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Black and gold warriors: US Army Rangers during the Korean War

Gray, David Robert, Ph.D.

The Ohio State University, 1992

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BLACK AND GOLD WARRIORS

US ARMY RANGERS DURING THE KOREAN WAR

DISSERTATION

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
Graduate School of the Ohio State University**

by

Major David R. Gray, U.S. Army, B.A., M.A.

*** * * * ***

The Ohio State University

1992

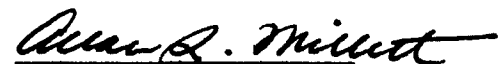
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INTRODUCTION

Throughout its history the United States Army has maintained a love-hate relationship with elite military units. A product of its unique culture and democratic institutions, the Army has relied on mass, citizen based armies mobilized at the outset of each conflict to win its wars. The success of this "amateur" heritage led most citizen soldiers to view professional soldiers, especially those in so-called elite units, with a great deal of skepticism and suspicion. Professionals were equally disdainful of elite formations. These anti-elite biases and peacetime reliance on a small regular Army were the main obstacles to the permanent establishment of specialized fighting units during the nineteenth century. The world wars, fought by mass armies composed of units of comparable quality, reinforced the idea that elites were an unneeded luxury. But some Army leaders saw a gap in combat capabilities. Some missions required technical skills, a state of training, and a level of aggressiveness lacking in most conscript units.

Despite societal and institutional hostility, the Army formed elite formations during World War II. The most famous of the Army's elites were its six Ranger battalions. The Rangers' specialty skills as amphibious raiders and high level of tactical performance, even on conventional missions, earned them the reputation as "super-infantry." Various Army units organized a number of provisional elite outfits modelled after the Rangers to give them enhanced capabilities. But neither the Rangers nor the provisional elites survived the draw-down after the war. Nevertheless, when the Korean War erupted in June 1950, the Rangers re-emerged as the Army's warrior elite. The Ranger experience in Korea highlights the role that elite units play in modern warfare. It also illustrates the American Army's ambivalent attitude towards elites.

The formation of so-called "elite" units has been a common phenomenon in twentieth century warfare.¹ Elite formations generally consisted of hand-picked, well trained infantrymen, equipped to maximize their mobility in difficult terrain. These units performed distinctive combat missions. The Germans, for example, formed Special Assault Detachments (*Stosstrupps*) to spearhead attacks across "No-Man's Land" during World War I. Later, the German Army trained these units to infiltrate past enemy strongpoints and into their rear areas. The Germans also relied on *Jager*, or mountain troops, to fight in alpine regions and sometimes act as stormtroopers.² During World War II the Allies utilized Commandos, Rangers, and airborne divisions for amphibious raiding and operations behind enemy lines. But why are elite units necessary at all?

According to Eliot Cohen in *Commandos and Politicians*, armies justify the activation of elite units using three rationales.³ First, and most importantly, armies form elite units for their military utility. These units perform missions deemed "too tough" for conventional forces or which require special skills. Within this category, elite outfits might function as a "laboratory" to test new weapons and tactics. Additionally, elite units may act as a "leader nursery" to train future military leaders. Many higher commanders believe that elites inculcate their members with higher standards of leadership and soldier skills. When

¹ The term elite may be applied to many different types of organizations within an armed force. This study focuses on the formation of light infantry units to execute specialized operations on land.

² For an excellent discussion of the development of the *Stosstrupps* and use of the *Jagers* see Bruce I. Gudmundsson, *Stormtroop Tactics Innovation in the German Army, 1914-1918* (New York: Praeger, 1989). Timothy Lupfer's *The Dynamics of Doctrine : The Changes in German Tactical Doctrine During the First World War*, Leavenworth Paper No. 4 (Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1981) remains the standard work on the evolution of stormtroop tactics.

³ The following discussion is distilled from Eliot Cohen, *Commandos and Politicians: Elite Military Units in Modern Democracies* (Center for International Affairs: Harvard University, 1978), 29-52.

they rotate to conventional assignments, elite members serve as role models and pass these higher standards on to the rest of the military organization .

A second reason for organizing elite formations is their romantic image. In an era of mass citizen armies controlled by managers and technicians, elite units serve as a symbol of heroism, especially in trying times. Commando raids during the early part of World War II, for example, boosted British morale in a time when few viable military options existed against the Germans. Additionally, the perception of the elite soldier as a rugged, clever, resourceful individual who is a natural fighter has a large appeal to military members and civilians alike. This romantic image tends to play off a nation's patriotism, and within armies, the desire to be part of the "warrior cult". Cultivation of the romantic image is important for recruitment and sustainment of elite units.

Last, elite units have a certain amount of political utility. According to Cohen, elite outfits are well-suited for use in the revolutionary-type wars prevalent since World War II because of their ability to operate independently in small formations. They might also be used to conduct sensitive and politically "deniable" missions, such as kidnapping or assassination of key enemy leaders. The capability for most elite units in the West to deploy rapidly to trouble spots around the globe for "show of force" missions adds to their political usefulness.

Once authorized and organized, elite formations share some universal characteristics. Personnel selection is the first distinguishing feature of an elite organization. Elite units have special access to their military organization's manpower. Unlike most conventional units, elite outfits generally fill their ranks from volunteers. Some members are specially selected on the basis of their prior proven ability as fighters or "warriors." Elite volunteers seem to possess some common personality traits, chief of which are a high degree of motivation, self-confidence, aggressiveness, and penchant for

action and risking-taking. The elite outfit's romantic image, the lure of adventure and danger, the possibility of enhanced promotion, the addition of special pay and privileges, and enhanced prestige are all factors that motivate men to step forward.

Volunteering, however, is not a sure ticket into an elite unit. Each candidate must pass some type of initial screening, generally consisting of a physical fitness examination, a background check of past duty performance, and a personal interview with a senior member of the elite unit's chain of command. Once identified as a potential unit member, volunteers undergo some sort of "rites of passage" to determine whether they will be accepted into the organization.

During the rites of passage new members are initiated into the elite group. The rites physically challenge and psychologically transform recruits. Once they have completed this arduous ritual, new members acquire the elite group's common outlook, intense pride, and enhanced status. According to Arnold Van Gennep, an authority on this process in primitive societies, a typical rites includes three phases: 1) separation from the former group; 2) transition into the new organization; and 3) incorporation. For elite units the first phase begins after the initial screening process when candidates report to an isolated encampment to begin training. The transitional stage generally consists of a rigorous training period which tests the candidates' mental and physical stamina, as well as their ability to endure hardship and perform the specialized military skills required of the unit. The shared experience of the rites of passage develops esprit de corps within members and bonds them with their comrades. The tougher and the more stressful the training, the greater initiates value membership in the group. Graduates of the rites of passage receive distinctive insignia, special uniforms, and the additional benefits associated with membership in the elite units. Incorporation, the final step of the rites, begins once an elite member reports for duty in the unit. Once there, he must perform the mission expected of

him to demonstrate his credentials. Repetitive accomplishment of their specialized missions reinforces members' elite status and encourages them to internalize the organization's norms.⁴

The second hallmark of elite units is their demanding, realistic training programs. Individual training emphasizes physical fitness -- especially the ability to march long distances with a heavy fieldpack -- land navigation, expert marksmanship, hand to hand combat, fieldcraft, survival, and mission specific skills such as demolitions. Members cross-train on different tasks to insure redundancy within the organization, which is especially important in the event of the unexpected death of a key member. Collective unit training focuses upon small unit tactical exercises, patrolling, infiltration techniques by land, sea and air, and close combat methods. Night operations generally constitute over fifty percent of an elite unit's training schedule. In most cases an elite formation's mission success will depend on its ability to operate in the night-time just as it does during the day. Throughout training elite units strive to achieve standards of performance higher than that of conventional counterparts. Often elites incur casualties during training; however, this does not deter them from continuing their regimen like it might in a conventional unit. The

⁴ For an analysis of the theory of rites of passage see Arnold Van Gennap, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960). For the importance of rites of passage in elite units see: Melford S. Weiss, "Rebirth in the Airborne," *The American Military* ed. Martin Oppenheimer (New York: Aldine Publishing Co., 1971): 38-45; Major James K. McCollum, "The Airborne Mystique," *Military Review* (November 1976): 16-21; Dennis E. Showalter, "Evolution of the U.S. Marine Corps as a Military Elite," *Marine Corps Gazette* (November 1979): 45-46; LTC Gary L. Bounds, "Notes on Military Elite Units" CSI Report No. 4 (Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1984), 1-2. For the effects of severe initiations and tough training on a member's desire to be in a specific group see: Anonymous, "The Making of the Infantryman," *The American Journal of Sociology* 51 (1946): 376-379 and Elliot Aronson and Judson Mills, "The Effect of Severity of Initiation on Liking For a Group," *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* (September, 1959): 177-181.

ultimate goals of training are to develop a tough, cohesive organization, instill a sense of aggressive self-reliance and initiative in unit members, and build small unit proficiency.⁵

Finding superior leadership for elite units is key to their success. Most leaders selected for elite service are individually charismatic leaders, which is a third characteristic of these type units. They project the elite image to outside agencies, the civilian population, and their own commands. This is important on two levels. At the bureaucratic level, the top leader in the chain of command must represent the unit's interests to higher headquarters in order to gain legitimacy for the elite unit. Military leaders who fall into this category include William Darby of the American Rangers and Robert Frederick of the First Special Service Force. Generally, elite leaders gain a political "patron" who supports their continued existence. Churchill's sponsorship of the Commandos during World War II and Kennedy's of the Special Forces in the early 1960's fit the mold of political patrons who supported the establishment of elite units.⁶

At the unit level, elite leaders must inspire their men to perform extremely dangerous missions. Elite leaders appear to exercise a more personal style of leadership -- such as sharing the hardship of their troops and setting the example -- than is sometimes the case in conventional units. Having undergone the same rites of passage as their men also provides elite leaders a common link with their men. They lead by virtue of example, not necessarily rank. Elite leaders, therefore, represent and instill the warrior ethic within their men. Because of the independent nature of their operations, these leaders must also be

⁵ Chapter 1 will give specific examples of these points. Also see Scott R. McMichael, *A Historical Perspective on Light Infantry* CSI Research Survey No. 6 (Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1987), 219-222; 235-236. Although not specifically about elite units, McMichael correctly captures the training that distinguishes light infantry from conventional infantry. Because the elite units discussed in this paper are light infantry units, his comments are germane.

⁶ Cohen, *Commandos and Politicians*, 37-41; 43-44.

comfortable in delegating authority to the lowest levels capable of accomplishing the mission. This implies a high degree of respect and trust between unit members and their chain of command. Most elite commanders, then, are confident, imaginative leaders who possess some degree of charisma and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances.⁷

Elite units may perform a variety of operational and tactical roles, geared, ideally, to their organization, training, tactics, and leadership styles. Most commonly these units act as shock troops, raiders, and infiltrators of enemy rear areas. Organized, equipped, and trained for close combat, shock troops spearhead assaults. The German *Stosstrupps* fall into this category. Composed of the German Army's most aggressive men and armed with a high number of automatic weapons and grenades, stormtroops led the way across the killing zones of No Man's Land, where they used firepower and maneuver to break into Allied trenches. Raiding is the next common role for elite units. Raiding involves a surprise attack against a stationary objective characterized by violence of action. Upon completing their assigned task, raiders immediately withdraw from the objective area. The British and Americans originally organized their Commandos and Rangers during World War II for amphibious raiding and short-term forays behind enemy lines. The last role -- as infiltrators of the enemy's rear area -- overlaps with the other two categories. In 1917-1918, for example, German stormtroops used infiltration techniques to get behind British and French lines; the Commandos and Rangers also infiltrated behind German lines to perform certain missions. The purpose of some elite units, however, is to conduct operations deeper in the enemy's rear areas and for more extended periods than is normal for shock troops or raiding forces. Commonly known as "Merrill's Marauders," the 5307

⁷ I am generalizing on these leadership qualities based on my study of elite leaders, personal experiences in light infantry units, and personal associations with members of elite organizations. McMichael makes similar points in his work; see *A Historical Perspective on Light Infantry*, 228-229.

Composite Unit, an American regimental combat team, carried out missions in Burma during 1944 that fall into this category. Because of the "special" or "technical" nature of these missions, elite unit service may fall into all three categories at times.⁸

Regardless of their mission, elite light infantry units share a common tactical style. Offensively-oriented, elite organizations generally task organize to operate in small groups. Squad and platoon operations are the norm, but this may extend up to battalion and brigade size operations like those performed by the World War II Commandos and Rangers. They use stealth and rugged terrain to mask their movements and achieve surprise. They also spend a great deal of time reconnoitering the objective before attacking. Once engaged with the enemy, these outfits use maneuver and well-rehearsed close combat techniques to achieve violence of action. Elite organizations, therefore, place a high premium on individual skill, leader initiative, and small unit actions throughout their combat operations. Because their austere organizations cannot support them for sustained combat, elite units achieve maximum effectiveness on short duration missions.⁹

In sum, recruitment, selection process, enhanced self-identification, and function distinguish a military elite unit from a conventional one. Elites generally fill their ranks with volunteers who possess special skills and have potential or proven ability as a fighter.

⁸ See Otto Heilbrunn, *Warfare in the Enemy's Rear Areas* (New York: Praeger, 1963), 19-94; 112-124. Roger Beaumont, *Military Elites: Special Fighting Units in the Modern World* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1974), 3, lists other types of elite troops, most of which do not apply to the units discussed in this study. Other units that do fall within the categories discussed include the British Special Air Service, the United States Marine Corps Raider battalions, and various elements of the Wehrmacht, especially the Brandenburgers. As a starting point on these units see James Ladd, *Commandos and Rangers of World War II* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978); Charles L. Updegraph, Jr., *U.S. Marine Corps Special Units of World War II* (Washington D.C.: Headquarters, USMC, 1972); War Department, *Handbook of German Forces in World War II* with intro by Stephen Ambrose (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990).

⁹ Heilbrunn, *Warfare in the Enemy's Rear Areas*, 145-173; McMichael, *A Historical Perspective on Light Infantry*, 223-226.

To gain final entry into elite ranks, each potential candidate must undergo a rites of passage. The rites of passage, designed to place maximum physical and psychological stress on participants, is more exacting than the kind of training required of ordinary soldiers. Candidates who successfully complete the rites of passage enter the elite "brotherhood". Elite soldiers closely identify themselves with the values of the organization and express disdain for "outsiders." Elite units perform combat missions requiring special skills and a superior level of unit cohesion. When utilized in combat, elite units generally function as a force multiplier to give a commander enhanced capabilities.

Although elite units have numerous advantages, considerable controversy has always followed upon the heels of their formation. Detractors of elite units, such as historian Roger Beaumont and others, argue that these type of units are not worth the costs involved. Beaumont doubts that such units enhance an armed service's overall force structure. The objections to elite units center on four lines of reasoning. First, elite units cause a "leadership drain," robbing parent organizations of their vital leaders. According to this argument, privates in elite units would be serving as sergeants or lieutenants in conventional units. Second, conventional commanders often fail to understand the capabilities of these units and misuse them in combat, resulting in high casualties. Veterans of elite organizations have long argued as much in their post-war memoirs, such as Charles Ogburn's *The Marauders* and James Altieri's *The Spearheaders*.¹⁰ Tactical misuse, in short, creates intra-organizational problems which detract from over-all force productivity. Third, high casualty rates lead to a "selection-destruction cycle", the loss of highly motivated, high quality personnel who are not easily replaced. This cycle results in

¹⁰ Charles Ogburn, *The Marauders* (New York: Harpers and Brothers, 1961); James Altieri, *The Spearheaders* (New York: Popular Library, 1960).

leadership shortages in elite as well as conventional units, which must bear the burden of most of the fighting. Last, given the same training, conventional units could perform the same tactical missions as elites, either with the unit as a whole or volunteers drawn from within the organization.¹¹

Similar to scholarly critics, commanders of conventional units have long expressed reservations about elite units. Commenting on the "specialist" role of the Chindits in his book *Defeat into Victory*, William Slim, commander of British forces in Burma, concluded "that such formations, trained, equipped, and mentally adjusted for one kind of operation only, were wasteful . . . Any well trained infantry battalion should be able to do what a commando can do; in the Fourteenth Army they could and did."¹² Numerous commanders have accepted Slim's commentary as the final word on the subject.

Despite these criticisms, the U. S. Army would turn again to elite units -- Ranger companies -- in the Korean War. During combat operations the Army intended primarily to use its Ranger companies as short range penetration units.¹³ The Rangers' principal tactical missions, therefore, would include infiltrations through enemy lines to attack enemy command posts, artillery and tank parks, and key communications centers or logistic facilities. Intelligence gathering and reconnaissance were secondary missions. The

¹¹ Beaumont, *Military Elites* ; Bounds, "Notes on Military Elite Units,". David Hogan's recent, unpublished dissertation, "The Evolution of the Concept of the U.S. Army's Rangers, 1942-1983" (Ph.D. diss.: Duke University, 1986) tends to support Beaumont's misuse theory. He concludes that the U. S. Army never had a clearly thought out concept for the Rangers.

¹² Field Marshal William Slim, *Defeat Into Victory* (London: Cassell and Co., 1956, reprint 1987), 546-547.

¹³ Short range penetration units penetrate the enemy's rear at a shallow distance from the front lines and can be reached in a short time. For purposes of this paper, this may be defined as an opposing enemy's divisional rear areas. See Heilbrunn, *Warfare in the Enemy's Rear Areas* , 145.

expressed goal of Army Ranger operations was to disrupt enemy command and control, destroy logistic resupply capabilities, and pose a psychological threat to rear area facilities. Attached to infantry divisions for tactical employment and testing, the Ranger companies performed their raiding mission, as well as a series of more conventional-type infantry assignments. Nevertheless, the Ranger companies remained on active service less than one year and with only six months of continuous combat. The rapid deactivation of the Ranger companies after a crash program to create them called into question the whole Ranger concept.

Both an organizational and operational history, this study traces the evolution of the U. S. Army's Ranger concepts during the Korean War. The Ranger companies provide an excellent case study in the formation and tactical employment of elite light infantry units for so-called "specialist" missions. In examining the development of the Ranger process, this work investigates the failure of the Rangers to mature as a legitimate organization within the Army force structure. This work assesses the impact that organizational structure, new doctrine, and institutional biases had in the Rangers' maturation process.

The Rangers' effectiveness as a military elite cannot be evaluated without an assessment of their actual performance in battle. Therefore, this work devotes a great of space to Ranger combat operations. Such a study should reveal important insights into the value and roles that training, unit cohesion, and leadership play in making military elites high performance outfits.

Finally, the Korean War Ranger experience underlines all of the general problems associated with elite light infantry units. From their inception, the Ranger companies encountered problems in personnel selection, organization, doctrine, and tactical employment. The Rangers, like previous elites, also faced institutional and professional

anti-elite biases. By highlighting these difficulties and the Ranger organization's attempts to overcome them, this study adds to the debate over the utility of military elites.

The history of Army Ranger companies has a special significance for present day Army force planners and combat leaders. General John Wickham, then Army Chief of Staff, established a requirement for highly trained, rapidly-deployable, light infantry forces in his 1984 White Paper. Wickham called for the creation of offensively-oriented units capable of seeking out the enemy on his own terrain using initiative, stealth, and surprise. According to the Chief of Staff, superb leaders, fighting soldiers, tough training, and tactical excellence were the hallmarks of these outfits. The Army expected light infantry forces to be high performance units, capable of bold aggressive action under conditions of great hardship and risk. The tactical focus of light infantry units was to be on infiltrations, air assaults, ambushes, raids, and night operations.¹⁴ Instead of activating elite units for this role, Wickham essentially wanted to create certain conventional divisions with an "elite character". Through an examination of their capabilities and limitations in a variety of combat and non-combat roles, the Army's Korean War Ranger companies provide excellent insights into how to produce such units.

¹⁴ General John A. Wickham, "Light Infantry White Paper," Office of the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, 16 April 1984, 1-2; 4-5. Copy in author's possession.

CHAPTER I

THE RANGER LEGACY

The Korean War Rangers were heirs to a proud tradition that dated to colonial times. Composed of experienced frontiersmen who had volunteered for the duty, the first Ranger units tackled the challenges of forest warfare in colonial North America. In subsequent conflicts through the nineteenth century, the Rangers established themselves as masters of reconnaissance and raiding. By the Second World War Rangers had emerged as the United States Army's elite light infantry. Besides their scouting and raiding missions, the World War II Rangers distinguished themselves through their ability to overcome rugged terrain, infiltrate enemy lines, and destroy heavily defended targets. The Army had this legacy in mind when it re-formed Ranger units for the Korean War.

FROM FRONTIER RIFLEMEN TO ELITE INFANTRY

The organization of the first American Ranger units dates to the late 1600's when early American colonists recruited robust woodsmen to patrol the area between their frontier outposts. The colonists called these men Rangers because they ranged along the hinterland separating the white and Indian civilizations. Providing early warning of frontier attacks, Ranger patrols scouted the forests looking for hostile Indians and their villages. In wartime, the colonies organized provisional Ranger units to gather intelligence, harass the enemy, and conduct raids. These tasks, characterized as "irregular" missions by the

the standards of eighteenth century warfare, were beyond the capabilities of most common militia units.¹

The colonial Rangers earned their greatest fame during the French and Indian War (1754-63). Colonel Robert Rogers formed ten Ranger companies to assist regular British forces sent to fight on the North American frontier. To man the companies, Rogers followed previous precedents by enlisting volunteers from among the hardy woodsmen who lived in the wilderness regions. Most of these men already possessed a marked ability at stalking, wilderness woodcraft, and marksmanship -- skills necessary for their survival in a hostile environment. The hundred man units served as scouts and raiders. While carrying out their missions, the Rangers wore green uniforms for camouflage and traveled with only the bare necessities --rifle, ammunition, water, and food -- to insure mobility. Rogers established a set of rules for all the Ranger companies. These tactical guidelines, if employed properly and with common-sense, provided methods to beat the Indians at their own style of warfare.

"Rogers' Rangers" successfully operated as an independent part of the British Army in most of the major campaigns of the French and Indian War. The companies gathered intelligence and harrassed the Indians at Halifax (1757), Ticonderoga (1758), and Crown Point (1759). The Rangers most noteworthy action occurred in September 1759. Rogers and his men encircled and destroyed the Abenaki Indian village at Saint Francis, Canada. According to Rogers' report of the action, the Rangers, in a six week period, maneuvered to their objective by canoe and on foot through four hundred miles of wilderness. Although they performed their specialist missions well, the Rangers lack of

¹John K. Mahon, "Anglo-American Methods of Indian Warfare, 1676-1794" *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 45 (1958) : 261-262; Center For Military History, "Rangers in Colonial and Revolutionary America," unpublished manuscript, Rangers-General File, document number HRC 714.7..

discipline and irregular methods caused many conventional commanders to view the companies not as elites, but as rabble.²

Despite the previous animosities displayed by professional soldiers, Ranger units re-emerged and served in some capacity in every American conflict from the Revolution through the Civil War. George Washington used Rangers, once again organized from volunteers with frontier experience, to perform reconnaissance missions and night attacks. In 1776 Thomas Knowlton of Connecticut formed a small corps of Rangers which later encircled a detachment of British light infantry at the battle of Harlem Heights. Companies of Rangers protected the frontier in the War of 1812 and fought as part of Colonel Philip Kearney's command in Mexico. During the Civil War, Rangers battled for both the Union and the Confederacy. Mounted on horses to gain mobility, Ranger formations -- such as Colonel John S. Mosby's Confederate Rangers -- operated as independent agents to raid enemy rear areas and attack outposts. Although the Rangers performed successfully as raiders, the Army chose not to retain them in its small post-war force structure.³

The idea of using the unique talents of volunteers to perform "special" military missions resurfaced during World War I. Two officers in the American Expeditionary (AEF) in France developed a proposal to form "Divisional Ranger Companies" recruited from "North American Indians" serving in the Army. Lieutenant John R. Eddy of the 4th

² Robert Rogers, *The Journals of Robert Rogers* (New York: Corinth Books, 1961); Robert Cuneo, *Robert Rogers of the Rangers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959).

³ For a brief discussion of these units see Captain Larry E. Ivers, "The American Rangers--Their First Two Hundred Years," unpublished manuscript, document number UD 503. I 32 du (Fort Benning, GA: U.S. Army Infantry School Library, 1963); idem, "Rangers in Florida--1818," *Infantry* (September-October, 1963); Center of Military History, "Ranger Units", copy in Ranger Battalions File- Miscellaneous, document number HRC 314.7; Virgil Carrington Jones, *Ranger Mosby* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944).

Infantry Division and Lieutenant Edward G. Sewell of the 91st Infantry Division believed that such companies would effectively exploit the Indians' natural talents. In a memorandum to the G-3, First Army, the two officers argued that the "Indian's instinctive orientation, together with his natural ability to locate himself by sketch or map" made "him an ideal night worker." American Indians had shown on numerous occasions the ability "to withstand front-line strain with fortitude and courage." These qualities would enable Ranger companies composed of Indians "to quietly work through and beyond the lines of the enemy." According to the document, the AEF could organize the Ranger companies by asking for volunteers from among the nearly twenty-five hundred Indians already in existing regiments in France. By enlisting the aid of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and the Office of the Secretary of the Interior, the General Headquarters would be able to recruit from "10,000 Indians of the United States, including the fast and long-distance runners in the Hopi, Zuni, and Navajo tribes of the southwest, and the fighting Cheyenne, Sioux, and Blackfeet from the northwest."⁴

The Ranger companies, the two lieutenants contended, would be useful in both position and open warfare. While in the defense the Ranger companies would locate enemy snipers, observation posts, and machine gun positions; reconnoiter wire; supplement the work of battalion intelligence sections; and control No-Man's Land. Because of their night-fighting abilities, the Rangers would be especially useful in searching out and destroying machine-gun positions. They could also serve as guides for company and battalion level patrols at night. When the AEF eventually switched to open

⁴ John R. Eddy and Edward G. Sewell, Memorandum for Colonel McCleave, G-3, First Army, Subject: Ranger Service, First Army, AEF, G-3 File #138, Record Group 120, National Archives, Washington, D. C. Dr. Timothy Nenninger found this document while doing his own research and forwarded it to a colleague, Major William Odom, who gave it to me. I acknowledge both men's generosity in sharing this information with me.

warfare the Ranger companies would serve as advanced reconnaissance parties and infiltrators. By "taking up positions at night in fields and woods, in camouflaged suits" the Rangers could "pick-up and kill enemy snipers and scouts during the day." During the conduct of operations G-3 would control the Ranger companies. The G-3 might, however, attach Ranger sections to the regiments for special missions; in that case, they would fall under the regimental commander's purview.⁵ Although these proposals had merit, they apparently came too late -- September 1918 -- for the AEF to act upon them. Nevertheless, the Army would turn again to Ranger specialists in the next world war.

