die upon a dogma, few will be martyr to a conclusion." Only the professional soldier will fight for conclusions made in chanceries or foreign offices, and one of the outstanding characteristics of the professional, at least in ranks, is that he rarely "asks the reasons why."

Given such conditions in such an unpopular war, given such soft youths trained to luxury in a nation only recently gone mad in the pursuit of—not happiness, but possessions, pleasure and prestige—the wonder is that they actually stayed to fight at all. But enough of them did to delay the North Korean 3rd and 4th Divisions for seventeen days along a 100-mile route slanting southeastward from Osan to Yongdong. Although they never inflicted very heavy casualties on the enemy infantry, they did, together with supporting air, knock out numerous tanks and guns. And they were, of course, hampered by inferior arms and communications, the latter in particular rendering them singularly vulnerable to the North Korean maneuver of hitting frontally to hold while moving around the flanks to cut off escape routes. Even veterans can be panicked by such tactics.

The 24th Division lost roughly 30 percent of its 12,200 men, as well as enough gear to equip a full-strength division. Among the casualties were 2,400 missing in action, most of whom were presumed dead, although a surprising number later turned up as enemy prisoners. And among these was General Dean.

The night he left Taejon General Dean fell down a slope while going after water for wounded men. He was knocked out. When he awoke, he found his head gashed and his shoulder broken. He wandered for thirty-six days in the mountains, trying to elude capture, shrinking from 190 pounds to 130, until he was finally betrayed by a pair of South Korean civilians who led him into a North Korean trap while pretending to guide him to safety. General Dean spent the rest of the war as a prisoner, as unbreakable in captivity as he had been in battle. And it was characteristic of this gallant and modest commander that he should be astonished when, upon being freed on September 5, 1953, he found himself a national hero and the recipient of the Medal of Honor.

He had not known, of course, that he had accomplished precisely what he had been ordered to accomplish: to hold off the enemy until reinforcements could be brought in. But even as he awoke on the morning of July 21, broken, bruised and bleeding, the 1st Cavalry Division was in line at Yongdong, the 25th Infantry Division had gone into position to the north, and the first phase of the Korean War had ended in failure for the enemy.

Although General Walker knew of the enemy in the southwest by July 20, a few days elapsed before he became fully aware of this peril to his left flank. On July 21 and 22, bad weather covered the enemy's movements and Walker gradually became alarmed. He had no idea of the North Koreans' strength or proximity. The next day the weather cleared, and the Fifth Air Force, by then based at Taegu, sent out scouting patrols. The fliers reported that the enemy was indeed coming strong out of the west and would soon be in position to strike through the gap below Taegu. The critical moment had come and there was nothing for Walker to do but pull the 24th Division out of reserve.

The next day, July 24, Walker summoned Major General John Church, the 24th's new commanding general, to Taegu. Church, promoted since his early days in Korea, had taken over only the day before, after General Dean had been declared missing.

"I'm sorry to have to do this," Walker told him, "but the whole left flank is open and reports indicate the North Koreans are moving in."

Church was ordered to hold an area bounded by Chinju, some 50 air miles west of Pusan, and Kumchon, 65 air miles to its northeast. Thus, only four days after it had been driven out of Taejon, the 24th went back into line again.

That afternoon the 19th Infantry went west to Chinju, and a few hours later Walker sent it reinforcements from the 29th Infantry which had arrived that day. In two of the 29th's battalions, the 1st and 3rd, the depleted ranks had been filled with 400 recruits who had arrived at Okinawa from the United States only four days before. The 29th had expected to spend six weeks training before entering battle. Many of its men had not zeroed in their rifles. Mortars had not been test-fired. New .50-caliber machine guns were still covered with cosmoline. But the 29th had come into a brush-fire war run by a fire chief whose only hope lay in putting out the biggest fires when and where they erupted. And so the 29th went west to Chinju, was ordered to strike the enemy at Hadong, another 35 miles to the southwest—and was there ambushed.

"Some GI's really love the Korean people."

But the North Koreans did not reach Chinju until July 31, and though it was apparent to no one at the time, they were beginning to lose the race for Pusan. More reinforcements had come to Walker in the form of the 2nd Division's 9th Infantry Regiment, and the Marine Brigade was two days' sail from Pusan. Walker was also aided by the prior North Korean decision to capture all of the southwest ports before sending the 6th Division racing east for Pusan. The purpose of this decision had been to provide bases for resupply by sea, but in effect it gave Walker time to defend against what had now become, with the reappearance of the North Korean 4th Division, a skillful two-division thrust at his left flank.

In this maneuver, the 6th Division had skirted wide around the Eighth Army's left to come in under it along the southern coast; by July 31, the 6th occupied Chinju. The 4th, meanwhile, had cut inside the 6th on an inner arc, moving down from Taejon to Kumsan, then turning east to capture Kochang-Anui about 35 air miles above Chinju. By July 31, the 4th Division was in position to attack beneath Taegu and seal off its escape routes, while also crossing the Naktong River before Walker had time to fall back behind this natural barrier. And the 6th was poised to smash at Masan, which masked the plum of Pusan.

Walker responded by pulling the 25th Division out of his center and rushing it down to the southwest. The first unit to go south was Colonel Michaelis's 27th Regiment, which came out of reserve to join the 24th Division in blocking the Masan Road. Thereafter, Walker fed the rest of the 25th into the southwest front, taking the gamble which left his center perilously weak for any enemy thrust there, while strengthening his left for what now seemed to him the enemy's most dangerous maneuver.

It was that, but it failed.

Lt. Gen. DWIGHT E. BEACH (DIV ARTY HQ '45 - '46) is now Chief of Research and Development D/A. Oh we're mighty proud of this boy and the way in which he's climbing the ladder. Just a couple of more rungs to go, Dwight.

Now You're Cookin'!

MAYNARD A. BIRKHOLZ (24th RECN TRP '43-'45) wants to know if you've heard about the "Charles Dickens martini. No olive or twist. Maynard is Assistant Cashier of the Farmers Bank of Omro, Wis. He and Lois are busy raising Sue (age 7) and Amy (age 9).... JAMES W. HAHN (HQ.CO.,2nd BN., 34th INF., dates?) is a member of Cadwallader-Lord-Hahn, Inc., an up-and-coming insurance business in Owosso, Mich.... WILLIAM PEACOCK, JR. (unit?, dates?) is one of our new members. He is operating Houston Export Crating Co., Inc. and may be addressed at P.O. Box 9144, Houston 11, Tex. Welcome aboard, Bill. You're the first of 999 new members we're going to recruit before the next clambake at Louisville next August....

...AND THEN

Death came to Col. JAMES N. PURCELL (24 SIG CO '42-'47) at Albany, N.Y. on Aug. 10th in his 62nd year of good living. Born in Brooklyn, Jim had retired from the Active Army about 7 years ago. At his death, he was a member of the State Civil Defense Commission.

After more than 5 years of service as the Division's Signal Officer, he returned to serve with the Signal Corps at Fort Monmouth only to answer the call for two years more overseas, this time as a member of the Korean Military Advisory Group during the Korean War.

President of our Association, he was also a member of the Society of Naval and Military Officers and the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association.

The Legion of Merit, with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Bronze Star Medal, Air Medal, and Commendation Ribbon were deservedly his.

His gracious wife, Mildred Hopper Purcell, survives him at 98 South Iris Ave., Floral Park, Long Island, New York, as do his sisters, Mrs. Isabelle Woolley and Miss Margaret Purcell, and to them,we humbly extend sincere and heartfelt condolences.

VICTOR BACKER (34th INF '41-'44) represented the Division and the Association as Jim was laid to his rest.

A patriot's quietly-spoken convictions can thunder louder than a giant fire-cracker. Such a detonation occurred on May 12, 1962, when General of The Army Douglas MacArthur addressed the cadets of the Military Academy at West Point, upon his acceptance of the Sylvanus Thayer Award for service to his nation. A few words of this stirring address were enough to inspire us with the realization that here was more than a speech, here was more than a passing headline. MacArthur literally had spoken "from the heart". He had no prepared text, not even notes. Fortunately, a tape recording had been made and was available. From this tape, we are able to present MacArthur's moving farewell address. It is our understanding that D/A is now reprinting it for the troops "in the field". This, too, was something we didn't think could keep; hence it's appearance, in full, elsewhere in this issue.

TAILORED to fit your needs...