The Army organized Ranger units in the Second World War at the behest of its Chief of Staff, George C. Marshall. In spring 1942 the United States had just begun to ship troops to England in anticipation of combat operations in Europe. These first divisions, however, would need several months of training before they were ready for employment. Marshall, however, wanted to make some American contribution to fighting against the Germans to draw attention to the European theater and away from the Pacific. He formulated a plan to extract selected individuals from a cross section of available American forces and train them in commando techniques so they could participate in raids with the British. After a period of service with the commandos, members would return them to their original units. This plan would give the Americans some combat veterans in their expanding Army, bolster morale in the United States, and signal American commitment to Britain. Consistent with these concepts, Marshall sent Colonel Lucian K. Truscott, Jr. to London to arrange for limited American participation in British commando raids against German-occupied France.

⁵ Ibid.

Truscott, acting on the Chief's instructions, coordinated the commando raids with the British. The British were in favor of the idea and promised their assistance in training the new outfit. Reporting back to the Chief of Staff, Truscott recommended the formation of a provisional unit similar in organization to the British commandos. With Marshall's approval, he drafted a letter of instruction for Major General Russell P. Hartle, the commanding general of United States Army Northern Ireland (USANIF), directing him to form the commando unit as expeditiously as possible. After consultation with Major General Dwight D. Eisenhower, chief of the Operations Division of the War Department General Staff, Truscott designated the new unit as the "Rangers," in honor of previous outfits in American military history that had performed similar tasks.⁶ The new formation's special mission and romantic image was sure to aid in recruiting and spark public interest.

On 7 June 1942 General Hartle notified the major units in USANIF of the forthcoming activation of the 1st Ranger Battalion and requested help in selecting its members. Hartle's letter outlined the selection criteria for the Rangers. The battalion would accept only volunteers in excellent physical condition who had athletic skill. Besides fitness, the Rangers wanted men with superb leadership qualities and who had mastered the soldierly skills of self-defense, marksmanship, and demolitions. Hartle required units to furnish a specified amount of personnel from private to captain to fill the Rangers. Based on the established guidance, commanders were to screen their volunteers and send the best

⁶ Michael J. King, *Rangers: Selected Combat Operations in World War II*, Leavenworth Paper No. 11 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1985), 5-7.

of the lot to the Rangers. Pending final approval from Colonel William O. Darby, 1st Ranger Battalion commander, USANIF attached these personnel to the Rangers.⁷

Darby formally activated the battalion on 19 June 1942 at Carrickfergus, Northern Ireland. Darby organized the battalion into a headquarters company and six line companies. The Rangers carried only light armament -- M-1 rifles, Browning Automatic Rifles, .45 caliber submachine guns, and 60mm mortars -- to enhance their mobility. The battalion moved to the British Commando Depot at Achnacarry, Scotland on 28 June where it trained until the end of July. The Rangers' regimen included speed-marching, cliff climbing, obstacle courses, and tactical exercises involving live ammunition. In August, the battalion began training in infiltration and amphibious insertion techniques. Six officers and forty-three enlisted men from the Rangers participated in the Dieppe raid on 19 August. Four Rangers died and four were captured during this operation. The battalion completed its training during September by practicing attacks on coastal defenses, pillboxes, and antiaircraft positions at Dundee, Scotland. This last phase of training emphasized tactical planning, control, and individual initiative.⁸

The 1st Ranger Battalion as a whole participated in its first combat actions in North Africa during Operation Torch in November 1942. The Rangers landed with Allied forces at Arzew, Algeria and participated in a number of battles in Tunisia. The battalion garnered great fame when it successfully executed a daring raid at Station de Sened. In another action, "Darby's Rangers" conducted a night attack through difficult terrain at Djebel el Ank

⁷ Darby, a West Point graduate commissioned in the field artillery branch, was General Hartle's aide de campe. He was the first Ranger volunteer. For more on Darby see Michael J. King, *William Orlando Darby: A Military Biography* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1981).

⁸ William O. Darby and William H. Baumer, *Darby's Rangers: We Led The Way* (San Rafael, CA: Presidio Press, 1980), 41-49.

pass, which enabled the 1st Infantry Division to seize a critical road junction around El Guettar. Following the battle for Djebel el Ank, the Rangers went into reserve. On 14 April 1943, Darby received permission to activate additional Ranger forces. Using members of the 1st Ranger Battalion as a cadre, he activated the 3d and 4th Ranger Battalions. Adding a 4.2 inch mortar company to his organization, Darby broke his battalion into the "Ranger Force" -- now numbering close to a thousand men-- and began to train them for the invasion of Sicily.⁹

Darby's Ranger Force spearheaded the American Seventh Army's landings in Sicily. The 1st and 4th Ranger battalions made an opposed landing at Gela on 10 July 1943 then participated in II Corps' drive inland. Attached to the 3d Infantry Division (Reinforced), the 3d Ranger Battalion also met opposition during its amphibious insertion at Licata. Subsequently, the battalion played an important role in the capture of Porto Empedocle. The Ranger Force did not perform raiding and infiltration missions during the Sicilian campaign. Instead, division commanders used the Rangers as "super-infantry" to launch attacks over difficult terrain or against well-defended positions. Anticipating a continued tendency toward these style operations, and because of the 1st and 4th Rangers' experience fighting against armor at Gela, Darby began to arm Ranger Force with heavier weapons to increase their organic firepower. He created a cannon company and equipped it with half-track mounted 75mm guns. Endorsed by General George Patton, then commander of the U.S. Seventh Army, Darby wrote to General Eisenhower to request the formation of a permanent Ranger Regiment to be assigned to a corps, army, or higher headquarters. Eisenhower was less than enthusiastic about the idea and disapproved the

⁹ King, *Rangers*, 13-22; Darby and Baumer, *We Led the Way*, 66-78.

plan. As a result, when Fifth Army utilized the Rangers in Italy, they once again performed conventional rather than commando missions.

The tactical mishandling of the Rangers during the Italian campaign led to their destruction by German armored forces. The Rangers conducted two amphibious operations in Italy in advance of the main Allied landings. The first came at Mairori, twenty miles west of Salerno, where the Rangers achieved surprise, took the town, destroyed nearby coastal defenses, and seized the Chiunzi Pass. Ranger Force held the Pass for eighteen days against heavy German counter-attacks and intense artillery bombardment. While allowing the British X Corps to batter its way toward Naples, the Rangers suffered 28 killed, 66 wounded, and 9 missing in a sustained conventional battle, for which they had neither the training nor equipment.¹⁰ After a brief period of rest, refitting, and receipt of replacements, Ranger Force made an unopposed landing at Anzio. The Rangers secured key points along the beach-head to allow Major General John Lucas' VI Corps to come ashore. The next mission Lucas gave to the elite battalions spelled disaster for them. On the night of 30 January 1944, the Rangers launched a night infiltration attack toward Cisterna in hopes of securing the town and vital road junctions. A German tank-infantry ambush caught the Rangers crossing an open area west of Cisterna, inflicted heavy casualties, and took over 300 Rangers prisoner. When shooting died out on the morning of the 31st, only 6 out of 767 men who had started the mission were able to make their way back to friendly lines. Following the battle, the Army disbanded the

¹⁰ Ibid, 29-30. Martin Blumenson, *Salerno to Cassino*, U.S. Army in World War II (Washington, D.C. : Office of the Chief of Military History, 1965) covers the larger tactical picture and specifics for the Italian campaign.

Ranger Force and transferred survivors from the Cisterna attack and members of the 4th Ranger battalion to the First Special Service Force.¹¹

The Army activated two more Ranger battalions -- the 2d and 5th Rangers -- for employment in the European Theater of Operations. Both battalions participated in the D-Day landings. Attached to the 116th Infantry, the Rangers' mission was to knock out German coastal defenses located on Pointe du Hoe. Under the personal command of their battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel James E. Rudder, Companies D, E, F of the 2d Ranger Battalion landed on the beach beneath the Pointe and scaled sheer cliffs utilizing ropes to reach their objective. While the men climbed the cliffs, Rudder coined the phrase, "Rangers, lead the way!" which has come to epitomize the spirit of these highly trained units. Once on top of the cliffs, the Rangers discovered that the gun emplacements were empty. Due to poor communications, the remainder of the 2d Battalion and the 5th Battalion landed on an alternate beach at Vierville where they assisted the 116th Infantry.¹²

During the breakout from the Normandy beachhead, both battalions conducted conventional style infantry assaults against the Germans at Brest, Grandcamp, and Le Conquet peninsula. Two other actions by these battalions are worth noting. In early December, the 2d Ranger Battalion captured the critical heights near Bergstein, creating a salient in German lines. The Rangers repelled five counter-attacks and withstood heavy artillery barrages to enable the Allies to maintain observation of the Schmidt and Ruhr River dams. The 5th Ranger Battalion performed the last real commando style mission of the European theater from 23-27 February 1945. Infiltrating three miles behind enemy lines,

¹¹ Ibid, 32-40; Darby and Baumer, *We Led the Way*, 124-169; for a more detailed account of the actions of the 1st, 3d, 4th Ranger Battalions see James J. Altieri, *Darby's Rangers* (Durham, N.C.: Seeman Printery, 1945).

¹² For the Rangers' actions on D-Day see *Small Unit Actions* (Washington D.C. : Historical, Division, U.S. War Department, 1946), 1-63.

the Rangers established a blocking position across the Irsch-Zerf road awaiting link-up with attacking elements of the 94th Infantry Division. Setting-up a perimeter defense around their objective, the Rangers conducted ambushes against unsuspecting German units in the area. When the Germans realized the Rangers were in the vicinity, they launched two unsuccessful counter-attacks against them. On 26 February, friendly armored forces reached the Rangers to find that the battalion had killed an estimated 299 enemy soldiers and taken 328 prisoners at the cost of 90 friendly casualties.¹³

Spawned by the performance of the Ranger battalions, several infantry divisions in the European Theater organized their own versions of the Rangers. During a visit to Europe as a member of the War Department Observers Board in June-July 1945, Colonel Gilbert Parker visited ten experienced infantry divisions. Officers in every division expressed the need for a permanent organization of specially trained men to conduct patrolling, reconnaissance, and other Ranger-type combat missions. Parker found that eight of the divisions had formed their own Ranger platoons for such missions. These platoons received intensive training in such Ranger skills as land navigation, physical training, demolitions, pathfinding, patrolling, and close combat techniques. Major General H.T. Collins, commander of the 42d Infantry Division, had authorized each battalion to form its own "Rainbow Ranger Platoon." He justified this ad-hoc arrangement because: "It was our experience that men without special training were of no use on night patrolling and little use by day." The 65th and 94th Infantry Divisions had similar Ranger units and used them to gather information, probe for soft spots in enemy defenses, and conduct special combat missions behind enemy lines. The 29th Infantry Division organized a provisional

¹³ King, *Rangers*, 43-54.

Ranger Battalion which participated in two small raids with British Commandos before disbanding.¹⁴

Established in July 1942, the First Special Service performed comparable missions to the Rangers. Commanded by Colonel Robert Frederick and composed of American and Canadian volunteers, the unit's original mission was to conduct raiding missions in Norway. To operate in the rugged terrain and frigid environment, the "Devil's Brigade" received airborne, arctic, and mountain training. However, the Army scrubbed the mission and assigned the First Special Service Force as part of the assault element for the amphibious landings in the Aleutians in 1943. Later, the unit deployed to Italy where it fought at Anzio and in the breakout towards Rome in summer 1944. During Operation ANVIL, the Allied invasion of southern France, the First Special Service Force led the amphibious landings and later fought with distinction with the Seventh Army at Belfort Gap. Although the Americans and Canadians judged the outfit to be a model of successful combined operations, the First Special Service Force performed few of the commando type missions for which it was originally designed. The unit disbanded in December 1944 and its members transferred to airborne units.¹⁵

In the Pacific theater, the 6th Ranger Battalion carried out a series of combat missions that were well-matched for its organizational capabilities and training. On 17

¹⁴ Report of Colonel Gilbert E. Parker to War Department Observers Board, European Theater, Subject: "Ranger Training in Infantry Division," 2 October 1945. Copy in Ranger Battalions File, Miscellaneous, Document call number HRC 314.7, Center of Military History; Joseph H. Ewing, *29 Let's Go! A History of the 29th Infantry Division in World War II* (Washington: Infantry Journal Press, 1948), 18-19; 25-26.

¹⁵ John K. Mahon and Ramana Danysh, *Infantry, Part I* (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, 1972), 59; Robert H. Adleman and Col. George Walton, *The Devil's Brigade* (Philadelphia: Chilton, 1966); Scott R. McMichael, *A Historical Perspective on Light Infantry*, Research Survey No. 6 (Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1987), 169-217.

October 1944, the battalion landed on the islands of Dinagat, Guiuan, and Homonhan three days prior to the American invasion of Leyte and destroyed Japanese radio facilities and defensive positions. Assisted by the Alamo Scouts, the 6th Rangers rescued 511 Allied prisoners from a Japanese POW compound in January 1945. The Rangers achieved complete surprise through their detailed reconnaissance of the objective and stealthful approach. This action was probably the most complex Ranger operation in World War II. The Rangers' skillful use of the Scouts and intensive planning also made it the most successful tactical mission that they performed. Company B executed the last Ranger mission in the Pacific by infiltrating 250 miles behind Japanese lines to the city of Appari, on the tip of Luzon. For twenty-eight days, the Rangers reconnoitered defenses around the city. The company concluded its mission by setting-up a drop zone for the 11th Airborne Division at Camalugian Airfield.¹⁶

Another Ranger-type unit in the Pacific was the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional) which operated in Burma from October 1943 to July 1945. The Army organized the unit from volunteers among jungle trained or tested troops -- mostly infantrymen-- as a result of an Quebec Conference agreement to assist British Chindit forces in Burma. Nicknamed "Merrill's Marauders" after their commander, Brigadier General Frank Merrill, the 5307th received training in long-range penetration techniques and jungle warfare. General Joseph Stilwell, theater commander, deployed the Marauders in a drive to recover Northern Burma and clear the way for the construction of the proposed Ledo Road. Operating well in the rear of Japanese forces in Burma, the unit engaged the

¹⁶ King, *Rangers*, 55-71; Forrest B. Johnson, *Hour of Redemption: The Ranger Raid on Cabanatuan* (New York: Manor, 1978); M. Hamlin Cannon, *Leyte: The Return to the Philippines*, United States in World War II (Washington D.C. : Office of the Chief of Military History, 1954), 31-32; 54-56; Robert R. Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, United States Army in World War II (Washington D.C. : Office of the Chief of Military History, 1963), 54-57; 561-562; 569-570.

enemy in a series of meeting engagements, ambushes, and raids. Throughout the operation the Marauders functioned on the barest minimum of logistical and medical support; as a result, many troops had to be evacuated for severe medical problems, including malaria and dysentery. The highlight of the unit's combat operations was the capture of Myitkyina airfield, the only all-weather airstrip in northern Burma. In August 1944, the Army redesignated the 5307th as the 475th Infantry Regiment.¹⁷

The Rangers and all of the similar type formations disbanded after the war. Prior to June 1950, Army leaders did give some consideration to reactivating elite light infantry units, but for reconnaissance, not raiding. In late 1946 Secretary of War Robert Patterson ordered the Army to study a proposal involving the activation of airborne reconnaissance units. The Office of Strategic Services (OSS) had successfully utilized such outfits in the Second World War and, since that agency had disbanded, Patterson thought the Army might be interested in the concept. The Army's Military Intelligence Division of the War Department General Staff studied the suggestion and found that it had merit. For the next eighteen months Army Ground Forces attempted to develop appropriate organizational structures, doctrine, and tactics for the airborne reconnaissance units. By mid-1948 the employment concept for the units, now labeled as the "Ranger Group" by planners, combined the strategic missions of the OSS and the tactical tasks performed by the Ranger battalions. Ranger Group was to organize and control resistance movements as well as conduct commando-style operations behind enemy lines. Budget constraints prevented the Army from organizing the Ranger Group; therefore, the ideas behind it went untested. This prewar linkage of unconventional warfare missions with previous Ranger concepts,

¹⁷ War Department, Historical Division, *Merrill's Marauders* CMH Pub 100-4 (Washington D. C. : Center of Military History, 1990 [reprint]); Mahon and Danysh, *Infantry*, 59-60; McMichael, *A Historical Perspective on Light Infantry*, 1-49.

however, would add to future confusion over the appropriate roles for a new set of Rangers during the Korean War.¹⁸

CONCLUSIONS

The Ranger units activated throughout American military history shared many common characteristics. Volunteers, possessing special technical skills or having proven abilities as fighters, filled the ranks of these elite military formations. The units, established on a provisional basis, served primarily as light infantry. They often used special weapons and equipment; for example, Rogers' Rangers used rifles instead of muskets. The Rangers performed distinctive and extremely hazardous missions, such as operations behind enemy lines. Therefore, the Rangers underwent rigorous training which exceeded the standards of regular infantry. Besides practicing needed skills, training promoted a high level of physical fitness, provided mental conditioning, and inculcated unit esprit de corps and cohesion. Sometimes Ranger formations had to train for special environmental conditions. The 6th Ranger Battalion and Merrill's Marauders, for example, received jungle training in preparation for their missions in the Pacific theater. During the actual conduct of operations, the elite outfits used stealthful movements to achieve surprise, maneuvered aggressively, and destroyed the enemy in close combat. When utilized in a proper tactical manner, such as the 5th Rangers' infiltration attack at Zerf and the 6th Rangers raid at Cabanatuan, this combination of quality troops, lightweight armaments, arduous training, and tactical style made the Rangers a potent combat force. At the conclusion of their missions, the Rangers often went into reserve where they rested and

¹⁸ Alfred H. Paddock, Jr., *US Army Special Warfare Its Origins* (Washington D. C. : National Defense University, 1982), 69-72.

rehearsed for their next task. Having time to reorganize and rehearse was a major factor in the Rangers' success.

Despite the utility of these military elites, organizational, doctrinal, and institutional problems kept them from achieving maximum effectiveness. The Rangers, formed on a temporary or ad hoc basis, never had a higher headquarters to look out for their interests. Without a unified headquarters, the units had to perform some missions unsuited to their training or organizational capabilities. A higher headquarters would have provided some quality control over the types of missions that the Rangers received, as well as overseeing the training of replacements and assuming responsibility for the administration of the units. The Ranger Force, instituted on Darby's initiative in 1943, was the only attempt to create a unified Ranger headquarters through the Second World War.

Lack of an appropriate Ranger doctrine also detracted from Ranger effectiveness. Without some manual or established guidelines, commanders used the Rangers according to their own needs and desires. Mark Clark's command consistently used the Ranger Force to spearhead attacks for conventional units during the Italian campaign, resulting in heavy casualties. Although capable of seizing and holding terrain, the Rangers lacked the organization and manpower to consolidate their gains for more than a short period. Absence of solid intelligence and inadequate combined arms support caused the Rangers to undertake missions incurring unacceptably high levels of risks.

Institutional biases also posed a problem for Rangers' survival in the Army force structure. British officers fighting in the French and Indian War recognized the Rangers' skill at forest warfare, but despised their motley appearance, lack of discipline, and impertinent attitude. In World War II many officers expressed doubts about elite forces in general and the Rangers specifically. Many felt that they did not pull their weight in combat and pulled too many of the most highly motivated members from conventional units. This

attitude accounted, in part, for some instances of misuse and led to the eventual disbandment of Ranger units after each war.

When the Korean War erupted in summer 1950 the United States Army would again form elite Ranger units to perform distinctive combat missions. The Army hoped to create organizations that maximized the best aspects of previous Ranger units. For their part, the new Rangers hoped to live up to the glorious legacies of their elite ancestors. As it evolved during the first year of the war, the Ranger program would reflect historical patterns -- both good and bad -- of utilizing elite light infantry forces.

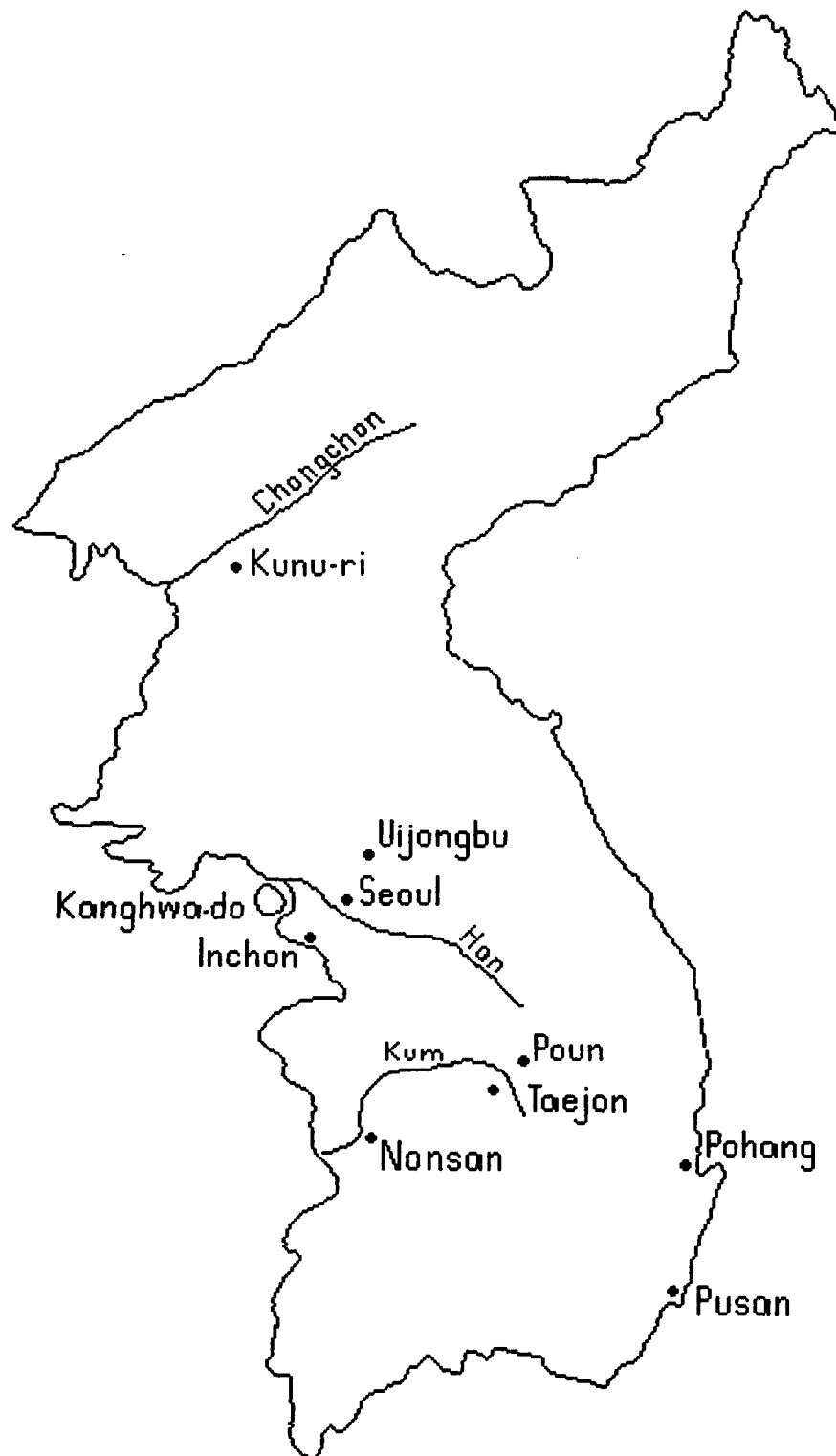


FIGURE 1 : KOREA

CHAPTER II
"I WANNA BE . . . A RANGER!"
- Army Cadence

BACKGROUND

On 25 June 1950, North Korean troops stormed across the 38th Parallel to invade their unfriendly neighbor to the south. Within days the North Korean People's Army had captured Seoul and routed the South Korean military forces. Backed by two United Nations Resolutions condemning North Korea's actions and requesting member nations to furnish assistance to South Korea, President Harry Truman decided to intervene on 27 June. He authorized Douglas MacArthur's Far East Command to employ its air and naval forces in support of the Republic of Korea against all targets south of the 38th Parallel. Three days later, Truman committed American ground troops to Korea. Reacting swiftly to the President's instructions, MacArthur formed and deployed Task Force Smith, an ad hoc force organized from elements of the 24th Infantry Division and commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Charles B. Smith. The remainder of the 24th Infantry and 25th Infantry Divisions sailed for Korea closely behind the task force.

In the opening months of the Korean War the North Korean Army skillfully used infiltration tactics to penetrate American and South Korean defenses. Possessing a high level of physical fitness, proficiency in land navigation, and expertise in night operations, specially trained North Korean units flowed through and around allied defensive strongpoints. The enemy infiltrators, utilizing the rough mountainous terrain to mask their

movements, appeared in friendly rear areas to attack command and control facilities, artillery firing positions, and dug-in defenses from the flanks or rear. On some occasions these units acted as independent agents; in others, their actions facilitated the forward movement of conventional units. These formations sometimes deceived allied forces by dressing as civilians, hiding their disassembled weapons and uniforms in cloth bundles, and concealing ammunition in native carts. All of these measures contributed to the North Koreans' advance. The successful use of these tactics disrupted allied command and control, unhinging American attempts to coordinate defensive efforts. By late July 1950 these tactics, coupled with successful attacks by conventional armored and infantry units, enabled the North Korean Army to force friendly allied forces back into a tight perimeter around Pusan.

In late August 1950, Army Chief of Staff J. Lawton Collins flew to the Far East for a briefing on MacArthur's upcoming Inchon operation. The Chief was familiar with an early report from Department of the Army observers in Korea who had noted the effectiveness of these tactics and lack of American capabilities in this area. When he visited the Pusan perimeter on 22 August, Collins listened as several front-line commanders provided first-hand accounts detailing the enemy's successful use of infiltration attacks. General Walton Walker, Eighth Army commander, expressed his concern over his army's inability to conduct similar types of operations. Wanting to respond to North Korean tactics in kind, but lacking units with the training or psychological conditioning necessary for behind the lines missions, both Walker and Collins toyed with the ideas of organizing specialist outfits for the job.¹

¹ "Report on the Visit of LTC Everett (Representative of G-3/ Dept. of Army) to FECOM and USARPAC, 19-30 August 1950," Tab E: HQ, Eighth U.S. Army Korea, "Combat Information Bulletin No. 1," Section I, U.S. Army Operations, *General Decimal File, 1950-1951, 333 Middle East to 333 Pacific*, Modern Military HQ Branch, Records Group

Walker subsequently found an opportunity to put his thoughts into action. Previously, on 9 August, the North Korean 5th and 12th Infantry Divisions had emerged from the rugged mountains along the perimeter's northern face, an area where Eighth Army (EUSAK) had employed economy force measures. The enemy's attack had rolled south, capturing the eastern port city of Pohang and cutting communications between the seacoast and Taegu, site of EUSAK headquarters. Walker had been able to shift forces to contain the offensive in a small salient which EUSAK named as the "Pohang Pocket."² By the time of the Chief of Staff's visit, the enemy had broken contact and disappeared back into the mountains. Exhausted by combat and lack of logistical support, the surviving North Koreans resorted to hit and run guerrilla tactics. The salient, however, posed a further, potential danger to Eighth Army's northern defenses. If the North Koreans reinforced their forces in this area, they might be able to envelop Taegu from the rear. Walker, therefore, wanted to monitor developments in the region. The enemy's disposition and nature of the terrain would require a unit capable of making rapid cross-country movements and operating at night. The situation seemed tailor-made for Walker to put his ideas about an American infiltration unit to test.