One of the problems in the editing of this poopsheet is that of timing. Of necessity, there is a considerable lapse of time between the moment when these lines are written and the moment when you, dear reader, read them, if in fact you ever do. For instance, this is being set down in mid-August, immediately following the Chicago session of our Marching and Chowder Society, held by the way whilst Popovich and Nikolayev were in dual orbit overhead. Inside information has it that the trips weren't all they were intended to be. At the climax of the tandem journey, Popovich was supposed to lean over and light a cigar for Nikolayev. Popovich got close enough, but his lighter wouldn't work. This very well may not be as priceless, when you read it weeks from now, as it is when we write it. Thusly, all references to the R. Burton - E. Taylor romance are out; what goes in August may not be appropos in late September for this frolicking twosome. But we can take heart in the fact that, in their case, even the dailies are having something of the identical problem. And, while Marilyn Monroe is front page material for the next few hours, she will be the way of all flesh as this reaches you. So we'll avoid mention of her too. But then, she wasn't in the Division anyway.

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Here is the text of General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's address to the Corps of Cadets at the U.S. Military Academy, after receiving the Sylvanus Thayer Award.

As I was leaving the hotel this morning, a doorman asked me, "Where are you bound for, General?" and when I replied, "West Point," he remarked, "Beautiful place, have you ever been there before?"

* * * * *

No human being could fail to be deeply moved by such a tribute as this. [Thayer Award] Coming from a profession I have served so long and a people I have loved so well, it fills me with an emotion I cannot express. But this award is not intended primarily for a personality, but to symbolize a great moral code—the code of conduct and chivalry of those who guard this beloved land of culture and ancient descent.

Duty, honor, country: Those three hallowed words reverently dictate what you ought to be, what you can be, what you will be. They are your rallying point to build courage when courage seems to fail, to regain faith when there seems to be little cause for faith, to create hope when hope becomes forlorn.

Unhappily, I possess neither that eloquence of diction, that poetry of imagination, nor that brilliance of metaphor to tell you all that they mean.

The unbelievers will say they are but words, but a slogan, but a flamboyant phrase. Every pedant, every demagogue, every cynic, every hypocrite, every troublemaker, and, I am sorry to say, some others of an entirely different character, will try to downgrade them even to the extent of mockery and ridicule.

But these are some of the things they build. They build your basic character. They mold you for your future roles as the custodians of the nation's defense. They make you strong enough to know when you are weak, and brave enough to face yourself when you are afraid.

What the Words Teach

They teach you to be proud and unbending in honest failure, but humble and gentle in success; not to substitute words for actions, nor to seek the path of comfort, but to face the stress and spur of difficulty and challenge; to learn to stand up in the storm, but to have compassion on those who fall; to master yourself before you seek to master others; to have a heart that is clean, a goal that is high; to learn to laugh, yet never forget how to weep; to reach into the future, yet never neglect the past; to be serious, yet never to take yourself too seriously; to be modest so that you will remember the simplicity of true greatness; the open mind of true wisdom, the meekness of true strength.

They give you a temperate will, a quality of imagination, a vigor of the emotions, a freshness of the deep springs of life, a temperamental predominance of courage over timidity, an appetite for adventure over love of ease.

They create in your heart the sense of wonder, the unfailing hope of what next, and the joy and inspiration of life. They teach you in this way to be an officer and a gentleman.

And what sort of soldiers are those you are to lead? Are they reliable? Are they brave? Are they capable of victory?

Their story is known to all of you. It is the story of the American man at arms. My estimate of him was formed on the battlefield many, many years ago, and has never changed. I regarded him then, as I regard him now, as one of the world's noblest figures; not only as one of the finest military characters, but also as one of the most stainless.

His name and fame are the birthright of every American citizen. In his youth and strength, his love and loyalty, he gave all that mortality can give. He needs no eulogy from me, or from any other man. He has written his own history and written it in red on his enemy's breast. . . .

Witness to the Fortitude

In 20 campaigns, on a hundred battlefields, around a thousand camp fires, I have witnessed that enduring fortitude, that patriotic self-abnegation, and that invincible determination which have carved his stature in the hearts of his people.

From one end of the world to the other, he has drained deep the chalice of courage. As I listened to those songs of the glee club, in memory's eye I could see those staggering columns of the first World War, bending under soggy packs on many a weary march, from dripping dusk to drizzling dawn, slogging ankle deep through mire of shell-pocked roads; to form grimly for the attack, blue-lipped, covered with sludge and mud, chilled by the wind and rain, driving home to their objective, and for many, to the judgment seat of God . . . .

I do not know the dignity of their birth, but I do know the glory of their death. They died unquestioning, uncomplaining, with faith in their hearts, and on their lips the hope that we would go on to victory.