Walker tasked Eighth Army's G3 (Operations), Colonel William H. Bartlett, to organize an experimental, company-sized unit to penetrate the Pohang pocket. Once in the enemy's rear, the company was to perform intelligence-gathering and commando-style missions. Bartlett passed the action to Colonel John H. McGee, head of G-3

(RG) 319, National Archives; J. Lawton Collins, *War in Peacetime : The History and Lessons of Korea* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), 108-110.

² Roy E. Appleman, *South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu*, U.S. Army in the Korean War (Washington D.C. : Office of the Chief of Military History, 1961), 319-333 describes the actions around Pohang.

Miscellaneous Division for implementation.³ Because EUSAK could not spare any of its trained infantrymen for the new organization, the G-3 instructed McGee to form the company from volunteers in service units in Japan and those in the Eighth Army replacement depot not already assigned to units. Bartlett wanted the unit established as quickly as possible, but gave McGee up to seven weeks to organize, equip, and train the new specialists. With these instructions and the chain of command's backing, McGee started the process which led to the creation of the first Ranger unit since the end of the Second World War.⁴

Eighth Army's actions underscore previous trends associated with the formation of wartime elites. Prompted by a visit from the Army Chief of Staff and his own tactical concerns, Walker decided to create a new unit to enhance his Army's capabilities. At the time of his decision, the Eighth Army commander lacked units with the physical endurance, training, or psychological toughness to perform night operations or missions behind enemy lines.⁵ Walker could not have afforded to pull them off perimeter defenses. Although it

³ The G-3, Miscellaneous Division organized special operations missions for Eighth Army. This section later acted as the headquarters for units organized to conduct guerrilla warfare and partisan operations in North Korea.. Under McGee's direction, Eighth Army formed a number of outfits with designations in the 8000's to perform deep reconnaissance and support guerrilla operations behind enemy lines. See John H. McGee, "Address at the 8th Army Ranger Company Reunion," St. Louis, Mo., 20 September 1986. Unpublished copy in author's possession.

⁴ John H. McGee, "Address at the 8th Army Ranger Company Reunion," St. Louis, Mo., 20 September 1986. Unpublished copy in author's possession.

⁵ For a discussion of the physical condition of units in Korea, see U.S. Army, FECOM, EUSAK, "Training to Meet Special Korean Conditions," *Special Problems in the Korean Conflict*, unpublished manuscript, document call number 8.5.1A AN (Washington D. C. : Center of Military History, 1955), 30-31; on the need for improved night training and patrolling skills, see " Report on the Visit of Lieutenant Colonel Everett to FECOM and

limited the new unit's access to manpower, EUSAK permitted Colonel McGee to recruit volunteers for his unit. Based on the Ranger experience in the Second World War, these highly motivated men, when trained in commando tactics, were more likely to want to take the risks associated with behind-the-lines missions than those drafted for the duty. Such a unit had a good chance of obtaining excellent results, out of proportion to their size, against targets in the enemy's rear areas. North Korean successes reinforced that notion. If successful, Eighth Army's experimental unit might serve as a role model for conventional units and spark the creation of other units along similar lines.

FORMATION OF THE EIGHTH ARMY RANGER COMPANY

Colonel John McGee was uniquely qualified to organize Eighth Army's new elite force. A 1931 graduate of West Point, McGee was in the Philippines commanding Moro Company, Philippine Scouts when the Second World War erupted. Captured in southeastern Mindanao after American forces had surrendered, he remained in a Japanese prison camp near Davao City for two years. When the Japanese transferred him to another camp, he escaped from a prison ship in the Basilian Straights, evaded capture, and joined an existing guerrilla unit on the other side of Mindanao. Taking charge of the guerrillas, which included survivors from a torpedoed prison ship, McGee struck at the Japanese through a series of carefully coordinated hit and run operations. In 1944 he made contact with American forces as they neared the Philippines. A submarine later evacuated him.

USARPAC, 19-30 August 1950," Tab E: HQ, EUSAK, "Combat Bulletin No.1," Section I, U.S. Army Operations, *General Decimal File, 1950-1951*, 333 Middle East to 333 Pacific, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives; G.S. Meloy, "Impact of Korean Combat Lessons at the Infantry School," *Army-Navy-Air Force Journal* (19 September 1953) : 53.

McGee finished World War II as the commanding officer of the 169th Infantry Regiment, 43d Infantry Division.⁶

McGee arrived in Japan just after the outbreak of the Korean War. He promptly reported to the Eighth Army Chief of Staff. Because of his previous experience with unconventional units and guerrilla warfare, McGee received the mission to screen personnel to fill a commando type outfit. Although he did not know it at the time, McGee selected the men who would fight in the Provisional Raider Company, which acted as a deception force at Kunsan during the Inchon invasion. McGee completed the task within a few days, then flew to Korea where he reported to Headquarters, Eighth Army (Forward) in Taegu. Assigned to EUSAK 's G-3 section, McGee prepared a staff study titled "The Conduct of Guerrilla Warfare in North Korea." Before he could formally present his recommendations, Colonel Bartlett directed him to organize the unit for the Pohang mission.⁷

As a first step in organizing the penetration unit McGee searched through available to find an established Table of Organization and Equipment (T/O&E). The former guerrilla commander recognized that such a document was the "key to quick organization" which would "immediately open the door for quick procurement of needed personnel and equipping as a combat unit."⁸ He initially intended to form the company in the same

⁶ Paul W. Child, Jr., *1987 Register of Graduates and Former Cadets* (West Point: Association of Graduates, USMA, 1987), 378. For his experiences in World War II, see John H. McGee, *Rice and Salt: A History of the Defense and Occupation of Mindanao during World War II* (San Antonio: Naylor Co., 1962).

⁷ Brigadier General (Retired) John H. McGee, phone interview with author, 2 September 1989; McGee, "Address at 8th Army Ranger Company Reunion."

⁸ Ibid.

manner as the Sixth Army's Alamo Scouts of World War II fame, but neither EUSAK nor Far East Command Headquarters had a copy of its T/O&E. Instead, McGee discovered a copy of a T/O&E used by Ranger companies toward the end of World War II and decided to use it to meet the requirement for the Pohang mission. Armed with the T/O&E, he then flew to Camp Drake, Japan to search for volunteers in Far East Command and at the Replacement Depot to man the Ranger company.

McGee quickly sifted files and interviewed a number of candidates for the Ranger company. Captain Gray Johnson and Lieutenant Paul Weaver, two members of the freshly organized Eighth Army Ranger Training Center staff, assisted him in the selection process. McGee and his staff members first drew upon many of the surplus selectees from his prior screening efforts for the Raider Company. From their initial efforts, the team formed a pool of about sixty potential Ranger candidates.

Although directives dictated that service troops were to fill the company's enlisted ranks, McGee wanted bonafide infantry officers to command the unit. He sought out unassigned infantry officers at Far East Command's Replacement Depot. During one visit to the depot, McGee met Second Lieutenant Ralph Puckett. A 1949 West Point graduate, Puckett volunteered for the Rangers because he had "heard the stories of the Rangers as a boy and wanted to be with the best." When McGee indicated that he had filled all of the company's lieutenant slots, Puckett replied that he would "take a squad leader's or rifleman's job" if only the Colonel would accept him. Impressed by Puckett's attitude, McGee made him the commander of the outfit. Second Lieutenants Charles Bunn of Springfield, Illinois and Barnard Cummings, Jr of Denver, Colorado, two of Puckett's West Point classmates also awaiting assignments in the Replacement Depot, also agreed to join the company. McGee interviewed Bunn and Cummings and appointed them to command the 1st and 2d Platoons, respectively, apparently basing his decision on their

final West Point class ranking. The three lieutenants had only recently completed the Infantry Officers' Basic Course and airborne training before volunteering for combat duty.⁹ Despite their inexperience, the lieutenants met McGee's requirements for officer leadership.

McGee briefed the trio on the organization and mission of the Ranger unit and instructed them to continue to examine suitable volunteers from the service units and the Replacement Depot. He ordered them to form the company as quickly as possible for rapid deployment to Korea. The Replacement Depot Commander agreed to assist Puckett and his cadre procure sufficient manpower to organize the unit. McGee and his staff then returned to Korea to establish an operational training camp in preparation for the Ranger company's arrival.¹⁰

News about the forthcoming activation of the Ranger company spread through official channels and the various unit "grapevines" in Far East Command. Mechanics, cooks, and clerks from the service units in Japan volunteered for the duty, as did some of incoming replacements at Camp Drake. Motivation to join the Ranger company varied.

⁹ McGee, phone interview with author, 2 September 1989; Ralph Puckett, letter to the author, 24 June 1989; Charles N. Bunn, letter to Robert W. Black, 4 October 1985, the Robert Black Collection, Military History Institute (hereafter noted as MHI); for biographies on the three classmates, see Childs, ed., *1987 Register of Graduates*, 524: 530: 532.

¹⁰ McGee, phone interview with author, 2 September 1989; McGee, "Address at 8th Army Ranger Company Reunion" ; Colonel (Retired) Ralph Puckett, letter to the author, 24 June 1989; *Eighth Army Ranger Company Newsletter*, 14 (25 August 1987), 1,3-4. Ralph Puckett, who compiled and published this newsletter for the Eighth Army Ranger Association for a period of time, provided me with pertinent copies in response to my questions about the organization, training and combat operations of his company. The issues cited in this manuscript contain the interviews with surviving Rangers on their experiences during the Korean War. Where possible, I have verified these recollections with official records, letters or phone conversations to the authors. My thanks to Colonel Puckett for his invaluable assistance.

Some, like Merrill Casner and Barney Cronin, joined for the challenge and sense of adventure. John Summers volunteered because he wanted to fight in the Korean War and it was his "chance to fight with the best the Army had." "Patriotism" and a desire "to bring a prompt and successful conclusion to North Korea's aggression" motivated mechanic William Judy to join the Rangers. Like many of the others, Merle Simpson volunteered because of his sense of patriotism, the stimulation of dangerous situations, and an opportunity for advancement. Others, like Harry Cagley, figured "that it was easier than fighting a war in an infantry company." The majority of the recruits were inexperienced, but some, like Pacific veteran Sergeant First Class Charles Pitts and Silver Star holder Private First Class Harland Morrissey, had seen combat with infantry or Marine units in the Second World War.¹¹

Puckett and his cadre sorted the records of the volunteers and used personal interviews to select the final candidates for their unit. In reviewing hundreds of records, the chain of command looked for previous combat experience, demonstrated athletic ability and physical stamina, weapons qualifications, and good duty performance. Most of the soldiers turned out to be average soldiers with solid duty performance. Demonstrated and expressed motivation became major discriminators in the selection process. Because of the dangerous nature of the Rangers' mission, Puckett preferred single men under the age of twenty-six, although he did make exceptions to these guidelines.

Having decided upon the names of potential Rangers, Puckett gathered them together for a group interview. He began the session by reminding everyone that they were volunteering for "a secret and dangerous mission involving operations behind enemy lines." Puckett then told those who had changed their minds to get up and leave. The

¹¹ Charles L. Pitts, letter to author, 10 August 1989; Merle Simpson, letter to author, 19 August 1989; *Eighth Army Ranger Company Newsletter*, 14 (25 August 1987): 2-5.

young Ranger commander later remembered that "approximately one-third of the recruits immediately got up and walked out." The three lieutenants then interviewed the remaining soldiers on an individual basis in a closed room.

Sitting at a table with each Ranger candidate standing before them, the three lieutenants asked a series of leading questions designed to illuminate each applicant's character and motivation. Merrill Casner, for example, remembered being asked whether he was ever in any trouble with the law, had been in any bar fights or drunken brawls, and if he could obey orders on a risky mission that might mean his death. By the end of this process, Puckett and the other two lieutenants had weeded out those whom they felt would be physically or mentally unable to endure Ranger training or accomplish assigned combat missions. Puckett eventually chose from the remaining volunteers, only a few with previous combat experience from World War II, to fill the company to authorized strength. With the assistance of the Replacement Depot, the Rangers had orders processed separating the final selectees from their parent organizations and assigning them to the new unit within a week's time.¹²

Puckett, using the T/O&E that McGee had given to him, formed the Ranger company and drew equipment at Camp Drake. With a total strength of three officers and seventy-four enlisted men, the company consisted of two thirty-six man platoons and a five-man company headquarters element (figure 2). Each platoon consisted of a headquarters element of one officer and three men, two eleven man assault sections, and a ten man special weapons section. Besides the commander and the first sergeant, the company headquarters included a supply corporal, company clerk, and messenger. The

¹² Ibid; Puckett, letter to the author, 24 June 1989; Merrill Casner, letter to Ralph Puckett, no date, copy in the Robert Black Collection, MHI; *Eighth Army Ranger Company Newsletter* 14 (25 August 1987) : 2-5.

company carried the same weapons as standard infantry rifle companies. Each assault section had a mix of M-1 rifles and carbines, supplemented by a light machine gun. The special weapons section manned a 60 mm mortar, two 3.5" bazookas, and a Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR). A sniper rifle in the platoon headquarters rounded out the platoon's armament.¹³

On 25 August 1950, Eighth Army General Order Number 237 formally organized Puckett's company under T/O&E 7-87 (Bulk Organization) as the Eighth Army Ranger Company, 8213th Army Unit.¹⁴ While still at Camp Drake, the Rangers made final preparations for overseas movement. They began an intensive physical training program, including running, road marches, and calisthenics. To distinguish them from other units, each Ranger received a "Mohawk" style haircut. Puckett also designated a tentative chain of command for the company. This began a four week rotational process in which every enlisted man served in a leadership position for a week. Puckett made his final leader selections based upon demonstrated performance as a leader and the recommendations of the other officers.¹⁵ Three days after it had formed, the company boarded the Japanese ferry *Koan Maru* and sailed for Korea to begin its combat training.

¹³ U.S. War Department, *Table of Organization and Equipment No. 7-87: Ranger Company, Ranger Infantry Battalion*, 7 August 1945, copy in "Ranger Battalion File," Document no. HRC 314.7, Center of Military History.

¹⁴ Record of Events Section, *Morning Reports Eighth Army Ranger Company, 8213th Army Unit*, 26 August 1950 (Hereafter cited as *Morning Reports*, date), copies in Ralph Puckett's possession.

¹⁵ Colonel (Retired) Ralph Puckett, phone interview with author, 18 July 1989.

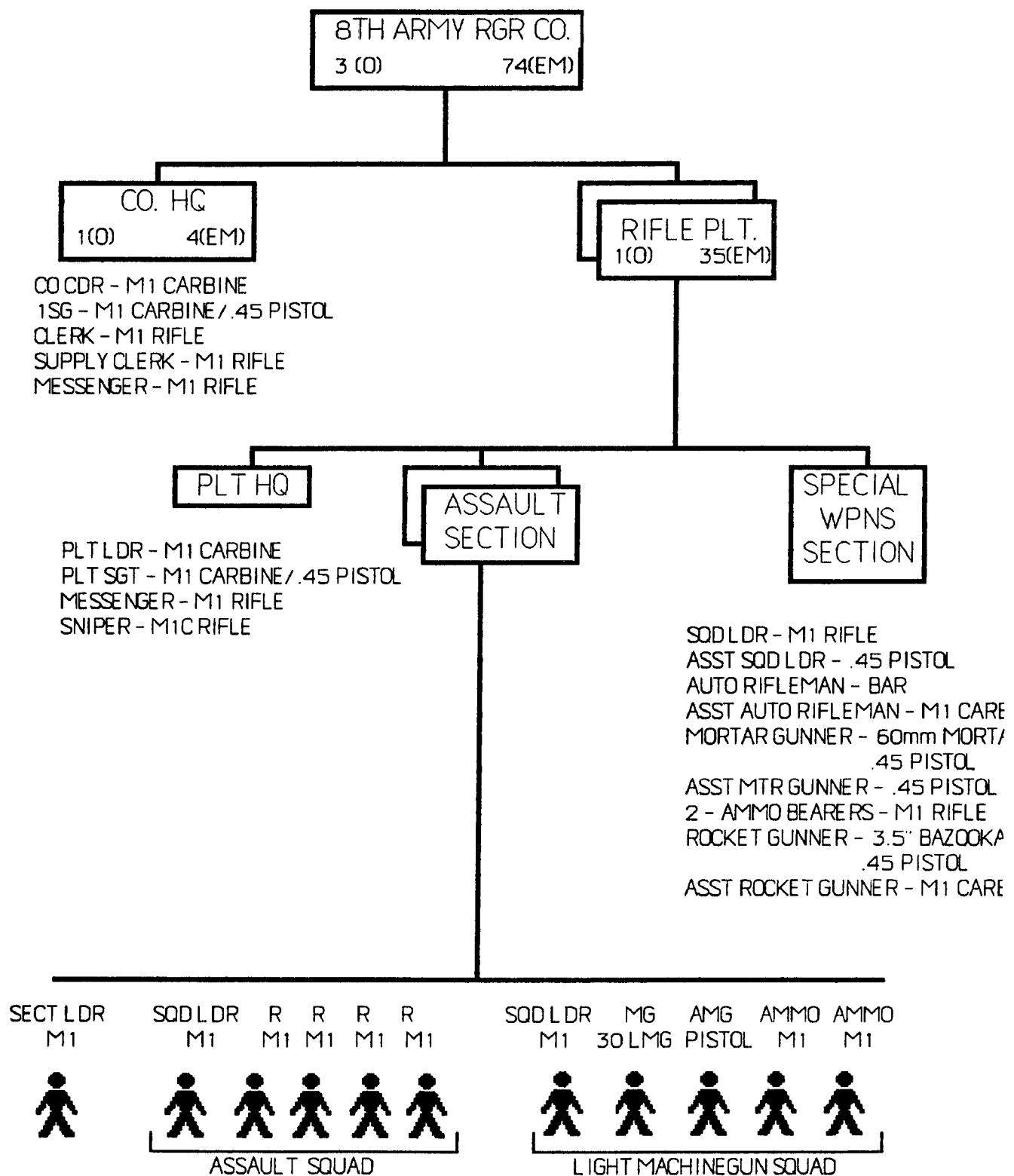


FIGURE 2: EIGHTH ARMY RANGER COMPANY ORGANIZATION, 24 AUGUST 1950
SOURCE: T/O & E 7-87, 7 AUGUST 1945

RANGER HILL

The Eighth Ranger Company arrived at Pusan, Korea on 2 September 1950. That same day the unit moved by train and truck to Kijang, a small village northwest of Pusan, where they occupied the training camp that Colonel McGee had set-up for them. The unit soon dubbed this area "Ranger Hill". Because there were North Korean guerrillas in the area, McGee had the Rangers organize a 360 degree defense of the hill, dig foxholes, and emplace trip flares around the perimeter. While the non-commissioned officers got the company settled for the night, Puckett and his officers discussed the training program with Colonel McGee.

McGee outlined a tentative training program based on his experience training the Philippine Scouts before World War II, training notes from his brother George McGee -- a former battalion commander in Merrill's Marauders -- and current infantry doctrine. To meet the Eighth Army's plans for the unit, the Rangers' tactical training was to include raids, reconnaissance and combat patrols, motorized detachment, and trail blocks. From this guidance, Puckett formulated four goals for the Ranger training program : "1) Each Ranger will achieve the best physical condition of his life; 2) Each Ranger will become highly competent and thoroughly trained in his weapon and the skills of the individual soldier; 3) Each squad, section, platoon, and the company will become a highly competent fighting team, thoroughly proficient in small unit tactics; 4) Each Ranger will develop the spirit and confidence that his squad, section, platoon, and the company are the best in the Army."¹⁶ Puckett's master training plan reflected these goals.

¹⁶ Ibid; *Eighth Army Ranger Company Newsletter*, 16 (10 October 1987) : 2.

The training program implemented by McGee and Puckett focused on the basic infantry fundamentals of move, shoot, and communicate. Training encompassed a progressive schedule of individual technical skills, collective unit drills, field training exercises, and leadership development. Detailed inspections and parades reinforced standards of discipline within the company. Throughout their training the Rangers participated in rigorous physical training including roadmarches with full combat equipment, 4-5 mile runs up and down the surrounding hills, hand-hand combat, and bayonet training. While physically strengthening their bodies, this phase of the training also accustomed the Rangers to overcome exhaustion, mental fatigue, and the possibility of injury.

During their first weeks on Ranger Hill, the Rangers concentrated on developing individual proficiency in first aid, map reading and the use of a compass, camouflage and concealment, communications, demolitions, and weapons handling. McGee's cadre laid out makeshift ranges in the rice paddies and hills surrounding the campsite. Weapons training aimed to make each individual an expert in the operation of all the company's assigned weapons. Constant marksmanship training reinforced each soldier's psychological commitment to shoot and kill the enemy. Live-fire exercises, therefore, were the norm. In addition to the regular blocks of instruction, the company's leaders received classes and practical exercises on how to plan and conduct infiltrations, raids, ambushes, and patrols; call for and adjust indirect fires; and leadership techniques.

The Rangers' collective training phase incorporated previously learned skills into tactical training. The company conducted small unit tactical drills at squad, section, and platoon level during the day and at night. The company practiced those primary missions that Colonel McGee had outlined previously. When the Rangers became adept at squad through platoon-level tactics, Puckett began to conduct company operations to include

attacks on fortified hills. Throughout tactical training the Rangers received little sleep and carried heavy loads over long distances in the rough terrain. Puckett gathered the unit together at the conclusion of each tactical problem and reviewed the results of the training. During this process, he used questions to draw out comments from individual soldiers about their unit's performance. By asking for feedback from each company member, Puckett insured that his soldiers understood and applied sound tactical principles. During these sessions the Eighth Army Ranger Company commander stressed the importance of following established tactical doctrine, while at the same time emphasizing that it was not a substitute for good judgment and initiative. When the discussion ended, Puckett required the unit to repeat the exercise to correct their mistakes and insure that they met the proper standards. At the time, Puckett suspected that the men hated him for making them redo things, but believed that these "after-action reviews" and repetitious problems paid off in combat.¹⁷

WARNING ORDER FOR COMBAT

While the Eighth Army Ranger Company trained in Korea, two events occurred that would have a direct impact upon its future. The first concerned the Chief of Staff of the Army's decision to organize a Ranger Training Center and activate Airborne Ranger Companies for employment in Korea. The second was MacArthur's amphibious envelopment at Inchon and Eighth Army's subsequent breakout from the Pusan Perimeter.

Determined to turn the tables on the North Koreans by using their own infiltration tactics against them, Army Chief of Staff J. Lawton Collins gave serious consideration to available options following his return to the United States in late August. On 29 August

¹⁷ Ibid; Charles L. Pitts, letter to author, 10 August 1989; for individual Ranger's comments on the training that they received see: *Eighth Army Newsletter*, 16 (10 October 1987) 1-6.

1950, he directed Major General Charles L. Bolté, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3 (Operations) to form "marauder companies" on an experimental basis. In a memo on the subject, Collins wrote:

One of the major lessons to be learned from the Korean fighting appears to be the fact the North Koreans have made very successful use of small groups, trained, armed and equipped for the specific purpose of infiltrating our lines and attacking command posts and artillery positions. During the latter stages of the war with Germany, the Germans developed similar units. The results obtained from such units warrant specific action to develop such units in the American Army.¹⁸

The Chief ordered the G-3 to establish one such company per infantry division, although he recognized that combat experience in Korea might dictate the organization of one company per infantry regiment. The remainder of the Chief of Staff's memorandum outlined the requirements for the new units.

Collins' plan called for the organization of elite independently-operating raiding forces. The marauder companies' distinctive mission "to infiltrate through enemy lines and attack enemy command posts, artillery, tank parks, and key communication centers or facilities" resembled that of the special North Korean units. The Chief wanted each company to be a mobile force of hard-nosed fighters, therefore, the total strength of the outfit was not to exceed 100 men. Every company was to consist of three rifle platoons, each further subdivided into three ten-man squads. The company's T/O&E would authorize a bare minimum of administrative and logistical personnel. Collins planned to man the companies with volunteers of high intelligence because he believed that units conducting independent operations behind enemy lines required extremely motivated and

¹⁸ J. Lawton Collins, Memorandum for the A.C.S., G-3, Operations, "Subject: Organization of Marauder Companies," 29 August 1950, *Records Section, Decimal File, March 1950-1951, 322 Ranger* (hereafter cited as *G-3 Ranger Records*): Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

capable personnel to be successful. In order to attract high quality men, the Chief wanted each soldier to receive twenty percent extra incentive pay. The nature of the marauder companies mission dictated that each soldier receive demolitions training, have the capability to cook his own food, and carry a light weight automatic weapon or 60 mm mortar. Originally, the company was to have jeeps, two per squad, but the Chief of Staff deleted this requirement three days later. Finally, the memorandum charged the G-3 to establish a training section, under the command of an outstanding young brigadier general or colonel, at Fort Benning, Georgia to initiate the formation, organization, training, and testing of these units.¹⁹

Collins' directive evoked an immediate reaction from Army force planners. Within a month, they had laid the groundwork for an Army-wide Ranger program. On 6 September 1950, representatives from the General Staff's G-3 section, the Office of the Chief Army Field Forces (OCAFF), and the Central Intelligence Agency met to hammer out the details for the marauder companies.²⁰ The priority of the conference was to expedite the organization, training, and deployment of one company for use in combat in Korea. The conferees agreed to activate and staff a training section at Fort Benning without delay in order to prepare for the first company's activation on 1 October 1950. The training center would train a maximum of three companies, one of which would stay at Benning as a test unit. To facilitate the formation of the first company, the planners intended to draw volunteer personnel from the 82d Airborne Division, men who possessed an Army General

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ The National Security Council had given the Central Intelligence Agency the responsibility for conducting covert operations beginning in 1947. Because some Ranger operations, especially those involving sabotage or strikes behind enemy lines, fell within the NSC's loose definition of covert operations, the CIA had a "need to know" about the Ranger program. For the CIA's responsibilities in covert operations, see Paddock, *US Special Warfare Its Origins*, 72-75.

Category Test Score of 90 or above and had completed basic and parachutist training. This decision also solved the issue of special pay: parachutist pay substituted for Collins' desire for a twenty percent bonus, which would have required Congressional approval of additional budgetary legislation. The committee decided that the training program would last six weeks and consist of such subjects as physical training; demolitions; map reading and land navigation; field craft and the conduct of guerrilla operations, including cooperation and coordination with indigenous personnel; infiltration techniques; aerial resupply methods; close combat skills; and a host of individual soldier survival skills. Unless someone raised an objection, the committee planned to call the new units "Rangers." The day after the conference, Major General Bolté signed and had transmitted a memorandum ordering Army Field Forces to implement the Chief of Staff's marauder directive, using the agreed-upon conference notes as planning guidance.²¹

During the month of September, Army General Staff and Army Field Forces staff planners moved quickly to activate the Ranger Training Center and form the first Ranger company. On 15 September 1950, General Collins personally selected Colonel John G. Van Houten, a veteran combat infantryman, to head the Ranger Training Section. That same day, Army Field Forces directed the Commanding General, The Infantry School to prepare a detailed program of instruction, initially of six weeks duration, for use by the Ranger Training Section.²² OCAFF's G-3 designated his Combined Arms Training

²¹ Conference Notes on Marauder Company, 7 September 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives; MG Bolté to Chief of Army Field Forces, Memorandum, "Subject: Marauder Units," 7 September 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

²² Office, Chief of Army Field Forces, *Annual History, 1 January -31 December 1950*, unpublished manuscript, Center of Military History, Volume II, Section V, Chapter 13, III: 3-4.

Division as the proponent action agency for the Ranger project. This section developed and forwarded to the Department of the Army a tentative table of organization and equipment for the companies and a table of distribution for the training section. On 21 and 22 September, General Bolté's office teletyped two messages to the Commanding General, Third U.S. Army in Atlanta authorizing him to form a Ranger Training Center at Fort Benning. He was also to organize provisionally four Ranger infantry companies from personnel drawn from within his jurisdiction. In response to an Army Field Forces request, the first dispatch also authorized the new outfits to wear the insignia and continue the history of the World War II Rangers. By 2 October 1950, Colonel Van Houten and a small staff had put the Training Center into operation and had begun training the first three Airborne Ranger Companies.²³

While the Ranger companies were still in the formative stage, the Chief of Staff notified Far East Command of his decision to create elite Ranger units and employ them in Korea. In a 22 September 1950 radio dispatch to Douglas MacArthur, Commander in Chief Far East Command (CINCFE), Collins outlined current plans regarding the formation of Ranger (Marauder) companies. The message described the mission, organization, and equipment of the new units and requested any information regarding similar type units that MacArthur may have formed for use in Korea. The CINCFE replied on 26 September giving his full concurrence to the proposed Ranger program and outlining measures that he had already taken in this area. Besides the formation of a Special Activities Group and a Raider Company, MacArthur's message discussed the Eighth Army

²³ Radio Dispatch to CG, Third U.S. Army, "Subject: Organization of Ranger Units," dated 21 September 1950; Memorandum for Record, Subject: Activation of Ranger Units," 22 September 1950; Radio Dispatch to CG, Third U.S. Army, "Subject: Equipment for Ranger Companies," 22 September 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

Ranger Company, which was still training in Korea. Far East Command planned to employ that unit "very much like that contemplated by the Department of the Army for proposed Ranger Companies and . . . considered that it can test Ranger organization in Korea." The message concluded with a promise to forward the results of the Eighth Army Rangers' tactical employment and performance to the Chief of Staff as soon as CINCFE received them.²⁴ Although lacking the capability for airborne insertions, the Eighth Army Ranger Company's combat employment soon became the initial basis for testing the organization and future utility of Ranger companies in Korean operations.

Tactical developments in Korea soon gave the Eighth Army an opportunity to evaluate its Rangers in combat. MacArthur's risky amphibious envelopment at Inchon on 15 September 1950 caught the North Koreans by surprise and was a complete success. Spearheaded by the 1st Marine and 7th Infantry Divisions, American forces attacked toward and liberated the South Korean capital of Seoul by 28 September. By early October, X Corps poised to carry the attack into North Korea. In the south, General Walton Walker's Eighth Army launched a 16 September counter-offensive to breakout out from the Pusan Perimeter. By 23 September, the combination of Walker's attacks and X Corps' advances had shattered the North Korean Army, which quickly broke into small units trying to evade capture and infiltrate back north. Eighth Army rolled forward in pursuit destroying any enemy resistance in its path. Elements of Walker's forces linked up with General Almond's X Corps on 26 September. Although the North Korean Army ceased to exist as an organized force, thousands of NKPA soldiers fled into the mountains

²⁴ Radio Dispatch from Chief of Staff of the Army to CINCFE (Commander), "Subject: Ranger (Marauder) Companies," 22 September 1950; Major General Bolté, ACS G-3 to Chief, Army Field Forces, Memorandum For Record, "Subject: Ranger Units," 26 September 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

to act as guerrillas. These scattered enemy forces posed a threat to the security of American rear areas.²⁵

At the end of September Colonel John A. Dabney, now the G-3 of Eighth Army, discussed the Eighth Army Ranger situation with Colonel McGee. Dabney asked him for the Rangers' status of training and for recommendations on their tactical employment since the requirement to penetrate the Pohang pocket had obviously disappeared with Eighth Army's breakout. McGee replied that the unit had completed only five out of seven weeks of training, but was ready for combat. He thought that the company should be attached to a parent organization to establish "interoperability with conventional forces and develop its operational procedures." Later, in a 1 October memorandum to the Commanding General, EUSAK, McGee reviewed the Rangers' training program and outlined the missions best suited for the company. According to McGee the Eighth Army Ranger Company possessed "a great fire power and a high degree of mobility over difficult terrain" whose "successful employment in combat will largely depend on the achievement of surprise. To achieve that element of surprise, adequate time must be provided the company commander for reconnaissance and detailed planning." McGee further recommended that EUSAK assign the Ranger company to combat duty, effective 11 October, and that the training camp's mess team and transportation assets initially accompany the unit. As a final recommendation, he proposed that "the combat value of this company be studied with the view of either expanding it into a Ranger Battalion or deactivating the Company."²⁶

²⁵ See Appleman, *South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu*, 487-606.

²⁶ Colonel John H. McGee to Commanding General Eighth United States Army Korea, Memorandum, "Subject: Training Report of Eighth Army Ranger Company," 1 October 1950, Headquarters, Eighth Army Ranger Training Center, copy in author's possession; McGee, "Address at Eighth Ranger Company Reunion," 8.

Dabney reviewed McGee's suggestions in conjunction with guidance from Far East Command regarding the Rangers. On 10 October 1950, he assigned the Eighth Army Ranger Company to IX Corps. IX Corps in turn attached the Rangers to the 25th Infantry Division for use in antiguerrilla operations. The division had a warning order transmitted to the Ranger commander instructing him to report to Taejon for further instructions. He was to have his company ready to move by 12 October. Later that same day Puckett, newly promoted to first lieutenant along with Bunn and Cummings, and a quartering party departed from Ranger Hill to link up with the 25th Infantry Division headquarters in the vicinity of Taejon. Two days later the rest of company joined him to begin their first combat operation.²⁷

Responding to tactical challenges, Eighth Army organized an elite Ranger company on an experimental basis in August, 1950. A provisional unit, the Eighth Army Ranger Company filled its ranks from volunteers in service related jobs who wanted to see combat with an elite unit. Eighth Army gave the company the resources and time -- free from administrative detractions--to organize and train. After an intensive period of training, the elite company was ready to flex its collective "muscle" behind enemy lines. In the coming months the Eighth Army Rangers would serve as an excellent laboratory to test the Ranger concept for the rest of the Army.

²⁷ Narrative Summary, History Book I : October 1950, U.S. Army Adjutant General's Office , *Command Reports, 1949-1954, 25th Infantry Division* (Hereafter cited as *25th Infantry Division Command Reports*, date), Box 3757, RG 407, Modern Military Field Branch, Washington National Records Center (hereafter cited as WNRC).

CHAPTER III
AIRBORNE RANGER . . . HE'S GOT THE PATCH I WISH I HAD!
- RANGER CADENCE

While the Eighth Army Ranger Company trained in Korea during September 1950, the Department of the Army pressed ahead with its plans to create an Army-wide Ranger program. With the Chief of Staff's personal interest in the project, Army planners were able to cut through existing bureaucratic "red tape." With remarkable swiftness -- in a period of less than six weeks after Collins had issued his Marauder Memorandum -- the Army established a crash Ranger course and began to train its first complement of Rangers in early October. By mid-November 1950 the first Airborne Ranger companies were ready to deploy to Korea. The US Army's Ranger program clearly illustrates the methods used and difficulties encountered when organizing war-time military elite forces.

THE RANGER TRAINING CENTER

Once it had had a chance to study the Chief's memorandum and instructions from General Bolté, the Office of the Chief Army Field Forces (OCAFF) hurriedly began to make necessary coordinations and issue orders to support the project. On 8 September, Lieutenant Colonel William R. Cole, a member of OCAFF's G-3 section, traveled to the U.S. Army Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia to initiate the preliminary planning for the Ranger training program. Cole discussed General Collins' vision for an independent raiding force with Infantry School planners, instructing them to base the Rangers' training regimen on the recommendations of the 6 September Pentagon conference. On 15 September OCAFF formally tasked the Infantry School to develop the Ranger program of instruction (POI) and set 2 October 1950 as the start date for the first

training cycle. Cole also arranged for Major William Bond, a World War II Ranger veteran and a current student at the Infantry Officer Advanced Course, to lend his experienced assistance to the project. Coordination continued telephonically between the two headquarters, but more detailed preparations and the actual organization of the Ranger Training Section awaited the arrival of the recently designated Ranger chain of command.¹

After his appointment as head of the yet-unformed Ranger Training Section (RTS), Colonel John H. Van Houten reported to Headquarters, Army Field Forces at Fort Monroe, Virginia on 16 September 1950 to receive up to date instructions on his new assignment. Colonel Edwin A. Walker, designated as the RTS executive officer, joined him at Fort Monroe the following day. Both officers were interesting choices for the assignment to organize and train the new Rangers.

Van Houten, a product of the interwar "Old Army," had made his reputation during the Second World War. A native Georgian, he had attended the University of Georgia where he earned a degree in agriculture in 1926. But farming was not his primary interest. Van Houten had joined the Reserve Officer's Training Program and earned a reserve commission as a second lieutenant in the cavalry at graduation. Within a year he had applied for and received a Regular Army commission in the infantry. Prior to World War II, he had served in a number of infantry regiments in New York, the Philippines, and Texas. He had also helped manage a Civilian Conservation Corps camp for three years during the Depression. Van Houten commanded the 60th Infantry Regiment and served first as chief of staff, then assistant division commander of the 9th Infantry Division in the European Theater of Operations in the war. Since the 9th Infantry Division was part of Joe

¹ Office, Chief of Army Field Forces, *Annual History, 1 January-31 December 1950*, unpublished manuscript, Center of Military History, Volume II, Section V, Chapter 13, III: 3-4.

Collins' VII Corps, Van Houten got to know the future Chief of Staff personally. When the Chief selected him to head the Rangers, he was teaching at the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth Kansas.²

Edwin A. Walker had also entered the Army during the interwar period. A 1931 West Point graduate, Walker received a Regular Army commission in the field artillery. As a company grade officer, he served in a number of command and staff positions in the artillery. Unlike Van Houten, however, Walker actually had served in elite military units. During World War II he volunteered for the First Special Service Force and commanded its 3d Regiment during combat operations in the Aleutians, Italy, and France.³ His practical experience would prove invaluable in setting-up and executing the Ranger program.

Collins' choice of Van Houten and Walker for these two key assignments requires careful examination since the legitimacy and survival of the Ranger program would largely depend upon their efforts and organizational talents. The absence of solid evidence makes an analysis of Collins' motivations largely speculative. Nevertheless, certain generalizations are possible from available data. Admired by associates in the infantry community, Van Houten had proven his abilities as a conventional commander and staff officer in both war and peacetime situations. According to John K. Singlaub, one of the earliest Ranger instructors, Van Houten was receptive to the idea of "special operations" but remained wedded to "conventional concepts of discipline and training." The new head of the Ranger program intended to maintain a high state of discipline while focusing training on infantry fundamentals. Collins could, therefore, depend upon Van Houten to

² U.S. Army, *Official Army Register* (Washington D.C. : Adjutant General's Office, 1950), 580; Robert W. Black, *Rangers in Korea* (New York: Ivy Books, 1989), 19.

³ Ibid, 587; Paul W. Child, Jr, *Register of Graduates, United States Military Academy, 1802-1987* (West Point: Association of Graduates USMA, 1987), 378.

insure that the Rangers did not become an "ill-disciplined mob" -- the common perception of elite units shared by most conventional officers. Because of his background, the Ranger Training Section commander would have credibility with staffers at Department of the Army, Army Field Forces, and the Infantry Center. Getting the institutional support of the Infantry Center would be crucial in order to get the program underway quickly.

But Van Houten's lack of airborne, Ranger, or other special operations experience hurt him when it came to relations with his own staff. He was, in short, an "outsider" in the elite community. Walker's job, therefore, was to provide the practical know-how needed to organize and train the companies. Collins probably thought that Walker's elite background would quell any controversy regarding his appointment of Van Houten to head the project. Thus, Van Houten would play the role of honest broker to make sure the Ranger program did not stray from Collins' concepts and to help legitimize the concept with conventional commanders. Walker's role would focus primarily on guiding the Ranger Training Section's day to day efforts and activities required for the production of elite combat units.⁴

At Fort Monroe, OCAFF's Combined Arms Training Division briefed both officers on the current status of the Ranger project. The Ranger chain of command hammered out a variety of issues at these meetings with OCAFF. Discussions centered around the

⁴ Evidence on these points is anecdotal. Major General (Retired) John K. Singlaub did not know why Van Houten was specifically chosen for the job but believed that he was Collins' "fair-haired boy.". According to Singlaub, Van Houten and Walker "hated each other" and "fought like dogs" over many issues regarding Ranger training and administration. I also have discussed these hypotheses with Dr. David Hogan, historian at the Center of Military History, whose dissertation is cited in this work. His research uncovered the uneasy relationship between the two officers, but he could not specifically ascertain the reasons behind both men's appointments. See Major General (Retired) John K. Singlaub, interview with author, 10 September 1992, United States Military Academy, West Point, New York and idem, interview with Dr. David W. Hogan, 1 February 1989, Alexandria, Virginia, transcripts of Tape I, Side 1, 19.

preparation of organizational tables for the Ranger companies and the Ranger Training Section, the recruitment of potential Ranger candidates from airborne units, and the availability of housing, training resources, and equipment -- especially foreign weapons -- at Fort Benning. They received enough guidance to begin activation of the Ranger Training Center and the first Ranger units. After further telephonic coordinations with the Infantry Center, Van Houten and Walker split company on 19 September, the former going to the Pentagon for additional briefings and the latter departing for Fort Benning.⁵ Concurrently, the Army General Staff and OCAFF staff members hurriedly drew up a tentative table of organization and equipment (TO/ & E) and table of distribution and allowances (TDA) for the Rangers. Although he did not feel that these authorization documents were "sound in relation to organization and equipment," General Bolté accepted them as "submitted in view of the urgency of the situation and the fact that [the companies were] experimental in nature."⁶ OCAFF also notified the Third U.S. Army of plans to activate four provisional Ranger infantry companies utilizing personnel drawn from within its jurisdiction.⁷

When he arrived at Fort Benning on 21 September, Colonel Van Houten faced two immediate difficulties. Van Houten's first problem was to find experienced, qualified personnel to fill the instructor slots in the Ranger Training Section. Finding eligible instructors who possessed the required airborne qualifications complicated his search. The

⁵ Office, Chief of Army Field Forces, *Annual History*, 4.

⁶ Memorandum, Subject: Proposed T/D for Ranger Training Section, 28 September 1950 and Memorandum, Subject: Proposed T/O&E for Ranger Companies, 13 October 1950, "G-3 Ranger Records, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

⁷ Brigadier General William S. Lawton, Chief of Staff, Army Field Forces, to Bolté, Subject: Outline Plan and Progress Report, Ranger Units, Section I, 10 October 1950, G-3 Ranger Records, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

G-1 (Personnel) Section, Department of the Army assisted Van Houten by screening personnel records and assigning former members of the World War II Ranger battalions, the First Special Service Force, and the Office of Strategic Services as part of the Ranger cadre. Major George Monsarrat, Captain Jack Street, and Technical Sergeant Joseph Cournoyer, for example, had fought with the Ranger battalions, while Major John Singlaub had seen action with the OSS in Europe. Van Houten quickly filled the remaining slots with volunteers from the Infantry Center staff, especially from the Airborne Department. The Ranger Training Section eventually consisted of twenty-four officers, seventy-six enlisted men, and five civilians. On 29 September 1950, the Commanding General, Third U.S. Army issued oral orders provisionally activating Van Houten's command as the Headquarters Detachment, Ranger Training Center (Airborne), 3340th Army Service Unit. Official orders formally adding the unit to the Army force structure arrived on 28 October.⁸

Second, Van Houten and his small staff had to prepare the barracks and arrange office spaces before the Ranger candidates arrived. The Headquarters Detachment, originally housed on the second floor of the Infantry School building, moved eight miles from main post to facilities located in the Harmony Church area during the last week of September. Harmony Church provided the Ranger Center with a relatively isolated encampment to conduct its training. In a few short days, the Ranger cadre, under the careful direction of Colonel Walker, inventoried property and readied the barracks for habitation. The Infantry Center provided administrative support to assist the Rangers until

⁸ Memorandum for the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, Subject : Progress Report of Ranger Training, 5 October 1950; Memorandum for the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, Subject : Organization of Ranger Companies, 16 October 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

they became self-sufficient in that area. On 20 September, the first Ranger volunteers began to trickle into Fort Benning and were quickly put to work by the cadre.⁹

Following Van Houten's departure from Fort Monroe, OCAFF had ordered Third Army to establish Ranger recruiting teams. Within days after their formation these teams reported to Fort Bragg, North Carolina and Fort Campbell, Kentucky. The Rangers canvassed the 82d and 11th Airborne Divisions looking for qualified parachutists willing to volunteer for Ranger duty. Although the teams concentrated their efforts at these two posts, membership in the Ranger companies was open to airborne-qualified volunteers throughout Third Army's jurisdiction. The recruiting teams followed the screening criteria established by the 6 September Pentagon conference in their choice of candidates. Volunteers had to be at least nineteen years old -- although this requirement was waiveable -- attained at least a composite score of 200 of 250 points on the Army's standard physical fitness tests; completed basic and airborne training; and scored at least 90 in Aptitude Area II of the Army General Category Test (AGCT). Additionally, the volunteer's chain of command had to certify that the soldier possessed the ability to succeed in hand-to-hand combat, as well as the potential to fight and operate independently behind enemy lines. To facilitate the recruiting teams' efforts, OCAFF instructed units to conduct their own preliminary screening process to weed out misfits.¹⁰

⁹ The Infantry School, "Directors Ranger Training Command and Ranger Department," unpublished document, United States Army Infantry Center Library, in Document File UD 503.A2 (7/13/51) du; Robert W. Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 22-25.

¹⁰ Memorandum, OCAFF to Collins, Subject: Organization of Ranger Companies, 21 September 1950; Memorandum for the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, Subject: Progress Report of Ranger Training, 5 October 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

The Ranger selection process resembled that used by the Eighth Army Ranger Company when it had organized. First, the recruiting teams interviewed and designated the commanding officers for each company. Then these officers sized up and selected the remaining enlisted candidates to fill each of their companies to authorized strength. Officers sought men who were aggressive and, as one put it, possessed "that courage and that will to fight so necessary to defeat a fanatical enemy who has no regard for his own life." Another officer said that he did not "mind if a man [was] a little short on height just so long as he had guts."¹¹ Volunteers had similar motivations for wanting to join the Rangers. Some like Glenn Dahl and Anthony Lukasik had missed the Second World War and wanted a chance to fight. Robert Black and Joseph Lisi had joined the 82d Airborne Division hoping for action, but the Division was not going to deploy. They saw the Rangers as ticket into combat and a chance to remain on jump status. Others had heard of the World War II Ranger units and wanted to be part of their elite heritage.¹²

The Ranger teams swiftly completed their recruiting efforts. By 28 September, the teams had chosen 260 soldiers from the 82d Airborne Division, 30 from the 11th Airborne Division, and 10 from the Airborne School; all of these volunteers were Caucasians. These men received orders assigning them to a Ranger company with a reporting date at Fort Benning of 1 October. After initial administrative inprocessing and receipt of equipment, the 1st, 3d, and 4th Ranger companies began training on 2 October.¹³

¹¹ Unidentified officers quoted in James R. Kennedy, "World's Toughest Soldiers," *Sir* (September 1951): 17; Jack Trim, "Rangers Prowl Fort Benning's Fields As Army Revives Happy Hatchetmen," *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer* (12 November 1950), C-1.

¹² Glenn Dahl, letter to author, 10 September 1991; Anthony Lukasik, interview with author 12 September 1991; Joseph Lisi, letter to author 11 September 1991; Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 21-22.

Unlike previous personnel policies involving the organization of elite units, the Army authorized the recruiting teams to accept black volunteers into the Ranger program. A three man recruiting team visited the Springlake area of Fort Bragg which housed the segregated 505th Airborne Infantry Regiment, the 80th Airborne Anti-Aircraft Battalion, and the 758th Tank Battalion. Many black soldiers quickly stepped forward when Ranger recruiters visited their battalions. James Queen, assigned as communications officer for the 3d Battalion 505th Airborne Infantry Regiment, volunteered because he wanted to "gain combat experience." Corporal William Weathersbee, in the same unit as Queen, interviewed for a position in the Rangers because he "wanted to be in the best unit in the military." "As a professional soldier," Lieutenant Albert Cliette "wanted to do [his] part in the Korean police action." An additional 139 black soldiers - 5 officers and 134 enlisted - rounded out Ranger recruiting efforts for the first cycle.¹⁴

Despite President Truman's 1948 directive to integrate Army units, Army Field Forces directed Van Houten to organize the black soldiers into their own company.¹⁵ The all-black company, designated initially as the 4th then changed to the 2d Ranger Company, began training on 9 October.¹⁶ The company quickly made up for the lost week of

¹³ Memorandum, OCAFF to Collins, Subject: Organization of Ranger Companies, 21 September 1950; Memorandum for the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, Subject: Progress Report of Ranger Training, 5 October 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives ..

¹⁴ Ibid; James W. Queen, letter to author, 20 September 1991; William Weathersbee, letter to author, 20 October 1991; Albert Cliette, letter to author, 22 September 1991

¹⁵ On Truman's order to desegregate the armed forces see Morris J. MacGregor, Jr., *Integration of the Armed Forces, 1940-1965* (Washington D. C. : Center of Military History, 1981).

¹⁶ John Singlaub remembers that the Ranger Training Center redesignated the company because of racial politics. According to the former instructor, "someone said 'Hey, wait a minute that puts us [the black company] at the rear of the bus!' " Before the company had even arrived, the decision had been made to change its designation to avoid further charges

training. The black Rangers had to overcome the stereotypes and prejudice common in the Army during that time. The 2d Rangers set out to prove that blacks were as capable as the white soldiers in the other companies. They believed that blacks deserved a chance to fight in elite units. Colonel Van Houten kept a watchful eye on the company. Some black Rangers were suspicious of the colonel's attention. The Ranger director, they perceived, did not believe that the company could perform up to the same standards as whites. Lieutenant Queen remembered one incident in which Van Houten, after having observed the 2d Ranger Company make some mistakes in tactical training, called the officers aside and expressed doubts that "colored troops would fight." Despite such pronouncements, the 2d Rangers proved their mettle in the training fields around Harmony Church. Impressed with the 2d Company's performance, Van Houten paid the men a (faint) compliment by reporting that "The colored company has the same limitations to a lesser degree as any other such unit but is by far the best of its type I have seen."¹⁷

At the Ranger Training Center, the Rangers organized according to the draft TO/amp;E 7-87 (Figure 3). With an authorized strength of 5 officers and 100 enlisted men, the table subdivided each company into a company headquarters and three rifle platoons. The company headquarters included the company commander, an executive officer, first sergeant, a communications chief, aid man, and a messenger. The last three individuals served as the designated drivers for the company's two 1/4 ton jeeps and one 2 1/2 ton truck. When required by the tactical situation or directed by higher headquarters, the TO/amp;E provided for an authorized augmentation of seven enlisted men to perform mess, administration, and supply matters. Totalling one officer and thirty-two enlisted men, each

of discrimination. John K. Singlaub, interview with Dr. David W. Hogan, 1 February 1989, Alexandria, Virginia, transcripts of Tape I, Side 1, 19.

¹⁷ Van Houten to Bolté, 13 November 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

platoon consisted of a three-man headquarters section and three ten-man squads. Squad members carried a mix of carbines, M-1 rifles, grenade launchers, Browning Automatic Rifles (BAR), .45 caliber submachine-guns, and a 60mm mortar. The increased numbers and types of weapons allowed the Rangers to task organize according to the specifics of an assigned mission. This combination of weapons also caused each squad member to carry two mortar rounds and certain demolition equipment, in addition to his own ammunition. For missions requiring a greater amount of firepower, the TO/amp;E allowed each platoon a 57mm recoilless rifle and a .30 caliber machine-gun. These and other spare weapons, however, often remained pooled in the company headquarters for use in special missions. This organization gave the company voluminous firepower for its size, while maintaining a high degree of mobility.¹⁸

The Ranger program's goal was to prepare the companies for independent, small unit operations behind enemy lines. This required the Ranger Training Center to teach individual and collective skills associated with infiltration, ambush, and raid missions. Because of the number of skills involved and the limited amount of time available to train, the Center divided its cadre into teams that presented identical instruction to each of the companies during the training cycle. This "committee system" insured that each company benefitted from the instruction of the "best qualified experts in a particular subject."¹⁹ The committees utilized the "country fair" technique to facilitate training: the companies would

¹⁸ Department of the Army, *Table of Organization and Equipment No. 7-87*, 17 October 1950 (Washington D.C. : Department of the Army, 1950), Copy in *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

¹⁹ Colonel John G. Van Houten, "The Rangers Are Back," *Army Information Digest* 6 (August 1951) : 37.