Always for them: Duty, honor, country. Always their blood, and sweat, and tears, as we sought the way and the light. And 20 years after, on the other side of the globe, again the filth of murky foxholes, the stench of ghostly trenches, the slime of dripping dugouts, those boiling suns of the relentless heat, those torrential rains of devastating storms, the loneliness and utter desolation of jungle trails, the bitterness of long separation from those they loved and cherished, the deadly pestilence of tropical disease, the horror of stricken areas of war.

Swift and Sure Attack

Their resolute and determined defense, their swift and sure attack, their indomitable purpose, their complete and decisive victory—always victory, always through the bloody haze of their last reverberating shot, the vision of gaunt, ghastly men, reverently following your password of duty, honor, country. . . .

You now face a new world, a world of change. The thrust into outer space of the satellite, spheres and missiles marks a beginning of another epoch in the long story of mankind. In the five or more billions of years the scientists tell us it has taken to form the earth, in the three or more billion years of development of the human race, there has never been a greater, a more abrupt or staggering evolution.

We deal now, not with things of this world alone, but with the illimitable distances and as yet unfathomed mysteries of the universe. We are reaching out for a new and boundless frontier. We speak in strange terms of harnessing the cosmic energy, of making winds and tides work for us . . . of the primary target in war, no longer limited to the armed forces of an enemy, but instead to include his civil populations; of ultimate conflict between a united human race and the sinister forces of some other planetary galaxy; of such dreams and fantasies as to make life the most exciting of all times.

And through all this welter of change and development your mission remains fixed, determined, inviolable. It is to win our wars. Everything else in your professional career is but corollary to this vital dedication. All other public purposes, all other public projects, all other public needs, great or small, will find others for their accomplishment; but you are the ones who are trained to fight.

The Profession of Arms

Yours is the profession of arms, the will to win, the sure knowledge that in war there is no substitute for victory, that if you lose, the nation will be destroyed, that the very obsession of your public service must be duty, honor, country.

Others will debate the controversial issues, national and international, which divide men's minds. But serene, calm, aloof, you stand as the nation's war guardians, as its lifeguards from the raging tides of international conflict, as its gladiators in the arena of battle. For a century and a half you have defended, guarded, and protected its hallowed traditions of liberty and freedom, of right and justice.

Let civilian voices argue the merits or demerits of our processes of government: Whether our strength is being sapped by deficit financing indulged in too long, by Federal paternalism grown too mighty, by power groups grown too arrogant, by politics grown too corrupt, by crime grown too rampant, by morals grown too low, by taxes grown too high, by extremists grown too violent; whether our personal liberties are as thorough and complete as they should be.

These great national problems are not for your professional participation or military solution. Your guidepost stands out like a tenfold beacon in the night: Duty, honor, country.

You are the leaven which binds together the entire fabric of our national system of defense. From your ranks come the great captains who hold the nation's destiny in their hands the moment the war tocsin sounds. . . .

The long, gray line has never failed us. Were you to do so, a million ghosts in olive drab, in brown khaki, in blue and gray, would rise from their white crosses, thundering those magic words: Duty, honor, country.

Prays for Peace

This does not mean that you are warmongers. On the contrary, the soldier above all other people prays for peace, for he must suffer and bear the deepest wounds and scars of war. But always in our ears ring the ominous words of Plato, that wisest of all philosophers: "Only the dead have seen the end of war."

The shadows are lengthening for me. The twilight is here. My days of old have vanished—tone and tint. They have gone glimmering through the dreams of things that were. Their memory is one of wonderous beauty, watered by tears and coaxed and caressed by the smiles of yesterday. I listen vainly, but with thirsty ear, for the witching melody of faint bugles blowing reveille, of far drums beating the long roll.

In my dreams I hear again the crash of guns, the rattle of musketry, the strange, mournful mutter of the battlefield. But in the evening of my memory always I come back to West Point. Always there echoes and re-echoes: Duty, honor, country.

Today marks my final roll call with you. But I want you to know that when I cross the river, my last conscious thoughts will be of the corps, and the corps, and the corps.

I bid you farewell.

MEMBERSHIP

APPLICATION

Edmund F. Henry
Sec'y. Treas.
24th Inf. Div. Assoc
402 First National
Bank Building
Attleboro,
Mass.

I apply for membership in the 24th Infantry Division Association.

Name_____

Address_____

_____

_____

24th Affiliation: I was a member of

_____

between_____

and _____

I enclose my check in the amount of $5.00

Where I am and what I'm presently doing:

_____

_____

_____

_____