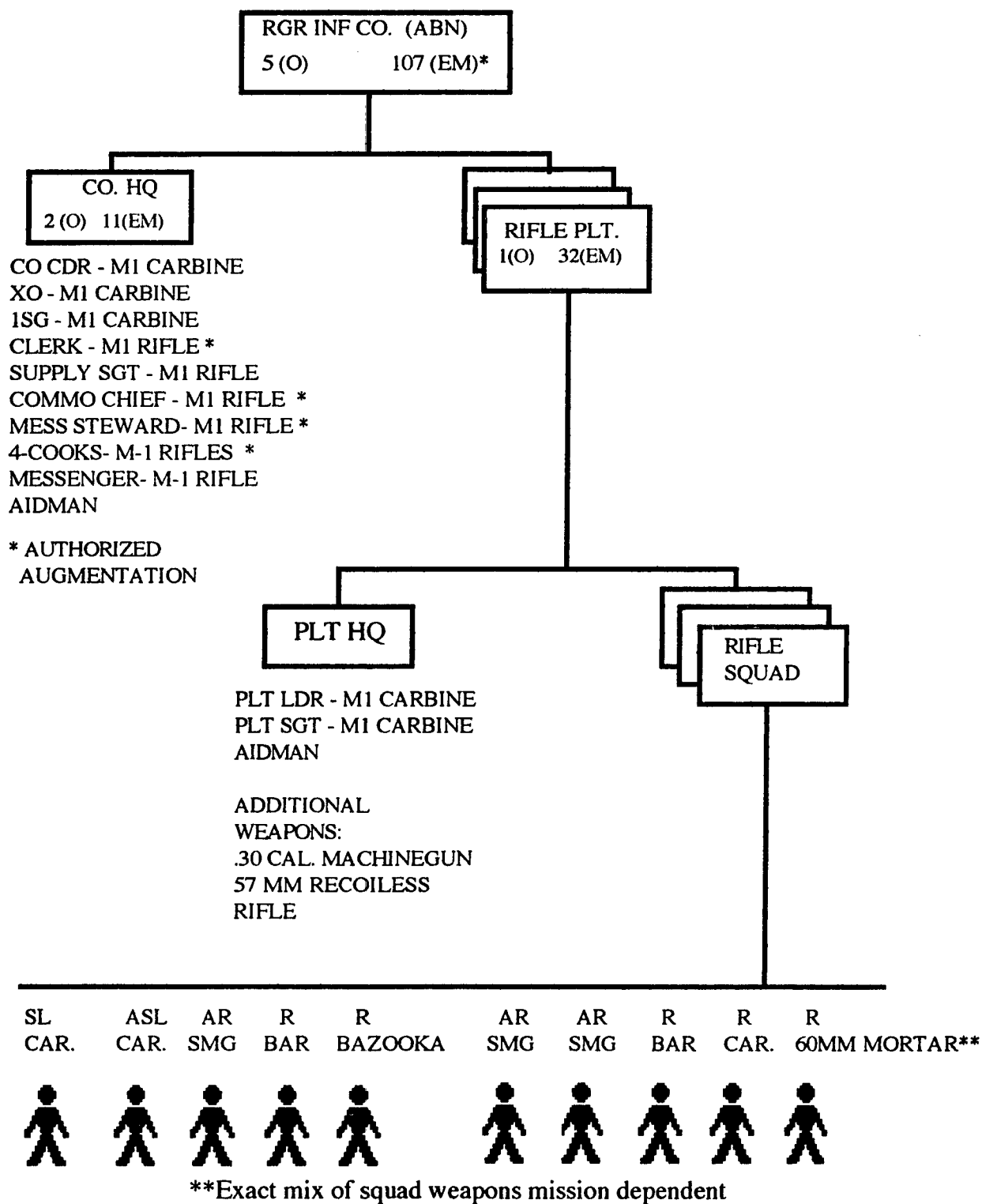


FIGURE 3: RANGER INFANTRY COMPANY ABN ORGANIZATION
SOURCE: T/O & E 7-87, 17 OCTOBER 1950

rotate clockwise through a series of stations where they would receive instruction and practice particular skills. To save time, instructors grouped two companies together during rotations through each major subcourse of training. In attempt to further enhance the Center's instruction, Van Houten requested that one or two British officers with Commando experience serve as advisers. The Army G-3, however, did not approve this request.²⁰

The six week Ranger course consisted of forty-eight hours of instruction per week, not including maintenance and remedial training time. Training focused on intensive physical conditioning, individual technical skills, collective unit drills, unit insertion techniques, and rigorous field training exercises. The Ranger cadre used a building block approach to training. During the first two weeks, the Rangers concentrated on developing individual proficiency with company weapons, first aid, map reading and the use of a compass, camouflage and concealment, communications, calling for and adjusting artillery fire, and demolitions. The Ranger instructors also introduced their students to the principles and techniques of patrolling. In the third and fourth weeks of training, the Rangers practiced movement techniques, battle drills, and squad level patrolling. A night jump followed by a squad patrolling problem culminated this phase of the training. The last portion of the program included platoon and company tactical training, infiltration techniques, stream crossing and small boat training, survival skills, and combat in the cities. To accustom the Rangers to operating in limited visibility, fifty percent of the tactical

²⁰ Van Houten to Bolté, Memorandum For Record, "Subject: British Advisors," 24 October 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

training occurred at night.²¹ Unlike its counterpart in the Eighth Army Rangers, the Airborne Ranger companies did not undergo "Friday night GI parties and Saturday-morning stand-by inspections," but left it to each individual to prepare his equipment for the next day's training.²²

Physical conditioning received constant emphasis and reinforcement throughout training. The Rangers' daily physical training program underlined Colonel Van Houten's assumption that each soldier's "life in combat may depend upon his ability to move long distances by foot at incredible speeds." To develop endurance, the Rangers started each day at 0430 hours, when they were not in the field, with calisthenics and a five mile run. Between blocks of instruction, the Rangers "speed marched" to the next class wearing full combat equipment. These speed marches, often at a slow jog, were sometimes five miles or more in length and were in addition to regularly scheduled road marches. The goal of this march conditioning program was to enable the Rangers to make a "40-50 mile cross country movement in 12-18 hours" depending upon the terrain.²³ The Rangers had to negotiate one of the most strenuous obstacle courses in the Army. The men had to climb a three story building, crawl on their stomachs over a series of rolling logs on top of an elevated platform, edge across a two-rope bridge hanging twenty-five feet above ground, and scale an eighteen foot stockade and jump off the other side, all while running at a "double-time" pace. Hand to hand combat, and bayonet training, both intended to instill aggressiveness in each Ranger, rounded out the conditioning program. This schedule

²¹ Bolté to Collins, Memorandum For the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, Subject: Organization of Ranger Companies, 16 October 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

²² Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 26.

²³ Van Houten, "The Rangers Are Back," 38; Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 25.

accustomed the Rangers to overcome physical and mental exhaustion, as well as the fear of injury.

The collective unit training phase prepared the Rangers to perform their assigned missions under the stress of combat. After establishing individual proficiency in basic infantry skills, the Rangers practiced their wartime missions under realistic combat conditions. Each tactical problem started with the companies conducting some kind of penetration into the enemy's rear: either ground infiltration through rugged, swampy terrain; an airborne drop; or a small boat insertion. Once behind enemy lines, the Rangers executed ambushes, raids, and demolition missions. Many times the companies performed "actions on the objective" with live ammunition. During one training exercise, the Rangers made a daylight company-level attack on a fortified position, which included overhead artillery fire and close air support. At a clapboard hamlet on Fort Benning nicknamed "Dixie Village," the Rangers spent a day learning to assault urban areas and conduct house to house fighting. The last week of training culminated in a "Hell Week", consisting of a night airborne drop and a three day field training exercise (FTX). During the FTX, the Rangers had to operate as squads and platoons to blow up a series of targets, then reunite for a company mission. To receive supplies throughout the problem, the companies had to request and control night aerial resupply drops.²⁴

The Rangers' initial training period was the most decisive factor in developing their elite character. The six week Ranger course served as a rites of passage, which played an important role in rapidly stimulating internal cohesion and esprit de corps within the Ranger companies. During the separation phase, the companies organized in the isolated

²⁴ Van Houten, "The Rangers Are Back," 33; Andrew Sparks, "Fort Benning Trains Army's toughest Fighters," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine* (3 December 1950): 6-7.

atmosphere of Harmony Church. The transition phase occurred as the Rangers progressed through the training. Three aspects of this part of the rites of passage are noteworthy. First, the stress and shared hardship of the program bonded the men together, giving them confidence in one another's ability to overcome adverse weather, terrain, enemy opposition, and fatigue. Second, the emphasis on small unit patrolling, especially at night, developed self-reliance and initiative among all ranks of the Rangers. Third, only the most motivated soldiers completed training, enhancing the idea that the Rangers were an "elite." The rigorous physical training, exacting standards set for technical and tactical proficiency, and continuous mental stress culled out the unfit and unmotivated. Every day the Ranger cadre parked a jeep with a white flag at each training site. Those unwilling or unable to undergo training could climb in the jeep at any time and quit. The cadre quickly removed these individuals from the training site and had them returned to their original unit, often within twenty-four hours.²⁵ As another form of quality control, the Ranger Training Center also instituted a "washout board," which reviewed the training record of marginal performers and decided whether to retain or release the candidate. With remarkable swiftness, the Ranger course brought together a group of individuals from various units and molded them into a cohesive team.

In conjunction with the tough training, the Ranger Training Center inculcated the Ranger companies with the elite ethos. Similar to the techniques utilized by Marine drill sergeants to indoctrinate their trainees during basic training, Colonel Van Houten's cadre constantly told the Ranger companies that they were the "best fighting units in the world."

²⁵ "Washout rates" varied from company to company and cycle to cycle. The 10th Airborne Rangers, for example, lost thirty-seven men before their graduation in April, 1951. The loss rate can best be followed using the Ranger Training Center and individual Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) Morning Reports. See also Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 25, 119.

Major Jack Snyder's comments, recorded by a visiting journalist, are representative.

During one training session, Snyder reminded the companies present that:

"You are Rangers . . . You are the best soldiers in the world and nobody can beat you if you learn teamwork. . . This isn't an infantry outfit. The platoon leader can't be directing you all the time. Every man here has to be able to his job as well as any NCO. Just remember that and you'll never be licked."²⁶

To reinforce further their elite image, everyone at the Ranger Training Center addressed one another as "Ranger" rather than by "soldier" or their rank. The Rangers self-identification as the Army's premier fighting force was apparent in their cocky attitude and open contempt for non-paratroopers or "legs." Belief in their "elite" status led most Rangers to conclude that they possessed a significant psychological edge over their enemies.

A combination of factors, therefore, molded the Ranger companies into an elite military outfit. Tough training, blended with the Center's not so subtle pronouncements and promotion of strong group identification, motivated company members to overcome all hardships to earn the title of "Ranger." Fear of failure was also a powerful incentive. Quitting implied that an individual was not good enough. Such a soldier would carry a stigma for the remainder of his life. This mental framework, as much as the training, added to the Rangers' romantic image.

Throughout the first training cycle, Colonel Van Houten rendered status reports to Army Field Forces. In a November 7 letter the Director of Ranger Training reported that training was being conducted according to the draft program of instruction submitted on 30 September. "Only very minor deviations" had occurred in time allotted or phasing, but Van Houten did admit that training had exceeded the scheduled 48 hours "by 2 to 12 hours

²⁶ Major Jack Snyder quoted in Bem Price, "Benning Trained U.S. Rangers Now Make Life Tough Behind Lines of Enemy," *Savannah Morning News* (March 11, 1951): 60.

per week, exclusive of time devoted to maintenance of weapons and equipment." This rigorous schedule left insufficient time for remedial or specialist training to establish true proficiency in certain skills, such as radio communications. He also addressed the need to give the 2d Ranger Company an additional week's weapons training to bring its members up to date with the other three companies. Only one officer and twenty-nine enlisted men had failed to meet standards and had to be reassigned. The Ranger Training Center had deferred five officers and twenty enlisted men to the second cycle because of illness, immaturity, and compassionate reasons.²⁷ Overall, Van Houten was pleased with the way things had progressed.

Anticipating the Rangers future combat employment, Van Houten also requested additional types of specialty training for the Rangers in October and November 1950. As early as 4 October 1950, Van Houten had received permission to send observers to Korea to gather impressions on how to improve the training program.²⁸ Based on early reports and the nature of the terrain, the Ranger commandant submitted proposals for supplementary amphibious and cold weather training.²⁹ OCAFF suspended action on the first request, pending further reports from Korea and because of the limited capacity of the Amphibious Training Base. The Department of the Army approved the second request

²⁷ Headquarters, Ranger Training Center To Commanding General, Office of the Chief, Army Field Forces, Letter, Subject: Status Report, The Robert Black Collection, Unsorted Documents, MHI.

²⁸ Van Houten to Bolté, Letter, "Subject: Request to Send Ranger Observers to Korea," 4 October 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

²⁹ Van Houten to Chief of Staff, Army Field Forces, Letter, Subject: Additional Training for Ranger Units, 21 October 1950; Letter, Subject: Additional Training (Amphib) for Ranger Units, 3 November 1950; Van Houten to Chief of Staff, Army Field Forces, Letter, Subject: Mountain and Extreme Cold Weather Training for Ranger Units, 11 November 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

upon the recommendation of Van Houten's latest observer, Major John K. Singlaub. Singlaub did not think further amphibious training was necessary, but did support mountain and cold weather training.³⁰ With Far East Command's approval, OCAFF authorized three companies in the second cycle to undergo three weeks of winter warfare training at Camp Carson, Colorado following their graduation. Thereafter, all companies destined for the Far East Command would receive that instruction.³¹

EXPANDING THE RANGER FORCE

The Department of the Army publicly announced the Airborne Ranger program with much fanfare on 10 October 1950. In a press release, the Army described the Rangers as "hard hitting and highly mobile units" capable of conducting the "special missions of the general types performed by their predecessors in World War II." The release further stressed the elite nature of the Rangers, characterizing its personnel as "volunteers . . . of high mental and physical standards" who were "qualified parachutists". Additionally, members would wear the "shoulder insignia" and "otherwise continue the traditions of the Ranger outfits of World War II."³² Similarly, the civilian press depicted the Rangers as "commando units, trained especially [in] infiltration methods and guerrilla warfare" and

³⁰ Singlaub to Van Houten, Letter, Subject: Observer's Report, 28 November 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

³¹ Office, Chief of Army Field Forces, *Annual History, 1 January-31 December 1950*, unpublished manuscript, Center of Military History, Volume II, Section V, Chapter 13, III: 5-6; Bolté to CINCFE, 13 December 1950; CINCFE to Bolté, 17 December 1950, Section II; CAFF to Commanding Generals, Third and Fifth Armies, Mountain Training Detachment, and Van Houten, 30 December 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

³² Department of the Defense, Office of Public Information, "Army Ranger Companies Being Organized As Integral Units of Infantry Divisions," Press Release No. 1252-50, 10 October 1950, in *Ranger Battalions File*, Document HRC 314.7, Organizational Histories Branch, Center of Military History.

compared them to "Stonewall Jackson's famed 'Foot Cavalry'."³³ During a radio interview with Elmer Davis in November 1950, General Collins would re-emphasize the Rangers' special status, calling "the reactivation of Ranger units . . . one of the major tactical developments . . . of this war."³⁴ Besides boosting the morale of the Rangers in training and reinforcing their status as elites, Army planners hoped the publicity would encourage qualified soldiers to volunteer for Ranger duty.

Even as the first four Ranger companies organized and trained at Fort Benning, the Army continued with its plans to expand the Ranger force to one company per active Army infantry division. The General Staff allocated funding priorities for the activation of fourteen Ranger companies in the Army budget for fiscal year 1952. To meet its immediate manning needs for the the second training cycle's four companies, scheduled to begin training on 27 November 1950, the Army decided to continue recruiting from the airborne divisions. Thereafter, planners intended to form the remaining units from volunteers within the parent division to which the Rangers would return. Because they expected many non-airborne qualified personnel from the divisional volunteers, action officers had to add the time it took to complete parachute training into their calculations for Ranger replacements and the starting dates of the Ranger training cycles. G-3, recognizing that the Rangers would require a steady replacement flow, aimed to establish "a regular

³³ John G. Norris, "Units of Commandos Organized by Army," *The Washington Post* (11 October 1950) in Ranger Battalions File, Document HRC 314.7, Organizational Histories Branch, Center of Military History.

³⁴ General J. Lawton Collins, excerpts from radio interview with Elmer Davis, 30 November 1950, copy in The Ranger Training Center Diary, The Robert Black Collection, unsorted documents, MHI.

volunteering system for Ranger Training on an army wide basis."³⁵ In late November, General Bolté informed OCAFF to plan for a total of thirteen Ranger companies, due to fluctuating mobilization schedules which called for the activation of only 12 infantry divisions for 1951. Bolté planned, however, to retain one company at Fort Benning to assist in training the other twelve companies and provide replacements as needed.³⁶

The Army had no problem finding enough qualified volunteers for the second four Ranger companies and began to implement the plans outlined in General Bolté's 16 October memorandum for the additional units. In mid-December 1950, the Army started to draw volunteers from the infantry divisions, except those in Europe. The plan called for the divisions there to provide only a cadre of officers and non-commissioned officers; Army-wide volunteers would fill the enlisted slots.³⁷ Beginning with the third training cycle in February 1951, National Guardsmen were eligible to volunteer for Ranger duty. This required each National Guard division to run its own screening process to identify those soldiers who could meet the physical and mental standards. Because of the crush of volunteers in these units -- six hundred men volunteered for the 45th Infantry Division's 10th Ranger Company, for example -- G-3 directives later stipulated that potential Ranger candidates had to be younger than thirty-six years, not under court-martial proceedings, and not come from units scheduled for immediate overseas movement. These instructions

³⁵ Bolté to Collins, Memorandum For the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, Subject: Organization of Ranger Companies, 16 October 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

³⁶ Bolté to CAFF, Letter, Subject: Ranger Companies, 24 November 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

³⁷ OCAFF to Bolté, Memorandum, Subject: Activation of Additional Ranger Infantry Companies (Airborne), 11 December 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

helped the 45th Division narrow its pool of qualified applicants to 191.³⁸ During a 12 December telephonic conference, Colonel Walker at the Ranger Training Center and the Army G-3 set the dates for the third and fourth training cycles. Plans now included provisions for non-parachutist qualified soldiers to complete airborne training a month prior to entry into Ranger training.³⁹

Despite the rush of volunteers from the mobilizing National Guard divisions, the Army could not completely fill the four Ranger companies for the third training cycle. During a conference on personnel requirements for the Rangers, Colonel Van Houten noted that approximately thirty percent of those who began training failed to complete it. Reasons for failure included motivation problems, inability to perform up to Ranger physical standards, and injuries. He recommended that each new Ranger company begin training with at least a twenty percent surplus to account for training attrition. With the addition of airborne training, which had its own set of performance failures and injuries, Van Houten postulated that each company might need as many as two hundred men at the start of the training cycle in order to graduate the unit at authorized strength. Using Van Houten's assumptions, the conferees figured that it would take approximately 2000 - 2200 men to fill the remaining Ranger companies to full strength T/O& E authorizations. The G-3 authorized division commanders to use an intensive recruiting program, similar to the one employed by the airborne divisions, to stimulate the necessary volunteers to man their

³⁸ Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 53-54; David W. Hogan, "The Evolution of the Concept of the U.S. Army's Rangers, 1942-1983" (Ph.D. dissertation: Duke University, 1986): 243-244.

³⁹ G-3, Operations Division, Memorandum For Record, Subject: Rangers, 12 December 1950; Brigadier General Ridgley Gaither, Chief, G-3 Operations Division, to Brigadier General D.A.D. Ogden, Chief, G-3 Organization and Training Division, Memorandum For Record, Subject: Volunteers for Airborne Training, and Memorandum For Record, Subject: Volunteers for Ranger Training, 1 February 1951, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

projected Ranger company.⁴⁰ Although nearly overwhelmed by a flood of volunteers, Ranger recruiting teams rejected many for failing to meet initial entry qualifications, which caused quota short-falls. General Bolté turned once again to the 82d Airborne and 11th Airborne Divisions as sources of manpower, despite protests from the Operations Division about the adverse impact this action would have on the Army's strategic reserve. The 82d Airborne Division eventually provided another 202 volunteers for the third cycle.⁴¹ The Ranger personnel situation improved somewhat for the fourth cycle through the combination of National Guard recruits and Army-wide volunteers.

Replacements for those Ranger companies actually engaged in combat also posed difficulties for Army planners. Initially, the Ranger Training Center used the replacement guidelines established by General Bolté's 16 October memorandum. At the end of each cycle, the Ranger Training Center, with G-3's approval, designated one company to remain at Fort Benning to help train the next cycle. The departing companies drained excess personnel from the stay-behind company to insure that they were manned at ten percent over authorized TO/ & E strength for overseas deployment. The obvious disadvantage to this system was its impact on the morale and cohesion of the stay-behind company. Since Van Houten intended to rotate this duty every cycle, this process deprived the company of

⁴⁰ G-3, Operations Division, Memorandum For Record, Subject: Report on Conference Regarding Personnel Requirements for Ranger Replacements and Units, 20 February 1951, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

⁴¹ Commanding General, Infantry Center to Adjutant General, Memorandum For Record, Subject: Shortage of Personnel For Ranger Training, 3d Cycle, 19 January 1951, Army Field Forces, Adjutant General, Communications and Records Division, *Decimal File, 1951-1952*, Case # 13, 353 File, Box 562, RG 337, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives; Hogan, "The Evolution of the Concept of the U.S. Army's Rangers, 1942-1983," 244; Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 57.

personnel it would need in the future. In December, 1950, the Ranger Training Center reassigned many men from the stay-behind 3d Ranger Company to insure that the 4th Ranger Company was over-strength before it departed for the Far East. To provide replacements for Ranger combat casualties in January, 1951, the Ranger Training Center and the 3d Ranger Company stripped its remaining "excess personnel," amounting to two officers and twenty enlisted men, to ship to FECOM.⁴²

Dissatisfied with this system, Van Houten decided to designate a permanent training and replacement company. He selected the 7th Ranger Company to assume this duty at the conclusion of the third training cycle. He waited to implement this action, however, until after the company had completed its cold weather training at Fort Carson. The Ranger Training Command⁴³ reassigned the men who had completed the training with this company as replacements for the Ranger companies already in Korea. Due to heavy Ranger casualties in the Far East, the 9th Ranger Company, also a third cycle unit, had to undergo this same process. During the fourth cycle, which began on 23 April 1951, the Ranger Training Command funnelled replacements back into the 7th and 9th Ranger Companies to reconstitute them. That same month, G-3 gave permission for Van Houten to organize Ranger Training Companies A and B as demonstration and provisional replacement units. These latter companies enabled the Ranger Training Command to ship qualified individual replacements to Ranger units worldwide. However, the length of training, now extended to 16 weeks including the airborne, ranger and cold weather

⁴² G-3, Operations Division, Memorandum For Record, Subject: Rangers, 12 December 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives; Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 27-28.

⁴³ The Department of the Army redesignated the Ranger Training Center as the Ranger Training Command on 5 April 1951. Ranger Training Command Morning Report, 6 April 1951, The Ranger Collection, Korean War Documents, MHI.

phases, meant that replacements arrived at three month intervals, creating spot shortages of personnel in the Ranger companies engaged in combat in Korea.⁴⁴

Despite some problems with recruiting enough qualified Ranger volunteers, the Army considered activating additional Ranger companies for use in theaters other than Europe and the Far East. Brigadier General Ridgley Gaither, Chief of the G-3 Operations Division, submitted a proposal requesting the activation of four more Ranger companies for use in Iceland, the Caribbean, and Alaska. Gaither suggested that the unified commander in the Atlantic, under certain wartime scenarios, might use two Ranger companies to conduct an airborne assault to secure an airfield in strategically important Iceland prior to the arrival of a Marine amphibious landing force. Similarly, a Puerto Rico-based Ranger company would provide the unified commander of the Caribbean with a rapidly deployable force capable of seizing key points, such as oil fields in Venezuela and Trinidad, for short periods of time. He also recommended the assignment of a Ranger company to the Alaskan command.⁴⁵ The G-3 discussed these recommendations in an 18 January memorandum to General Collins entitled "Proposed Strength for 21 Div. Army."⁴⁶ This proposal proved too premature for the Chief of Staff, who tabled it without his approval. Subsequently, the Army Field Forces, in response to a previous inquiry from G-3, also recommended postponing the organization of one Ranger company per infantry regiment,

⁴⁴ Ibid, 98, 119, 252-253; Emmett Fike, "The Twin Ranger Co's of the Korean War," *The Static Line* (October 1988): 32; Hogan, "The Evolution of the Concept of the U.S. Army's Rangers, 1942-1983," 246.

⁴⁵ Gaither to Chief, G-3 Plans Division, Memorandum, Subject: Additional Requirement for Ranger Infantry Companies (Airborne), U.S. Army, Operations, General Decimal File, 1950-1951, From 322-325, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

⁴⁶ Eddleman to Ogden, Memorandum for Record, Subject: Requirements For Ranger Units," 10 January 1951 and Memorandum For Record, same subject, 14 February 1951, U.S. Army, Operations, General Decimal File, 1950-1951, From 322-325, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

first mentioned as a possibility in Collins' original directive. Army Field Forces advised caution until the Army had the chance to evaluate fully the Rangers' combat performance.⁴⁷

The Army eventually organized a total of seventeen Ranger Infantry Companies (Airborne) and trained them during five cycles. The first training cycle consisted of the 1st, 2d, 3d, and 4th Ranger Companies, which served in Korea with the 2d, 7th, and 3d Infantry Divisions, and the 1st Cavalry Division, respectively. The 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th Companies trained as the part of the second cycle, supported by the 3d Rangers. The 5th and 8th Companies fought with the 25th and 24th Infantry Divisions in Korea, while the 6th Company went to the 1st Infantry Division in Europe. The Army assigned the 7th Company to state-side duty with the 3d U. S. Army. The third training cycle consisted of the 10th, 11th, 12th Companies, which went to the 45th, 40th, and 28th Infantry Divisions. The 9th Company also participated in this cycle, but its members served as replacements for the other companies after graduation. The 13th, 14th, Training Detachments A and B composed the fourth cycle. The first two companies went to the 43d and 4th Infantry Divisions, while the detachments stayed at the Ranger Training Center. Colonel Van Houten sought to officially activate the last two companies as a morale booster to their members, but without much success.⁴⁸ The 15th and a reconstituted 9th Company

⁴⁷ Bolté to CAFF, Letter, Subject: Ranger Companies, 24 November 1950 and Memorandum For Record, same subject, 26 March 1951, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

⁴⁸ Van Houten to G-3, Letter, Subject: Activation of Training Companies -- Ranger Trainees, 4 June 1951; Adjutant General to Van Houten, Letter, same subject, 17 August 1951, 322 Ranger File, Army Field Forces, Communications and Records Division, Decimal File, 1951-1952, Box 503, RG 337, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

completed the fifth cycle and remained with the 47th and 31st Infantry Divisions in the United States (See Figure 4).

DISTRIBUTION OF RANGER INFANTRY COMPANIES (AIRBORNE) BY THEATER AND DIVISION, 1951

FAR EAST COMMAND		EUROPEAN COMMAND
KOREA	JAPAN	GERMANY
<u>CO/DIV</u>	<u>CO/DIV</u>	<u>CO/DIV</u>
1st RGR /2 ID	10TH RGR/45 ID	6TH RGR/1ST ID
2D RGR/7 ID	11TH RGR/40 ID	
3D RGR/3 ID		
4th RGR/1st CAV		
5th RGR/25 ID		
8TH RGR/24 ID		

ARMY FIELD FORCES	
RANGER TRAINING COMMAND	ZONE OF THE INTERIOR
Headquarters Detachment (ABN), 3340th ASU	9th RGR/31 ID
7TH RGR	12TH RGR/28 ID
RGR Detachment A	13th RGR/43 ID
RGR Detachment B	14TH RGR/4 ID
	15TH RGR/47 ID

LEGEND

RGR = Ranger Company (Airborne)

ID = Infantry Division

CAV = Cavalry

ABN = Airborne

CO/DIV = Company/Division

**FIGURE 4: DISTRIBUTION OF RANGER INFANTRY COMPANIES (AIRBORNE)
1951**

DEVELOPING RANGER DOCTRINE

Even before the first Ranger training cycle had concluded, the Ranger Training Center had begun to formulate a tentative doctrine for the employment of the companies in combat. G-3 had charged the Center with the mission "to develop, test and conduct the organization, equipment, doctrine, tactics, technique[s] and training of these units."⁴⁹ Ranger planners relied on the Chief of Staff's Marauder Memorandum, the Pentagon Conference Notes, the Ranger Company TO/ & E, current infantry doctrine, and Ranger experience in World War II to guide their efforts. On 12 November 1950, the Ranger Training Center released a preliminary doctrinal statement detailing the principles for utilizing Ranger units. Van Houten admitted that the pamphlet was "hastily gotten together, and rather rough, initial start on doctrine, tactics and techniques for the Ranger companies." Nevertheless, the document, for the first time in Ranger history, systematically described the Rangers' organization, equipment, capabilities, limitations, tactics, and procedures for coordinating their missions.⁵⁰

The tentative doctrine outlined the conduct of Ranger operations, stressing the companies' capabilities for rapid movement in all terrain conditions, infiltration of enemy lines, and aggressive action against critical objectives. The doctrine focused on the Rangers' primary mission "to infiltrate through enemy lines and attack command posts, artillery, tank parks and key communications centers or facilities." In addition to these tasks, the Ranger companies also had the ability to: repel enemy assaults by fire, close

⁴⁹ Bolté to CAFF, Letter, Subject: Marauder Units, 7 September 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

⁵⁰ Ranger Training Center, "Ranger Company (Tentative)" 12 November 1950, Document no. UD 503.A2 du (Fort Benning, GA: Ranger Training Center, 1950); Van Houten, letter to Collins, 13 November 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

combat, and counterattack; maneuver in all types of terrain and climatic conditions; seize and hold terrain; conduct reconnaissance and intelligence operations by penetration of hostile combat zones; and land by parachute, glider, or assault aircraft. Besides those listed in the mission statement, suitable Ranger objectives included road and railroad bottlenecks, airfield installations, observation posts, critical terrain features, escape routes, assembly areas, and prisoner enclosures. Although doctrine warned against using them specifically for intelligence gathering, the Rangers had received instruction in reconnaissance techniques and could locate targets deep in the enemy's rear for artillery and air attack. Formed for employment by division or higher headquarters, the Rangers had the organization and training to accomplish these assignments using both day and night operations. Additionally, the companies could operate independently for sustained periods in enemy held territory.⁵¹

The draft doctrine also addressed the Rangers' major limitations. First, the companies lacked the size, heavy weapons, transport, and administrative self-sufficiency "for offensive or defensive missions that require[d] the long sustained combat effort normally expected of infantry units." Second, the Rangers had to rely on higher headquarters for air or amphibious means to enter the enemy's rear areas. Because the Ranger company commander worked directly for the division commander without the benefit of an intermediate headquarters, the doctrinal statement recommended that each division appoint a G-3 staff officer as a Ranger liaison and make him directly responsible for "all matters pertaining to the activities of ranger units." Close contact between this officer and the Ranger company commander would facilitate planning and coordination of assets for upcoming missions. To maximize the company's tactical employment, division

⁵¹ Ibid, 1-5, 8.

commanders, staffs, and Ranger company commanders had to be alert to suitable missions for the unit. Third, the Rangers companies required administrative and logistical support from their assigned parent unit. According to the study, aerial resupply would normally sustain the company during field operations. Lastly, while the Rangers might make frequent use of hit and run guerrilla tactics to disrupt enemy rear areas and cooperate with partisans, they were to operate according to the rules of land warfare as members of the United States armed services, not as a guerrilla force. The Rangers' principle mission remained combat actions against the enemy, not organizing and training friendly guerrilla groups.⁵²

The draft doctrine also described several unique aspects of Ranger operations. Due to their offensive orientation, the key elements of Ranger operations were planning, reconnaissance, security, and surprise. The study explicitly prescribed guidelines for each of these doctrinal tenets. First, the document stressed the importance of detailed, advance planning, including coordination with friendly adjacent and supporting units, prior to any Ranger mission. Proper task organization for the mission, selection of the appropriate weapons and equipment, and rehearsals on terrain similar to the objective area were critical planning tasks for Ranger leaders. Second, the study instructed Ranger commanders to make a careful daylight reconnaissance of the routes to and from attack positions and, if possible, the objective area itself in preparation for a mission. Aerial overflights might be especially useful for this task. In the absence of direct reconnaissance, doctrine called for Ranger leaders to familiarize themselves with the most recent aerial photographs and map changes prior to departure from friendly areas. Third, doctrine outlined several active and passive security techniques for the Ranger companies to follow. Camouflage of personnel

⁵² Ibid.

and equipment, proper tactical movement formations, and infiltrations through difficult terrain were the best methods for the Rangers to use to maintain security. Fourth, the Rangers could achieve surprise at the objective area by a stealthful approach from an unexpected direction, rapid movement, and violent execution of the attack.⁵³ The specific tactics that the Rangers practiced during training emphasized these four doctrinal tenets.

On 28 March 1951, the Ranger Training Center further refined its doctrine with a revision of its draft training circular, also entitled *Ranger Company (Tentative)*. This manual blended previously stated doctrinal principles, the tactical techniques taught to the Ranger companies at Fort Benning, and combat reports from the Ranger companies in Korea. The Ranger tactics prescribed by the pamphlet emphasized stealth, surprise, "ruthless" direct actions upon the objective, and quick withdrawal. The circular listed several techniques that the Rangers could use to infiltrate the enemy's rear areas, including the use of parachutes, small rubber boats, and U.S. Navy high speed transports or submarines. To accomplish a successful ground infiltration, the manual recommended that the Rangers consider splitting into small groups and meeting at rendezvous points. The Ranger companies could also coordinate for diversionary attacks on other sectors of the front to mask their movement or drop from the backs of tanks during an armored thrust through enemy lines. The manual stressed the importance of avoiding enemy contact to escape ambushes. The unit might, however, leave behind "wild goose" detachments along its route of march to distract the enemy from the main body's movement. Once in the enemy's rear, the Rangers were to rendezvous and operate out of "clandestine bivouacs," located in dense forest or rough terrain located away from the enemy's main lines of drift. Where possible, the manual advised the Rangers to use knives, strangulation cords, and

⁵³ Ibid, 9-10; Van Houten, *The Rangers Are Back*, 41.

other silent means to kill enemy personnel. During raid missions the companies were to open fire with their most mass-casualty-producing weapons at minimum ranges to achieve surprise and insure effective violence of action. In addition to these techniques, which were applicable to most missions, the manual prescribed techniques for ambush, prisoner rescue, and demolition missions. The Army, however, never accepted this training circular for formal publication, although the Ranger Training Center and the Ranger companies used it as a guide throughout their service in the Korean War.⁵⁴

PREPARATIONS FOR DEPLOYMENT

Events in Korea during October 1950 almost eclipsed the need for the Ranger program. A United Nations offensive, following up on the success of the Inchon landings and breakout from the Pusan Perimeter, drove across the 38th Parallel into North Korea. By the end of the month it appeared that the war would be over shortly, without even minimal Ranger participation. This situation concerned Army planners working on the Ranger project. They hoped to test at least one company in combat before hostilities ended.

General Bolté discussed the Ranger issue with the Chief of Staff in mid-October. In a 19 October memorandum, Bolté asked Collins to deploy the first three Ranger companies immediately upon completion of their training, scheduled for 13 November, "so

⁵⁴ Ranger Training Center, *Ranger Company (Tentative)*, 28 March 1951, Document no. UD 503.A2 (7/13/51) du (Fort Benning, GA: Ranger Training Center, 1950), especially 10-17. The Ranger Training Command drafted an updated version in July, 1951, but Army Field Forces did not accept it for publication either.

that they may be tested in action in Korea."⁵⁵ Following Eighth Army's method of employing its Ranger company in the 25th Infantry Division's sector, Bolté argued that "Even though major hostilities may be terminated in the near future, it is felt that these units will have potential value in an antiguerrilla role."⁵⁶ With the situation in Korea improving, Collins expressed other possible uses for the Rangers. Reflecting President Truman's (and his own) concern that the war in Korea was only a sideshow in the communists' master plan for world domination, Collins viewed Europe as the most strategically important theater and, as such, should receive more resources. He directed, therefore, that of the first three companies, one would go to Korea and one to Europe. A third company would accompany the first infantry division sent to reinforce Europe.⁵⁷ Events in Korea soon superseded this plan.

During the last week of October, Communist China began to supply its North Korean ally with a large number of "volunteer" units. By early November, Eighth Army and X Corps units had encountered sizeable concentrations of the Chinese in their areas of operation.⁵⁸ Expressing concern about China's unofficial intervention, MacArthur, in a message to Collins, reported that the "introduction of the Chinese Communists in strength ha[d] completely changed the overall situation"; therefore, he believed that "all previous plans for provision of essential U.S. ground, sea, and air forces . . . be immediately and

⁵⁵ Bolté to Collins, Memorandum, Subject: Deployment of Ranger Units to FECOM," 19 October 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Colonel M. F. House, Assistant Secretary of the General Staff, to Bolté, Memorandum, Subject: Deployment of Units to FECOM, 23 October 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

⁵⁸ Appleman, *South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu*, 673- 688; 749-776.

fully deployed." He also asked Collins to earmark all three Ranger companies for Far East Command.⁵⁹ MacArthur's report persuaded Collins to send all three companies to Korea. After the Chinese launched a massive counter-offensive against United Nations forces on 26 November 1950, Collins continued to give Korea first priority for the Ranger companies.⁶⁰

With the decisions made regarding the Rangers' final destination, the Ranger Training Center prepared to graduate the first training cycle's companies and prepare them for overseas deployment. The first four Ranger companies graduated from training on 13 November in a ceremony presided over by Major General Withers A. Burress, Commandant of the Infantry School, and Colonel Van Houten. After congratulatory remarks, Burress presented the commander of each company with the newly authorized black and gold ranger tabs for each soldier. Because they were to depart for Korea first, Burress presented members of the 1st Ranger Company with their own guidon, featuring a parachute inscribed with the words RANGER.⁶¹

The 1st Rangers, after a two day pass, travelled by train to Camp Stoneman, California to make final preparations for transit to Korea. The company embarked on the *USNS C.G. Morton* and departed for the Far East on 25 November. The 2d and 4th Companies remained at Fort Benning until 3 December, when they also began a train trip to California. These units sailed for Korea on 9 December aboard the *USS General H.W.*

⁵⁹ Major General R.E. Duff, Acting G-3, to Collins, Memorandum, Subject: Deployment of Ranger Units to FECOM, 6 November 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

⁶⁰ Bolté to Collins, Memorandum, Subject Ranger Units Sent to FECOM, 19 November 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

⁶¹ For the ceremony see Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 27.

Butner. Designated to stay behind as a demonstration and training force, the 3d Ranger Company assisted the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th Companies through administrative processing and drawing of equipment prior to the second training cycle's start on 27 November.⁶²

Because he wanted to insure that division commanders in Eighth Army understood how properly to employ the Rangers prior to their arrival in theater, Colonel Van Houten and several members of his staff visited Korea during the first part of December. Van Houten discussed Ranger organization, training, and doctrine with the commanders and staffs of those divisions designated to receive Ranger companies. On 18 December, he went to see Major General William B. Kean at the 25th Infantry Division, where he received a briefing on the Eighth Army Ranger Company's tactical employment.⁶³ By the time he returned to the United States, Van Houten was dismayed over the division commanders' apparent confusion and lack of understanding over the combat role of the Rangers.

Van Houten had the Ranger Training Center staff prepare a new study to clarify tentative Ranger doctrine and respond to a G-3 inquiry about attaching Ranger companies to infantry regiments. The staff study, titled "Ranger Type Units," attempted to determine "the best organization, command and staff relationships needed to achieve the maximum effectiveness from ranger type units."⁶⁴ After reviewing a brief history of ranger-type units and the need for the current Ranger program, the study found that the term "Ranger" had an ambiguous meaning within the Army. Ranger units, according to one school of

⁶² Ibid, 28, 35,40.

⁶³ G-1 Journal, 18 December 1950, *25th Infantry Command Reports*, December 1950, Box 3766, RG 407, WNRC.

⁶⁴ Ranger Training Center, Staff Study, Subject: "Ranger Type Units," 26 December 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

thought, were shock infantry troops "to be used for the purpose of negotiating rugged terrain and seizing key tactical objectives." In defensive situations, these troops would repel enemy assaults by fire, close combat, or counterattack. Others thought of Rangers as a "specially trained unit to penetrate the enemy lines and create havoc in his rear areas."⁶⁵ In an attempt to resolve the appropriate role of the Ranger companies, the study listed official definitions taken from Special Regulation 320-5-1, *Dictionary of US Army Terms*.

These definitions were:

RANGER- Soldier specially trained to make surprise attacks on enemy territory. Rangers act in small groups, making rapid attacks and withdrawing. The name is used by the Americans; the corresponding British term for soldiers of this kind is Commando.

INFANTRY- branch of the Army trained, equipped and organized to fight on foot.

GUERRILLA WARFARE- operations carried on by small independent forces generally in the rear of an enemy. Their objective is to harass, delay, and disrupt military operations of the enemy.

SHOCK TROOPS- troops especially organized, trained and equipped for assault and hand to hand fighting.⁶⁶

These definitions failed to clarify anything and only added to doctrinal confusion because the Rangers' missions seemed to fall into all of these categories.

Besides these conflicting and overlapping definitions, the nature of the Rangers' training program also contributed to confusion over their proper combat role. The training that the Ranger companies received at Fort Benning encompassed all of these definitions, and the tentative doctrine statement implied that the companies could perform in all of these roles. Unfortunately, the study did not refine the Ranger definition, merely stating that "it

⁶⁵ Ibid, 2.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 3.

is apparent that the Rangers are specially trained infantry troops, irrespective of what mission they may be engaged in at the moment or in what size units they may be organized."⁶⁷

The study went on to address the question of attaching Ranger companies to infantry regiments. Based on the experience of ranger-type units formed by the infantry divisions in World War II, the study concluded that an infantry regiment did not have the capability to plan, coordinate, and employ this type of elite unit. Additionally, the Ranger companies themselves lacked a supporting staff to assist regimental commanders in determining appropriate operational tasks. The study also argued that the Rangers would impose a heavy administrative and logistical burden on a regiment. The document, therefore, recommended against attaching the Rangers to individual infantry regiments.⁶⁸

The staff study's main purpose was to argue for the formation of Ranger battalions for use by division or higher headquarters. The study outlined a proposal to organize four hundred man Ranger battalions using the current Ranger TO/ & E. The battalion would consist of a headquarters company and three rifle companies. A battalion staff would plan and control Ranger operations, as well as provide supporting services. The proposed Ranger battalion would give its parent organization greater combat effectiveness by virtue of its greater firepower and mobility. Such battalions would have a higher percentage of automatic weapons but fifty percent fewer men than similar-sized conventional units. A chart, which the author of the study termed "patently unfair," compared a Ranger battalion to a standard infantry one. According to the chart, the Army could produce forty-seven

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 5-6, 12.

Ranger battalions at the cost of 18,800 men, while roughly the same numbers (18,902) formed only nine conventional infantry battalions.

According to the study, the organization of Ranger battalions had several other inherent advantages. A key benefit would be the assignment of a field grade officer to command the unit. Such an officer, by virtue of rank and position, could insure adequate Ranger representation at higher headquarters. A larger organization with a staff to provide command and control would enable the Rangers to maintain a high level of training in specialized skills. A Ranger battalion would also furnish greater advancement opportunities for company grade officers. The Rangers would be better able to maintain their elite character and esprit de corps in such an organization. Based on recruiting efforts to that date and surveys of non-airborne personnel in divisions visited by Ranger recruiting teams, the study deduced that there would be sufficient personnel to form a Ranger battalion. The study's final paragraph strongly recommended that the Army organize Ranger battalions and conduct further study on the best organizational structure for those units.⁶⁹ Interestingly, the Ranger Training Center's staff study had come to the same conclusions as Eighth Army's Colonel McGee regarding the proper size and employment of Ranger units.⁷⁰

Van Houten forwarded the study to G-3, hoping for favorable action on the Ranger battalion issue, which might keep the divisions from using the Ranger companies improperly. G-3 rejected the recommendations, preferring to wait for results from actual Ranger experiences in Korea. Still feeling uneasy about the potential for Ranger

⁶⁹ Ibid, 6-12.

⁷⁰ Colonel John H. McGee to Commanding General Eighth United States Army Korea, Memorandum, Subject: Training Report of Eighth Army Ranger Company, 1 October 1950, Eighth Army Ranger Training Center, copy in author's possession.

misutilization, Van Houten suggested that the Chief of Staff or the G-3 send a message to the division commanders in Korea requiring them to employ the companies only for missions which included "the attack of critical objectives behind enemy lines" not "the normal combat missions assigned to infantry companies."⁷¹ The G-3, wisely, did not send any such letter, which would have infringed on a local commander's prerogative to make decisions regarding his units' employment according to the local tactical situation. Bolté, however, instructed the Chief of Army Field Forces and the Inspector of Infantry to discuss Ranger utilization with division commanders on future inspection trips to Korea.⁷²

Van Houten and G-3 did not have to wait very long for results of the Rangers' combat performance. The 1st Ranger Company arrived at Camp Zama, Japan on 9 December, where the men drew cold weather clothing and re-zeroed their weapons. A ferry transported the Rangers to Pusan, Korea on the 17th, and the unit linked up with the 2d Infantry Division six days later. The division attached the company to the 23d Infantry Regiment, who assigned the Rangers immediate patrolling duties. By the end of the month the company was in heated combat with the enemy around the Hongch'on area. Arriving on Christmas Eve and spending six days in Japan, the 2d and 4th Ranger Companies flew into Kimpo Airfield and then trucked to their assigned units, the 7th Infantry and 1st Cavalry Divisions, respectively.

Three more Ranger companies eventually deployed to Korea during winter and spring, 1951. In the coming months, the Rangers performed some of the behind the lines

⁷¹ Van Houten to Bolté, Letter, 28 December 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

⁷² G-3, Memorandum For Record, Subject: Employment of Ranger Units in the Pacific, 16 April 1951, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives; Office, Chief of Army Field Forces, "Notes on Combat in Korea," 16 April 1951, Document no. DS 917.1.A61 (4/16/51) du, United States Army Infantry School Library, Fort Benning, GA.

missions outlined by their training and doctrine. The majority of their missions, however, seemed to confirm Colonel Van Houten's fears that the divisions would use the Rangers less for specialized raiding than for more conventional infantry tasks.

CHAPTER IV

EIGHTH ARMY RANGERS IN ACTION

Their offensive approved by President Truman on 29 September 1950, United Nations' forces attacked across the 38th Parallel on 7 October intending to destroy the remaining North Korean armies and reunite the Korean peninsula as a single nation. MacArthur ordered a two-pronged offensive with Eighth Army in the west and X Corps in the east. The assault rapidly drove forward, encountering slight resistance. By the last week in October, friendly patrols operated only a few miles from the Yalu River. The swift advance, however, bypassed numerous remnants of the North Korean People's Army and various indigenous guerrilla groups. These units, including those scattered enemy elements in South Korea who escaped into the mountains after Eighth Army's breakout from the Pusan perimeter, exposed rear areas to the hit and run tactics of guerilla warfare. General Walker wanted to secure his army's lines of communication before further advances. He ordered IX Corps to hunt down and destroy these pockets of guerrilla resistance. On 5 October 1950, IX Corps established its headquarters in Taejon and began to conduct anti-guerrilla operations in the Taejon-Chongju area using the American 2d and 25th Infantry Divisions, augmented by the ROK 11th Division.¹

During October 1950, the 25th Infantry ("Tropic Lightning") Division bore the brunt of IX Corps' antiguerrilla activities. Assigned a sector of 6,500 square miles of rugged, mountainous terrain, the division assumed responsibility for operations east and south of Taejon. This sector blocked the enemy's main escape routes from the Pusan

¹ Appleman, *South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu*, 721.

area. The "Tropic Lightning" Division concentrated armed motor convoys, saturation patrols, and ambushes to clear its zone of the guerrillas. By the time the Eighth Ranger Company linked up with the 25th Division Reconnaissance Company on 14 October 1950, the division had killed or captured about 1500 enemy soldiers and guerrillas in its area of operations.²

GUERRILLA FIGHTING AT POUN

Lieutenant Puckett and his quartering party arrived at Taegu to receive instructions from the 25th Infantry Division late in the evening of 10 October. The division assigned the Rangers to clear a sector surrounding the village of Poun, where they would join the 25th's Reconnaissance Company in mopping up guerrilla units. The young Ranger commander moved to Poun, thirty-two miles northeast of Taejon, the next day. He coordinated his mission with the Reconnaissance Company commander and established a base of operations. The rest of the Ranger company, now twelve men short of authorized strength due to training injuries and drop-outs, traveled to Taejon by train on 12 October. The company received a basic load of ammunition and supplies, as well as a ten-man squad of South Korean soldiers to supplement their numbers and act as interpreters with friendly civilians. Puckett placed one Korean in each headquarters element and split the remaining members into each assault section.³ Having completed their resupply activities, the company convoyed to Poun on 14 October to begin its assignment.

² Narrative Summary, *25th Infantry Division Command Reports*, History Book I October 1950, Box 3757, RG 407, WNRC.

³ *Morning Report*, 12 October 1950. The original purpose of the South Koreans was not to act as interpreters and guides, but rather to train them for future use in their own army. The Rangers' mission, however, capitalized on the South Koreans' language ability and familiarity with the terrain. Author- Puckett interview #2, 12 August 1989.

Once the company had arrived at Poun, Lieutenant Puckett task organized it for combat and then issued an operations order for the upcoming operation. He broke down the company sector into two platoon size areas of responsibility. His plan called for Lieutenant Bunn's 1st Platoon to move to a nearby village while the company headquarters and Lieutenant Cummings' 2d Platoon operated from Poun. Puckett intended to use squad and platoon size patrols in continuous day and night sweeps of the area. He instructed his platoons to make maximum use of ambushes along known and suspected routes of enemy egress. At other times, he intended to use the company to set-up roadblocks in conjunction with the motorized sweeps of the Reconnaissance Company. Puckett instructed the platoons to take prisoners if possible.⁴

During the remainder of the month, the company combed the mountains and trails seeking out scattered enemy units and their guerrilla bases. Lieutenant Bunn established his command post in an old school house and implemented a series of squad and platoon search and destroy patrols. On one occasion, the platoon captured a dozen enemy soldiers. Several times the 1st Platoon engaged in fire-fights with retreating North Korean forces. In these instances, the platoon encountered enemy squad-size elements which generally offered only limited resistance.

Similar to its sister unit, the 2d Platoon saturated its zone with combat patrols and ambushes. During one ambush, it established a "V" shaped assault position on each side of a deep saddle on a frequently travelled hillside. A trail bisected the terrain feature. Lieutenant Cummings placed security teams with radios in a covered and concealed position down each side of the trail. After two hours of waiting, one of the security elements alerted the platoon when it spotted a party of guerrillas walking down the trail.

⁴ Author-Puckett interview #1, 18 July 1989.

When the single-file group of nine enemy soldiers approached the Rangers' kill zone, the platoon leader ordered one of his South Korean attachments to yell out a surrender demand. The guerrillas, startled but unwilling to surrender, reacted by opening fire on the hill. The Rangers' response was instantaneous. Spraying the kill zone with automatic and rifle fire, the platoon killed eight enemy soldiers in less than a minute. One guerrilla escaped unharmed, but the Rangers captured him when he tried to hide in a hole in the surrounding rocks. Because the platoon lacked transportation, a small party of Rangers had to march cross-country seven miles to deliver the POW to the Reconnaissance Company for evacuation to the rear.⁵ In another action on 17 October, a squad from 2d Platoon encountered a South Korean police patrol, which opened fire on them, slightly wounding Ranger Corporal Harutoku Kimura.⁶ This incident demonstrated the language difficulties and interoperability problems between American and South Korean forces in the Poun area, which were also present elsewhere.

Throughout the campaign Puckett himself rotated among the platoons. He required each platoon to conduct detailed debriefings of their patrols to ascertain intelligence requirements, changes in terrain and enemy tactics, and highlight mistakes the patrol may have made. On at least two occasions, Puckett mounted company sized patrols, as much for the training value as to accomplish a specific mission. During the return trip from one company-sized patrol to a suspected enemy base located on Hill 1057, the Rangers took a short break in the vicinity of the village of Sangpan-ni. As the men relaxed, a fifteen man North Korean patrol stumbled upon them. In the resulting fire-fight, the Rangers killed six

⁵ Recollections of Ranger Bill Judy, *Eighth Army Newsletter*, Number 17 (26 November 1987): 9-10.

⁶ *Morning Reports*, 17 October 1950.

and captured one enemy soldier without suffering any casualties.⁷ The Rangers gradually refined their patrolling techniques, developed standard operating procedures, and practiced immediate action drills for unexpected encounters with the enemy.

The Eighth Ranger Company encountered enormous difficulties while trying to sustain itself at Poun. The company headquarters only authorized a three man element -- the company first sergeant, company clerk, and supply corporal -- for administration and supply activities. Without its own mess team and transportation assets, the company was dependent upon the Reconnaissance Company for food, water, ammunition, and transportation. As a result, the platoons stockpiled the supplies that First Sergeant Charles Pitts delivered at their command posts. Although forced to subsist mainly on "C" (canned) rations, the Rangers augmented their diets by foraging in the hills and nearby villages. Pitts eventually "procured" (through a so-called "midnight requisition") a jeep which somewhat alleviated the supply situation and allowed the commander to visit the dispersed elements of the company more easily. The jeep also enabled the Rangers to evacuate prisoners more quickly. The men of the 25th Reconnaissance Company were sympathetic to the Rangers' plight and assisted them with their resupply needs whenever possible. Logistical sustainment, however, continued to be a recurring problem throughout the company's existence.⁸

By the end of October the 25th Infantry Division considered its area sufficiently pacified and began to turn over its anti-guerrilla responsibilities to the South Korean police forces. During the first week of November, the division, along with the other elements in

⁷ War Diary, 18 October 1951, History Book I, *25th Infantry Command Reports*, October 1951, Box 3757, RG 407, WNRC; Author- Puckett interview #2, 12 August 1951.

⁸ Charles L. Pitts, letter to author, 10 August 1989; recollections of Ranger Charles Pitts, *Eighth Army Ranger Company Newsletter* 17 (26 November 1987), 5-6.

IX Corps, moved northwards and established its headquarters at Kaesong. The American offensive into North Korea had slowed to a crawl as units encountered elements from the Communist Chinese Army for the first time. Nevertheless, optimism overshadowed caution in Far East Command, and many believed the war would be over shortly. Eighth Army once again tasked IX Corps to conduct mopping-up operations of enemy units bypassed by the American I Corps advance into North Korea. The Tropic Lightning Division received the mission to clear the Masan-ni/Uijong-bu area. On 3 November 1950, the 25th Division alerted the Eighth Army Ranger Company of the change of mission and ordered it to move to Kaesong. The following day, the Rangers moved the 175 miles to Kaesong by train and established themselves in a warehouse close to the division headquarters.

For the next three days, the Rangers rested and refitted their equipment. The company now numbered three officers, sixty enlisted men, and ten ROK enlisted men.⁹ The highlight of the stay occurred when the Rangers discovered an abandoned bath house. The men filled a sunken pool with hot water and impressed a Korean civilian into service to keep the water warm. This was the first opportunity any of them had of taking a hot bath since coming to Korea. Expecting a forthcoming victory parade, First Sergeant Pitts formed the company to practice dismounted drill and parade ceremonies. This turned out to be premature when Lieutenant Puckett received a warning order attaching the Rangers to

⁹ *Morning Reports*, 11 November 1950.

Task Force Johnson for a reconnaissance in force mission directed toward enemy pockets around Uijong-bu.¹⁰

The Rangers joined the 25th Reconnaissance Company and elements of the 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment to form Task Force Johnson on 10 November. The Task Force's specific objective was to sweep and clear a triangular area bounded by Uijonbu in the south, Tongduchon-ni in the north, and Shiny-ri to the northeast.¹¹ Operating in separate platoon-sized patrols, the Eighth Army Ranger Company moved out at first light 12 November to search and clear an area around the village of Tongduchon-ni; however, they did not encounter any enemy resistance. The next day the Rangers teamed with F Company, 35th Infantry to screen all civilians moving down Route 3 between Uijonbu and Tongduchon-ni. Approaching the outskirts of Uijonbu to set up a roadblock, the 2d Platoon ran into a patrol of fourteen North Korean soldiers walking on a narrow trail. In the ensuing fire-fight, the North Koreans scrambled for cover; several retreated back into Uijong-bu. The Rangers killed two, including a North Korean captain.¹² After the contact, the Rangers manned a roadblock, searched civilians for weapons and contraband, and apprehended suspected guerrillas.

¹⁰ Operations Instructions #11, Operations Summary, *25th Infantry Division Command Reports*, History and Staff Section Reports, Book 1-4, November 1-15, Box 3762, RG 407, WNRC.

¹¹ Operations Instructions # 12, Operations Summary, *25th Infantry Division Command Reports*, History and Staff Section Reports, Book 1-4, November 1-15, Box 3762, RG 407, WNRC.

¹² Recollections of Ranger Bill Judy, Ibid, 10; *Morning Report*, 15 November 1950.

On 14 November, the division ordered Task Force Johnson to expand its operations further north.¹³ During this advance, the Task Force used the Rangers and Reconnaissance Company to lead the assault down Route 3. On several occasions the Rangers had to clear mines in the road and provide flank security patrols for the Task Force's armored vehicles while they negotiated their way through restricted road passages. The 25th Division ordered Task Force Johnson to break contact and return to an assembly area around Kumcheon on 18 November.¹⁴

The Eighth Army Ranger Company force-marched back to its base in Kaesong the night of 18 November in near-zero degrees temperatures. When they arrived, the Rangers received orders placing them under the operational control of Lieutenant Colonel Welborn Dolvin, commander of the 89th Medium Tank Battalion, who was forming a new task force at Yong-po-dong in preparation for Eighth Army's upcoming "final push." A truck convoy carried the company to Kunu-ri, North Korea on the 21st. From there, the Rangers continued on to Yong-po-dong to link-up with the armored task force during early evening on 22 November.¹⁵

¹³ Operations Instructions # 13 and #14, Operations Summary, *25th Infantry Division Command Reports*, History and Staff Section Reports, Book 1-4, November 1-15, 1950, Box 3762, RG 407, WNRC.

¹⁴ War Diary, 10-20 November 1950, 35th Infantry Regimental Combat Team, in *25th Infantry Division Command Reports*, Book 8, Unit Reports, November 1950, Box 3764, RG 407, WNRC.

¹⁵ Operations Instructions # 19, 18 November 1950, *25th Infantry Division Command Reports*, History and Staff Section Reports, Book 5-7, November 16-30, 1950, Box 3763, RG 407, WNRC; *Morning Reports*, 20-21 November 1950.

TASK FORCE DOLVIN AND HILL 205

During late October and early November, United Nations units encountered stout resistance from Chinese Communist Forces. In Eighth Army's sector, the Chinese severely punished the 8th Cavalry Regiment as it advanced toward Unsan on 1 November. Their attack also drove back the ROK II Corps, forcing General Walker to order a limited withdrawal to strengthen his tactical position. Eighth Army consolidated behind the Chongchon River and braced for a Communist assault, which never came. While Truman and MacArthur debated the significance of the Chinese appearance, Eighth Army began to refit its elements for future operations. Having persuaded the President and the Joint Chiefs of Staff that the limited Chinese presence did not pose a serious threat to his command in Korea, MacArthur ordered his forces to resume the offensive. General Walker slated Eighth Army's attack to begin on 24 November 1950.

In the 25th Infantry Division's sector, Major General William B. Kean decided to attack with three units abreast. Kean created an armor heavy task force for employment in the division's center zone of attack. Task Force Dolvin consisted of: Dolvin's own 89th Medium Tank Battalion; the Eighth Army Ranger Company; E Company, 27th Infantry Regiment; B Company, 35th Infantry Regiment; 25th Reconnaissance Company; and C Company, 65th Combat Engineer Battalion.¹⁶ Dolvin formed his task force in an assembly area at Yong-po-dong and began planning for the upcoming mission. On 23 November, while the task force's subordinate element leaders received their operations

¹⁶ Operations Order # 15, G-3 file, *25th Infantry Division Command Reports*, History and Staff Section Reports, Book 5-7, November 16-30, 1950 Box 3763, RG 407, WNRC.

order, Dolvin had the Rangers conduct reconnaissance patrols out to five kilometers in front of the task force. The Rangers reported no contact from these patrols.¹⁷

At 1000 hours 24 November 1950, Task Force Dolvin crossed its line of departure with B Company, 35th Infantry on the left, the Rangers in the center, and E Company, 27th Infantry on the right. The commander formed combined arms teams by attaching the infantry companies to a tank company for the assault. The attack had progressed only a short distance when the Rangers stumbled across two Americans from the 8th Cavalry Regiment. These two soldiers reported that the Chinese had captured them at Unsan earlier in the month. They indicated that the Chinese had abandoned twenty-eight other prisoners, some seriously wounded, approximately five kilometers further forward. The Rangers relayed this information to Task Force headquarters, and another element found the prisoners later that afternoon.¹⁸

Riding on top of the tanks, the Rangers continued forward without opposition until they neared their objective in the vicinity of Hill 222. As the Eighth Ranger company closed on the hill, the Chinese opened fire on the column. The Rangers leaped to the ground while the tankers, unsure where the fire originated from, "buttoned up" (closed their hatches). Puckett directed his two platoons to form an assault line, with 1st Platoon on the right and 2d on the left. The Ranger commander then ordered his platoons to fire and maneuver toward the hill.

¹⁷ War Diary, 23 November 1950, 89th Tank Battalion, in *25th Infantry Division Command Reports*, Book 9, Attached Unit Reports, November 1950, Box 3765, RG 407, WNRC.

¹⁸ War Diary, 24 November 1950, 89th Tank Battalion, in *25th Infantry Division Command Reports*, Book 9, Attached Unit Reports, November 1950, Box 3765, RG 407, WNRC; *Associated Press*, "Chinese Reds Free 30 More U.S. PW's," reproduced in *Eighth Army Ranger Company Newsletter*, 17 (26 November 1987) : 15.

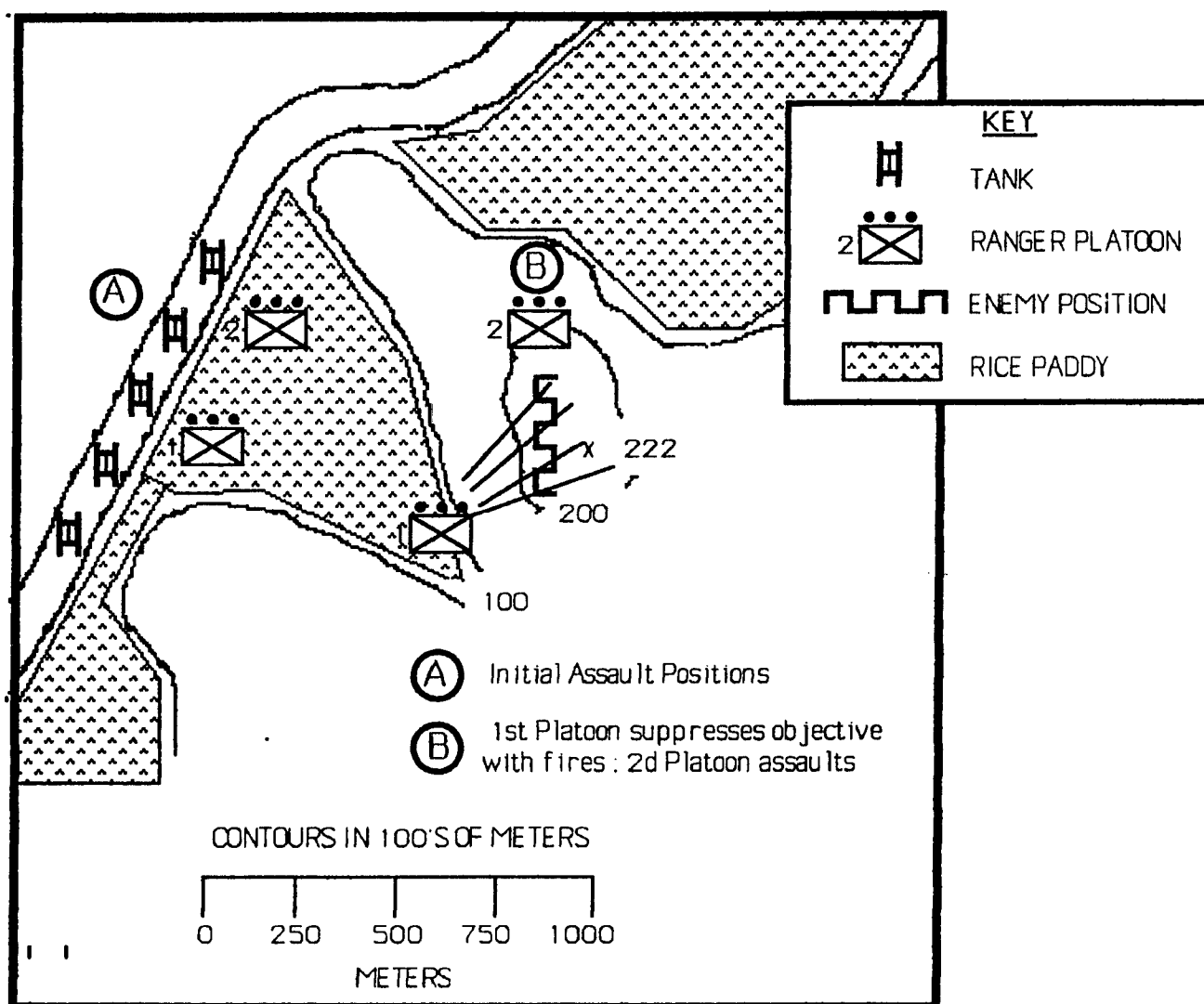


FIGURE 5: RANGERS' ASSAULT ON HILL 222, 24 NOV 50
SOURCE: MAP SHEET ANJU, KOREA

As Lieutenant Bunn's men raked the objective with small arms fire, Lieutenant Cummings and his Rangers rushed across the rice paddy to their front to the shelter of a far

embankment. Automatic rifle fire killed PFC Joseph Romero as he ran across the paddy. When the 1st Platoon joined them on the far side of the paddy, 2d Platoon resumed the assault. Just as platoon members crested the bank, the friendly tanks opened fire on them, killing two and wounding three others. Puckett ran back across the paddy, and unable to get into the external telephone box on the tank platoon leader's tank, pounded the turret hatch with his carbine until he could get the tank to stop firing.

Meanwhile, the 2d Platoon continued to attack. After a tough climb under hostile fire, Cummings' Rangers swept across the hill, clearing it of resistance. The company evacuated the dead and wounded, then formed a perimeter defense and attempted to dig fighting positions in the frozen ground. The tanks remained at the base of the hill for the night. That evening temperatures plummeted to near zero degrees Fahrenheit. First Sergeant Pitts transported five more men to the Task Force's aid station to be treated for frostbite. The fire-fight for Hill 222 and cold weather injuries reduced the Eighth Army Ranger Company's strength to fifty-one effectives for the next day's operations.¹⁹

As the sun rose the following morning, Task Force Dolvin resumed its attack northwards to seize three key terrain features. Before movement Dolvin had adjusted his formations and tactical plans. B Company, 89th Tank Battalion and the Rangers continued to lead the way in the center; however, the tank battalion commander switched the positions of the two rifle companies on his flanks. From left to right, the task force attacked with E Company, 27th Infantry, Eighth Army Rangers, and B Company, 35th Infantry. By mid-morning the Task Force's flank companies had to fight through stiff resistance to get to their objectives. After heavy fire-fights, the rifle companies secured the

¹⁹ *Morning Reports*, 24 and 25 November 1950; Ralph Puckett, letter to author, 24 June 1989; Author- Puckett interviews #1 and # 2; recollections of Rangers John Summers, Bill Judy, Merrill Casner, *Eighth Army Ranger Company Newsletter*, 17 (26 November 1987): 8-10; 12.

Task Force's flanks, and the Rangers, again riding on the backs of the tanks, attacked to seize Objective 8, in the vicinity of Hill 205.

In a repeat of the previous day's performance, the Rangers jumped from the tanks and established a base of fire to suppress enemy small arms fire directed against them from Hill 205. The Rangers ran across another rice paddy while Lieutenant Puckett called for artillery and tank fire. The tanks delivered a much more accurate cannonade than the day before. As artillery and tank shells pounded the objective, the Rangers used fire and maneuver to close on the base of the hill. Puckett's men, spraying streams of automatic weapons fire and throwing grenades, scrambled up the hill. The North Koreans concentrated intense fires on the Rangers, but they continued up the slopes. Supporting fires from other enemy forces located on the high ground southeast of the road added to the Rangers' difficulties. Puckett, noting the direction of the incoming rounds, called for suppressive fires on the second enemy position. Lieutenant Colonel Dolvin monitored the call and directed air strikes on to the target to silence the enemy gunners. The Rangers reached the thinly wooded crest of Hill 205 only to find that the enemy had disappeared. During the attack, the company suffered nine more casualties: six Rangers and three ROK soldiers.²⁰

After the company had reorganized and consolidated on top of Hill 205, Puckett established a 360 degree perimeter and sited his machine-guns on likely avenues of

²⁰ War Diary, 25 November 1950, 89th Tank Battalion, in *25th Infantry Division Command Reports*, Book 9, Attached Unit Reports, November 1950, Box 3765, RG 407, WNRC.

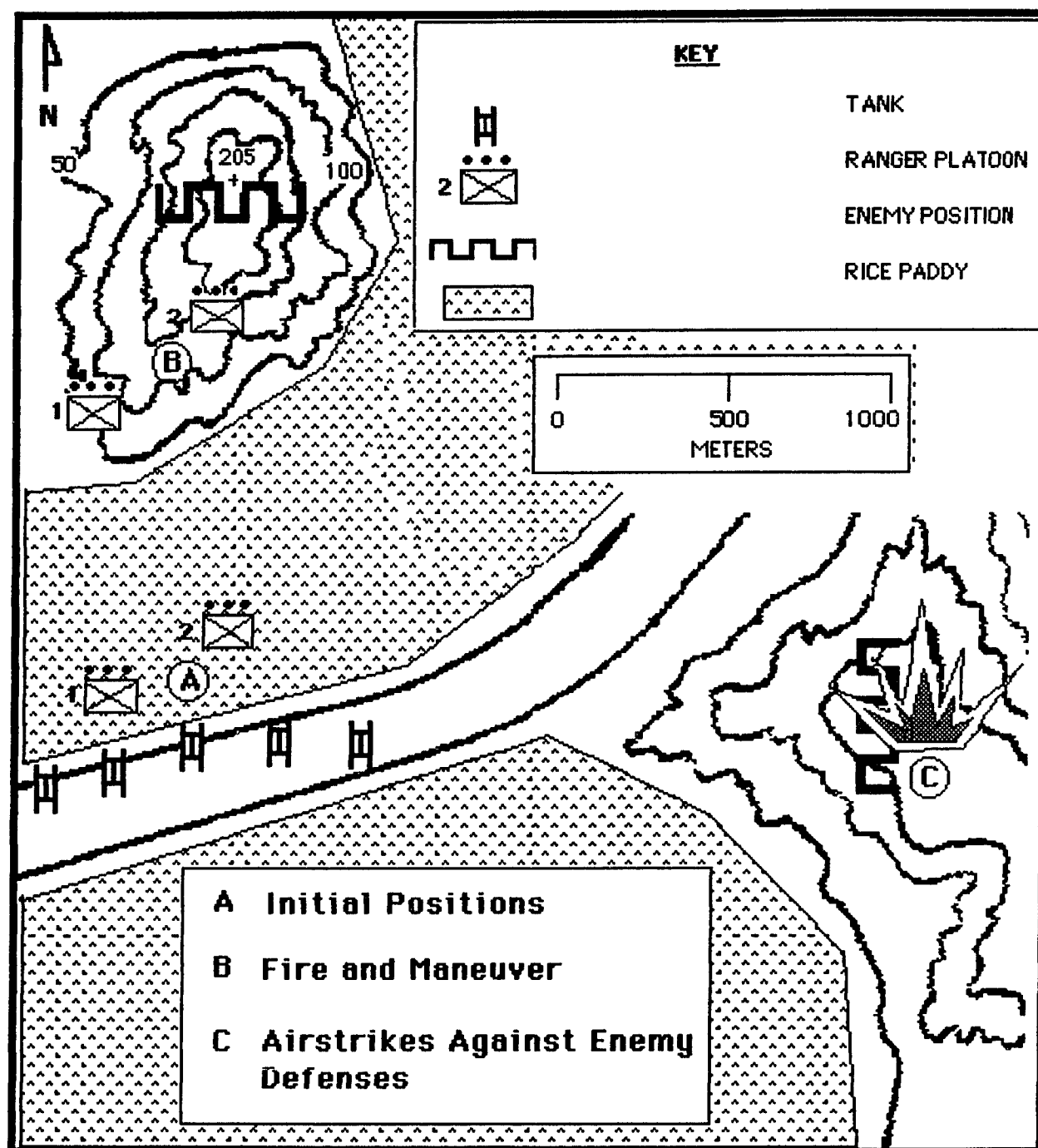


FIGURE 6: EIGHTH ARMY RANGER COMPANY'S ASSAULT ON HILL 205
SOURCE: MAP SHEET ANJU, KOREA

approach. He instructed the platoons to dig foxholes. The hill, however, served as a Korean cemetery. Although the Koreans buried their dead in easily identified mounds,

superstition prevented some men from digging too deeply. Wanting to integrate the fires of the tank company, Puckett walked down the hill to coordinate his defensive plans with the armor company commander. Once satisfied with the company's preliminary defensive measures, the Ranger commander walked back to the Task Force command post to coordinate his artillery fire plan with the artillery liaison officer, Captain Gordon Sumner. He also evaluated the rest of the Task Force's positions and the overall tactical situation before moving back to Hill 205 for the night. Puckett discovered by analyzing the S-3's operations overlay that the Rangers had an exposed right flank. Several kilometers separated the Rangers from the closest friendly unit.²¹

The Rangers continued to improve their defenses throughout the early evening hours in anticipation of a Chinese attack. At one point while digging his foxhole, Corporal Merle Simpson spotted a Chinese soldier on top of the hill. The enemy soldier ran off before anyone could fire a shot.²² As the sun set, the temperature tumbled, adding additional stress and misery to the already battle-fatigued Rangers. Around 2100 hours the company heard machine-gun fire and explosions to their left front. Although it was a brightly moon-lit night, the Rangers could not see what caused the fire-fight. Unknown to Puckett and the Rangers at the time, the Chinese had just overwhelmed the 3d Platoon, E/27th Infantry. Within the hour an intense mortar barrage fell on Hill 205, signalling the opening of a series of Chinese attacks that would last throughout the night.

As the mortar fire lifted, the Chinese, blowing whistles and bugles and throwing hand grenades, swarmed up the hill toward the Rangers. The Rangers greeted the enemy with a fusillade of rifle, machine-gun, and grenade fire. Puckett called for artillery flares to

²¹ Author-Puckett interviews #1 and #2.

²² Merle Simpson, letter to author, 19 August 1989.

illuminate the valley to his front, then instructed the artillery to fire his pre-planned targets. The illumination rounds allowed the Rangers to place accurate small arms, mortar, and artillery fire on the Chinese formations. At 2350 hours the Ranger commander reported that the Chinese attack had failed and that his company still controlled the hill. The enemy attack, however, had killed and wounded several Rangers, including Puckett himself, who had a shard of grenade shrapnel pierce his arm.

In the next three hours, the Chinese launched four more human wave assaults up the hill. Each time the Rangers responded with concentrated firepower from their weapons and the artillery. At times the Chinese reached the Rangers' defensive positions and had to be thrown back with grenades and bayonets. Scrambling from hole to hole between mortar barrages, Puckett frequently left his command post to check the status of his men on the perimeter and help beat back enemy assaults. Returning to his own foxhole, he called on the artillery to place high explosive rounds within danger close (600 meters) of his positions, and then adjusted it to place a wall of steel around his perimeter. Incredibly, the tanks remained at the base of the hill and never fired in support of the Rangers during the course of the battle.²³

The Chinese massed an estimated battalion for a sixth attempt at approximately 0230 hours. The enemy formation directed its main effort towards the company's exposed right flank. By this time, the company's casualties had mounted and many of the Rangers were without ammunition. Preceded by a mortar barrage and grenade explosions, the Chinese breached 2d Platoon's defenses and began to overrun the hill before the rest of the

²³ Author-Puckett interview #2. When asked why the tanks did not fire in his support, Puckett was at a loss for a logical explanation, although he speculated that lack of night training might account for their inaction. Based on their previous days' performance and his conversations with the tank company commander, Puckett's opinion of the tankers, except for Lieutenant Colonel Dolvin, was (understandably) low.

company could react. Puckett called again for more artillery but was told that the battalion was firing another mission for E/27th Infantry, which was also heavily engaged. He continued to beg for a fire mission when two enemy mortar rounds dropped outside his foxhole, wounding him severely and killing Lieutenant Cummings. When Puckett recovered enough to look outside his foxhole, he saw that the Chinese were swarming inside the perimeter. In a muffled voice, the Ranger commander asked the artillery liaison officer to report the dire situation to Dolvin. In other parts of the perimeter, some Rangers continued to fight until the Chinese shot or bayoneted them in their foxholes. Overwhelmed by sheer numbers and with their plight growing more desperate as time passed, the survivors looked for a way to escape from the hill.

Uncommon valor became common as the remaining Rangers helped their wounded off the hill. Rangers David Pollack, Billy Walls, and Bill Judy grabbed Puckett, wounded now for a third time, and dragged him from the hill. While they pulled him down the hill, they encountered and killed a Chinese machine-gun crew set-up to prevent the Rangers escape. At one point Walls asked Puckett if he was all right; Puckett replied "Yes, I am all right! I'm a Ranger!" Avoiding capture, the three Rangers carried and dragged Puckett to the bottom of the hill. At the hill's base, a tank sergeant helped place him on the back of a tank for evacuation to the battalion aid station.

Ranger Bill Kemmer returned to the top of Hill 205 when he discovered that his Ranger buddy, Ted Jewell, was not at the bottom. Kemmer helped Jewell, wounded by a grenade fragment, down the hill to safety. Others were not so lucky. Unable to move due to wounds from a grenade blast, Merrill Castner watched helplessly as the Chinese shot and bayoneted the wounded Rangers remaining on the hill. Castner saw Wilbur Clanton, one of the company's few black Rangers, charge a group of Chinese soldiers with only a bayonet in hand, only to be hacked apart by the enemy. Then a Chinese soldier placed the

barrel of his rifle against Castner's head and fired. Fortunately, the bullet only grazed his head and resulting wound was not fatal. He survived by playing dead and making his way back to friendly lines after the Chinese moved to another part of the hill.

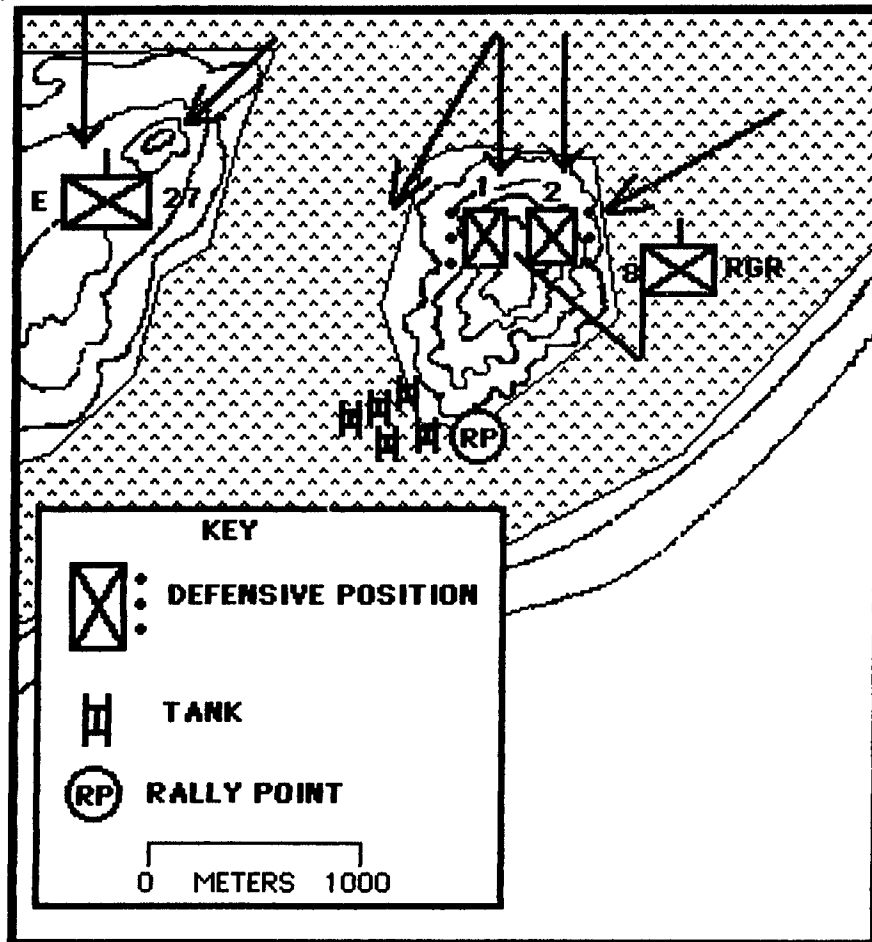


FIGURE 7: DEFENSE OF HILL 205, 26 NOV 50
SOURCE: MAP SHEET ANJU, KOREA.

When the Chinese overwhelmed the remainder of his squad, Merle Simpson ran over to Harland Morrissey's squad, screaming a warning. Morrissey yelled for his men to "fix bayonets!" but quickly changed the order to "get off the hill" when he saw the large numbers of Chinese crest the hilltop. Some Rangers, such as Sumner Kubinak, Librado Luna, Alvin Tadlock, and Ernest Nowlin, stayed behind to provide the covering fire that allowed the rest to withdraw. Intense enemy mortar and machine-gun fire prevented these Rangers from escaping and they died where they fought. At the base of Hill 205, First

Sergeant Charles Pitts set-up a reorganization point and began to collect the straggling Rangers together. Lieutenant Colonel Dolvin, appraised of the Rangers' situation, had the artillery pepper the hill with high explosive and white phosphorus shells. The Chinese continued their assault without making further assaults on the Rangers. When the sun rose on the morning of 26 November 1950, Pitts informed the Task Force commander that the Rangers had one officer and twenty-one enlisted men present for duty.²⁴

The attack that shattered the Rangers was part of the Chinese Second Phase Offensive which sent United Nations' forces reeling all along the front. In Eighth Army's sector, the weight of the Chinese attack collapsed the ROK II Corps. This action exposed the flanks of the 2d Infantry Division to encirclement, forcing it to retreat. The 2d Division's withdrawal became a race for time as the Chinese set-up roadblocks to its rear, closing off the Americans' main routes of escape. Bill Kean's Tropic Lightning Division endured relentless attacks as it fought a series of delaying actions back toward Kunu-ri. Fearing that the continuous assaults on Task Force Dolvin would cleave through the center of his front, Kean sent forward reinforcements under the command of his Assistant Division Commander, Vernard Wilson. In addition to the reserves, Wilson assumed

²⁴ War Diary, 25-26 November 1950, *25th Infantry Division Command Reports*, *25th Infantry Division Command Reports*, History and Staff Section Reports, Book 5-7, November 16-30, 1950 Box 3763, RG 407, WNRC; War Diary, 26 November 1950, 89th Tank Battalion, in *25th Infantry Division Command Reports*, Book 9, Attached Unit Reports, November 1950, Box 3765, RG 407, WNRC; *Morning Reports*, 25-26 November 1950; Author- Puckett interviews # 1 and 2; recollections of Rangers Billy Walls, Charles Pitts, Ted Jewell, Bill Judy, and Merle Simpson, *Eighth Army Ranger Company Newsletter* 17 (27 November 1987): 1-15; Merrill Casner, Telephone interview with Author, 19 October 1989; S.L.A. Marshall, "Death of a Hero," *Combat Forces Journal* (November 1951): 14-22; Don Whitehead, "They Earned Proud Name of 'Rangers': Greenhorns' Repel Red Attacks, Die Like Heros," *Associated Press Release* (1 Dec 1950). For his actions First Lieutenant Puckett later received the Distinguished Service Cross; Pollack and Walls merited the Silver Star; other awards presented for heroism displayed during the battle included three additional Silver Stars and fourteen Bronze Stars with "V" devices.

tactical command of Task Force Dolvin and over the next two days skillfully extricated the task force from disaster. Task Force Wilson also bought time for the rest of the 25th Division to withdraw to Yongbyon, nine miles north of Kunu-ri.

REBUILDING

After accounting for the surviving Rangers, First Sergeant Pitts received orders to move the company back to the division command post. For the next two weeks the remnants of the Eighth Army Ranger Company provided security patrols and manned perimeter outposts around the division headquarters while they withdrew south. On 5 December 1950, Captain John Paul Vann assumed command of the company.

Vann had served in the Army Air Forces as a B-29 navigator during World War II. Following the war, he transferred to the infantry and attended the Airborne School at Fort Benning. He stayed at Benning as an infantry instructor until 1947 when he received a transfer to the 24th Corps, then on occupation duty in Korea. In February 1949 he reported to the 25th Infantry Division in Japan. Vann was working in the division's G-4 section (Logistics) when the Korean War started. Aiding the division's deployment to Korea in July, 1950, he quickly gained the reputation as an aggressive, energetic officer who could get things done. This reputation brought him to the attention of General Kean, and Vann soon became one of the division commander's "fair-haired boys."

Because of his logistics job, Vann had provided some assistance to Ralph Puckett's Rangers in procuring necessary equipment and supplies. When he heard about the Rangers' losses at Hill 205, Vann went to see General Kean and volunteered to command the company. Kean, who had refused Vann's previous bids to command a company,

accepted his offer and assigned him the task of rebuilding the Eighth Army Rangers.²⁵ Vann first met the company in a little village outside Kaesong and told them how much he wanted to be a Ranger company commander. After he had spent the next couple of days with the new commander, First Sergeant Pitts assessed Vann "to be a suitable replacement for Ralph Puckett [but] not exactly a man a first sergeant could fall in love with."²⁶

Vann's first major task was to restore the Rangers' combat readiness. This required three things: time, new equipment, and replacements. Vann worked energetically to procure all three items. Vann obtained the time to reconstitute his company when the 25th Infantry Division relieved the Rangers from their security mission on 9 December and ordered the company to Kaesong for refitting. The Rangers reached Kaesong the next day, and the company's chain of command began to requisition new equipment.

Eighth Army assisted Vann in reorganizing and re-equipping the Ranger company, but under a different table of organization and equipment. EUSAK wanted to comply with Far Eastern Command's previous promise to the Department of the Army to have the Eighth Army Ranger Company serve as a laboratory to test Ranger organization and concepts in Korea. To provide a valid basis for testing, Eighth Army issued General Orders No. 188 directing the Eighth Army Rangers to reorganize according to the 17 October 1950 version of T/O&E 7-87. This would bring Vann's unit on line with the Airborne Ranger companies in the United States. With an authorized strength of 5 officers and 107 enlisted men (including authorized augmentations), the new T/O&E enlarged the company from two to three platoons, eliminated the special weapons squads, and

²⁵ *Official Army Register* (Washington D.C. : Adjutant General's Office, 1950); Neil Sheehan, *A Bright Shining Lie : John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam* (New York: Random House, 1988), 435-467.

²⁶ Recollections of Ranger Charles L. Pitts, *Eighth Army Newsletter* 20 (1 May 1988) : 7.

rearranged each platoon into three ten-men squads. The company's firepower increased with the addition of a 57mm recoilless rifle and a heavy machine-gun in each platoon. Squad members continued to carry a mix of carbines, M-1 rifles, grenade launchers, and BARs, in addition to .45 caliber submachine-guns (SMG). An authorized augmentation of a mess team, communications section, two jeeps and a 2 1/2 ton truck increased the company's capacity to sustain and transport itself.²⁷

To meet the personnel strength prescribed by the table and fill the spaces of previous casualties, the company received replacements from two sources. First, Eighth Army established a Ranger replacement pool at Camp Drake. This time personnel officers identified and interviewed volunteers from incoming infantrymen with combat-experience. The first ten of these recruits reached the Rangers the same day that the company began reorganizing at Kaesong. As a second source, Vann, with General Kean's approval, chose volunteers from among the 25th Infantry Division's units and new replacements. Vann later claimed to be so "flooded by applications" that he had "a waiting list of over 1000 men." Although some men from the infantry regiments opted to join the Rangers, Vann had (characteristically) overstated the numbers.²⁸ Assisted by the Division's G-1 section (Personnel), Vann also received an additional twenty-three men from the division's replacement pool in the second week of December. Many of those that arrived from the replacement centers were straight from basic training or reservists recalled to active duty. Both groups generally lacked the physical fitness or individual skills that the Rangers

²⁷ Department of the Army, *Table of Organization and Equipment No. 7-87*, 17 October 1950 (Washington D.C. : Department of the Army, 1950), Copy in *G-3 Ranger Files*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

²⁸ Captain John P. Vann quoted in "Ranger Officer Reports to RTC; First to Return," *The Bayonet* (24 May 1951) : 10. Vann's statements tended to be self-aggrandizing. During his assignments in Vietnam, he later overstated the role that he played in the Rangers when talking to reporters. For a critical account of Vann's Ranger exploits see Sheehan, *A Bright Shining Lie*, 452-53.

desired. To facilitate the integration of new recruits and the formation of the 3d Platoon, Vann and Pitts redistributed some of the experienced veterans within the company. They placed a seasoned Ranger in charge of each fire team and squad and made these leaders responsible for the training and assimilation of their new members. Despite the priority given to reconstituting the Ranger company, Eighth Army's continued retreat to the south complicated the whole process of securing sufficient personnel and equipment.²⁹

While new replacements arrived, Vann instituted a training program to bring the company back up to Ranger standards. He placed heavy emphasis on physical conditioning, weapons qualification, communications, judo, and patrolling. Because the new T/O&E required the company to be airborne qualified, Vann had his men practice parachute landing falls from the back of a moving truck. Eighth Army, however, cut short the Rangers' training after only three days and attached them to the Turkish Brigade for an upcoming mission.

The company drove to Seoul on 13 December to link-up with the Turks and train for a few more days. During this period, Vann filled his platoon leader positions. Lieutenant Charles Bunn retained his original assignment as 1st Platoon Leader. Vann gave Lieutenant Richard Stiles command of the newly formed 3d Platoon on 15 December. First Lieutenant Glenn Metcalf, a 1949 graduate of the University of San Francisco who had received his commission in the artillery, joined the company three days later and filled

²⁹ Captain John Paul Vann, "Unit Historical Report," 27 January 1951 (Report for December 1950) Eighth Army Ranger Company, U.S. Army, *Command Reports 1949-1954*, *Non-Organic Units, Japan Logistical Command*, AYUT 8213, Box 4644, RG 407, WNRC; G-1 to Chief of Staff, "Informal Routing Slip," 6 December 1951, *25th Infantry Command Reports*, Box 3766, RG 407, WNRC.

the 2d Platoon Leader slot.³⁰ On 16 December, the Rangers received an operations order for their first combat mission since the disaster on Hill 205.³¹

Army DUKWs (amphibious craft) ferried the Eighth Army Ranger Company from the mainland to Kanghwa Island, located at the mouth of the Han River, on 17 December. Attached to the brigade from Turkey, the Rangers' general mission was to screen the Eighth Army's left flank. The company was to conduct reconnaissance and combat patrols to warn the Turks if the enemy tried an amphibious landing below the Imjin River line defenses. Intelligence indicated that North Korean forces had used the island as a staging base for raids behind friendly lines on the mainland in the recent past. When the company marched into Kanghwa city, the local populace gave them an unexpectedly warm welcome. Vann set up his command post in a school house and directed his platoon leaders to establish a series of outposts around the perimeter of the island. In an action that diminished their recent popularity with the natives, the Rangers destroyed all the boats on the island as a precautionary measure to prevent guerrillas from exfiltrating from the island.³²

The Rangers conducted four major types of operations during the two week period they spent on the island. First, the company continuously swept the island using dismounted and mechanized patrols. These patrols maintained contact between the three platoons' outposts and acted as a ready reaction force in the event of enemy contacts or

³⁰ Ibid; *Morning Reports*, 15 and 18 December 1950.

³¹ Operations Instructions # 30, 16 December 1950, *25th Infantry Division Command Reports*, Box 3766, RG 407, WNRC.

³² Vann, "Unit Historical Report, December 1950"; Recollections of Rangers Charles Pitts, John A. Summers, and Bill Skerkowski, *Eighth Army Ranger Company Newsletter* 20 (1 May 1988), 6-11; *Associated Press*, "U.S. Commandos Greeted By Kanghwa Island Folk," undated, photocopy in *Newsletter* listed above.

sightings. During the course of their patrols the Rangers apprehended two hundred Koreans attempting to land on the island during hours of darkness. Some turned out to be refugees or ROK deserters; however, the Rangers held sixty people suspected of being North Korean guerrillas. Second, the company used the DUKW's to conduct sea patrols around the island's perimeter. On several occasions the Rangers engaged small North Korean patrol boats in the channel off the northwest coast of the island. Third, Vann sent platoon-size patrols, sometimes with a Turkish force, across the channel to the mainland for short patrols north of the Imjin River. On a few occasions these patrols sighted several distant enemy concentrations but were unable to engage them. A last mission, complying with Turkish directives, involved the evacuation of friendly civilians on the island. Captain Vann reported evacuating close to 4500 civilians to the mainland during 20-21 December. Throughout their stay on the island, the Rangers reported sightings of flares, machine-gun fire, and the movement of refugees to the G-2. On 28 December, the Rangers received orders relieving them of their mission at the end of the month. The massive Chinese offensive which began on New Years Eve 1950 increased the 25th Infantry Division's sense of urgency to withdraw the Rangers from Kanghwa-do island and move them to reinforce Turkish positions further south.³³

The momentum of the Chinese attack forced Eighth Army, to make successive withdrawals to defensive positions forty miles south of Seoul. The 25th Division maintained its defensive line on the Imjin River on New Years Day, then withdrew to the perimeter around Seoul the following day. Successful Chinese assaults against the ROK

³³ Ibid; G-3 Periodic Operations Reports and G-2 Journals, 17-31 December 1950, *25th Infantry Division Command Reports*, Box 3766, RG 407, WNRC; Vann, "Unit Historical Report," Eighth Army Ranger Company, 27 January 1951; Charles Pitts, letter to author, 10 August 1989; Charles Bunn, letter to Robert Black, 4 October 1985; Sheehan, *Bright Shining Lie*, 468.

divisions in central Korea caused Eighth Army to abandon Seoul and move to "Line C" on the south bank of the Han River on 3-4 January. The 25th moved to and dug-in around Sinchon-ni late on 3 January. Still attached to the Turkish Brigade, the Eighth Army Ranger Company assisted in screening the Division's (and Eighth Army's) right flank. But tactical developments in X Corps' area of operation in eastern Korea required Eighth Army to evacuate Line C and consolidate along Line D, located just below the city of Suwon. The Tropic Lightning Division and its attachments reverted to I Corps reserve with this move. The division, operating out of Chonan, ordered the Rangers to Nonsan to conduct anti-guerrilla patrols in order to provide security for the service support units located in the vicinity.³⁴

Arriving in Nonsan on 8 January, the Eighth Army Ranger Company conducted refresher training and performed rear area security missions for the remainder of the month. The Rangers were responsible for protecting the 25th Division's main supply route, which ran from the Chonan area south to Kunsong. Similar to its earlier experiences at Poun, the company saturated its area of operations with patrols during its three weeks' stay around Nonsan. These short duration squad and platoon-sized Ranger patrols also served as a training vehicle to season new replacements. When a platoon was not on a mission, they conducted training and rehearsed for its next mission.

Captain Vann organized for a long range reconnaissance in force mission on 9 January 1951. Leaving elements of 1st Platoon to train and patrol around Nonsan, Vann task organized 2d and 3d Platoons for a three day sweep of the Kum River valley near the

³⁴ Narrative Summary, *25th Infantry Division Command Reports*, January 1951, Box 3773, RG 407, WNRC; First Lieutenant Glenn W. Metcalf, Jr, "Unit Historical Report," 22 February 1951 (Report for January 1951) Eighth Army Ranger Company, AYUT 8213," *U.S. Army Command Reports 1949-54, Non-organic Units Japan Logistical Command*, Box 5004, RG 407, WNRC; Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 570-604.

village of Inchon-ni. Interestingly, Vann placed Lieutenant Metcalf, now the company executive officer (XO), in command of the formation. Metcalf had recently become the XO when Lieutenant Edward Simonsen arrived on 3 January to fill a platoon leader position. Vann planned to run his own vehicular patrols with the company headquarters and a squad from 1st Platoon. After a five mile drive to the town of Kanggyong, the Rangers disembarked and began their mission in the morning hours of 10 January. Besides a few inaccurate sniper rounds, the Rangers did not encounter any enemy activity that day. The next day one platoon crossed the Kum River to patrol the hills to the north. The other platoon stayed south of the river and searched villages for enemy soldiers and equipment. Neither platoon met much success.

At daylight on 12 January, both platoons moved out to patrol the southeastern portion of their area around Inchon-ni. Around noon the patrol made contact in a small village. After a ninety minute stand-off characterized by crackling exchanges of automatic weapons fire, both sides broke contact. At approximately 1400 hours the Ranger platoons, travelling in column formation, started down the same trail that they had used that morning. The patrol passed through a narrow defile bordering the Kum River. Before moving back to their rally point, the Rangers paused to take a five minute break. When the Rangers resumed their march an enemy machine-gun opened fire on them. The opening blasts killed Rangers John Mitchell, Jr. and Joseph Lauzon as they crossed a rice paddy at the end of the defile, and it wounded several others. The Rangers jumped into a ditch next to the road and began to return fire. Several Rangers, including a medic, attempted to reach their wounded comrades, lying wounded in the ice-covered rice paddy. Intense enemy fire and an inability to cross the ice, however, prevented rescue attempts. For the next two hours, the two platoons battled with the ambushing force, estimated at approximately one hundred enemy soldiers. Unable to overcome enemy resistance, Lieutenant Metcalf ordered the

Rangers to withdraw back through the defile using the ditch for cover. While one platoon suppressed the enemy with rifle and machine-gun fire, another would run down the ditch and set up in a position to overwatch the evacuation of the other. During this action, Lieutenants Simonsen, Stiles, and Metcalf fired machine-guns left unmanned when enemy fire killed their gunners. By 1600 hours, the Rangers had extricated themselves and linked-up with the company's trucks to return to Inchon-ni. The encounter cost the Rangers two killed and nineteen wounded, including both platoon leaders. The patrol was able to inflict fifteen known enemy casualties. Unfortunately, the bodies of the two dead Rangers had to be left behind for recovery at a later date.³⁵

Captain Vann reported the Rangers' situation to division headquarters that night. The Tropic Lightening G-3 instructed Vann to return to the area the following morning with two companies of reinforcements from the 11th ROK Regiment. The Rangers and their ROK attachments began another sweep of the area at day break on 13 January. They searched every village in the vicinity of the previous days' fire-fight. In one hamlet they found sixty men hiding, and Vann had them taken prisoner. As the Rangers herded the prisoners out of the village, an enemy guerrilla band attacked them. In the ensuing fire-fight most of the prisoners escaped, but the Rangers succeeded in killing seven guerrillas and wounding uncounted others. A search of the dead enemy bodies yielded some official documents. These documents later turned out to be North Korean orders to local guerrilla groups instructing them to increase hit and run activity in support of the Chinese

³⁵ Operations Summary, Section IV, *25th Infantry Division Command Reports*, entry for 12 January 1951, Box 3773, RG 407, WNRC; First Lieutenant Glenn Metcalf, Jr., "Unit Historical Report," 22 February 1951 (Report for January 1951), Eighth Army Ranger Company, AYUT 8213, *Command Reports Non-organic Units Japan Logistical Command*, Box 5004, RG 407, WNRC; *Morning Reports*, 12-13 January 1951; John A. Summers, letter to the Author, 7 November 1989; recollections of Rangers Elmer Cassatt and William Skerkowski, *Eighth Army Ranger Company Newsletter* 20 (1 May 1988): 2; 9.

offensive.³⁶ The Ranger company continued aggressive patrolling in this area until 30 January when it assumed the security mission for the 25th Infantry Division's main command post at Suwon.³⁷

TO THE HAN RIVER AND BEYOND

By mid-January, the Chinese offensive had lost steam, and General Ridgway was prepared to counter-attack. Codenamed OPERATION THUNDERBOLT, Eighth Army launched a major assault against the Chinese on 25 January. Ordering American units to get off the roads and into the surrounding hillsides, Ridgway attacked with I and IX Corps abreast, intending to re-establish contact with Chinese forces and reoccupy the Han River defensive line. The 25th Infantry Division spearheaded I Corps' advance with the objective of retaking Suwon. The division seized Suwon on the 26th, but met stiff Chinese resistance when it attempted to push further north the following day. During the first week of February, the Tropic Lightning Division continued to punch northwards, using armored task forces to breakthrough determined Chinese resistance. The Chinese counter-attacked in mid-February temporarily forcing American forces back on the defensive. Employing the superior, massed firepower of combined arms task forces, air attacks, and naval gunfire, Eighth Army shattered the Chinese Fourth Phase Offensive and forced the enemy to withdraw. For the remainder of February, I Corps directed the 25th Division to continue to advance toward the Han, and to clear its area of operation as it proceeded.³⁸

³⁶ G-2 Daily Journal, entry # 4590, 13 January 1951, *25th Infantry Division Command Reports*, Box 3773, RG 407, WNRC.

³⁷ Metcalf, "Unit Historical Report," Eighth Army Ranger Company, AYUT 8213, 22 February 1951.

³⁸ Narrative Summary, *25th Infantry Division Command Reports*, February 1951, Box 3776, RG 407, WNRC; Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 652-712.

As part of their offensive operations, the 25th Infantry Division assigned the Eighth Army Ranger Company a number of missions designed to exploit its light infantry skills and night training. The Rangers received an order on 2 February instructing them to conduct a reconnaissance in force mission in front of the Turkish Brigade to determine the strength and location of enemy forces. The division attached elements of the 25th Reconnaissance Company to the Eighth Army Rangers to provide fire support. The Rangers were to engage any enemy they spotted to inflict a maximum number of casualties, without endangering the primary mission. If possible, the G-2 wanted the Rangers to capture a prisoner and return him for interrogation. The G-2, however, could provide little intelligence as to the whereabouts of any enemy units in the area. The company departed from friendly forward lines around 2000 hours and travelled northwest from the Suwon area. Outside of friendly lines, the Rangers broke into squads to cover their area of operations. During the eight hours on patrol, the Rangers covered eighteen miles but found no evidence of the Chinese. The company re-entered Turkish lines just before sun-up on 3 February and occupied an assembly area north of Suwon. For the next seven days the Rangers remained in their assembly area training and incorporating some new replacements, including Captain Charles Ross as the executive officer and Lieutenant Richard Starcher as the new 3d Platoon Leader.³⁹

While X Corps bore the brunt of the Fourth Phase Offensive, the units of I Corps continued a cautious, systematic advance toward the Han River. On 9 February, the 25th Infantry Division alerted the Rangers for an upcoming mission with the division's

³⁹ Operations Summary, Section IV, *25th Infantry Division Command Reports*, February 1951, Box 3776, RG 407, WNRC; G-2 Journal, *Ibid*, entries on 2-3 February 1951; First Lieutenant Glenn Metcalf, Jr., "Unit Historical Report," 8 March 1951 (Report for February 1951), Eighth Army Ranger Company, AYUT 8213, *Command Reports Non-organic Units Japan Logistical Command*, Box 5004, RG 407, WNRC.

Reconnaissance Company. Linking-up with the reconnaissance troops early the next day, both units' mission was to screen the division's western flank in the vicinity of the port city of Inchon. Minefields impeded the movement of the two companies toward toward the city. The Rangers helped to clear the mines while providing flank security for the motorized reconnaissance elements. Once he had established a command post in Inchon, Vann ordered the Rangers to patrol to the southwest of the town. In the afternoon Ranger patrols encountered a small force of North Koreans entrenched on a key hilltop. With assistance from the 25th Reconnaissance Company's heavy mortars, the Rangers assaulted and captured the hill, killing two enemy, wounding one, and scattering the others. For the next two days, the Eighth Army Rangers continued their screening mission before being recalled to Suwon on 13 February.

At Suwon, the company experienced several changes in its chain of command. Upon returning from the Inchon mission, Captain Vann learned that his infant son was gravely ill and that his wife wanted him to return to Japan. Vann decided to go on emergency leave; therefore, he temporarily passed command to Captain Ross on 14 February. At the same time, Master Sergeant Morris Hickerson replaced Charles Pitts as the company's first sergeant. Pitts then became the 2d Platoon Leader.⁴⁰ Vann never returned, and Ross commanded the company for the remainder of its existence.⁴¹ The

⁴⁰ Charles L. Pitts, Phone interview with author, 5 September 1989.

⁴¹ Although not Ranger trained, Charles Ross had extensive "on-the -job" experience with patrolling and behind the lines missions. As a rifle platoon leader on Bougainville, he led many patrols and ran a patrolling school for his rifle battalion. Later on Leyte, Ross spent two weeks behind enemy lines contacting guerrilla units while acting as a reconnaissance platoon leader. Towards the end of the war, he commanded E Company, 164th Infantry. During the inter-war period he commanded an armored cavalry company in

new leaders had little time to transition into their positions before the company received orders for further combat missions.

After a stretch performing as a security guard for the division command post, the Rangers acted as a contact force on the division's right flank. The company searched and cleared the area between the division's right most unit, the 27th Infantry Regiment, and 19th ROK Regiment, beginning on 16 February. A South Korean liaison team attached to the Rangers enhanced the company's ability to communicate and maintain contact between the two friendly forces. While the Rangers screened the right flank, the 25th Division slowly advanced north, and by early morning on 19 February reached the Han River.⁴²

In support of General Ridgway's counter-offensive plan, OPERATION KILLER, the general mission of the units in I Corps was to hold its positions, feint large-scale Han River crossings, and send strong patrols across the river to harass the enemy. This plan provided the 25th Infantry Division with ideal opportunities to employ the Rangers in raids and other behind the lines combat missions. The division ordered the Eighth Army Ranger Company to cross the Han River, near the village of Sachon-ni, during hours of darkness on 20 February and proceed to the railroad tunnels on the far bank. The Rangers' mission was to raid the railroad tunnels, destroy any enemy equipment, and take prisoners, if possible. To supplement their forces and provide supporting fires, the division attached a platoon from the 27th Infantry to the company. The Rangers moved to a new assembly area three kilometers south of the Han River during the early morning hours of 20 February. While the rest of the company rehearsed for the raid, reconnaissance patrols

Japan, a basic training company at Fort Pickett, Virginia, and a company in the 3d Battalion, 504th Infantry (Airborne). He volunteered for the Rangers after his arrival in Korea in January 1951. Charles Ross, letter to author, 21 August 1989; Sheehan, *A Bright Shining Lie*, 468-472.

⁴² Ibid.

spent the day observing the opposite shore endeavoring to spot any activity in the objective area. The reconnaissance parties returned at dusk, not having seen any indication of the enemy. At approximately 2000 hours the Ranger force moved down to a position just short of the river, established security, and prepared to cross. Because the river had frozen over, Captain Ross scrubbed his original plans to use rafts and decided to cross over the ice on foot, leading with 3d Platoon. The patrol kicked off at 2135 hours. Approximately two hundred meters from the northern shore, enemy sentries challenged the lead elements. Ignoring the voices, the Rangers hurriedly moved toward the objective area. The North Koreans challenged the unit twice more before opening fire with automatic weapons.

The fire from at least five enemy machine-guns pinned the Rangers to the ice. Bright moonlight, reflecting off the snow and ice which was present, illuminated the river bed enabling the enemy to spot any objects or detect signs of movement. Without white camouflage, the Rangers, assuming the prone position as soon as the firing started, presented a clearly visible target. Fortunately, the North Koreans were poor marksmen and did not inflict any friendly casualties. Scouts from 3d Platoon worked their way to the far bank, followed by most of platoon. After an hour of waiting, the North Koreans stopped their intermittent firing, and the rear most elements of the Ranger formation extracted themselves to the friendly southern bank of the Han. Captain Ross decided to halt the mission and sent word to the 3d Platoon to make its way back across the river. As the lead elements stepped out onto the ice, the enemy opened fire once again. The Rangers on the south side of the river could not provide suppressive fire for fear of hitting their own men. The 3d Platoon members finally made it back across the river by crawling on their hands and knees and bellies under the hail of bullets directed at them by the North Koreans. The Rangers disengaged from the landing site, reported their situation to the 25th Division, then

returned to their assembly area by 0100 hours, 21 February. Despite the opposing machine-gun fire, the patrol suffered no casualties.⁴³

The Rangers rested the remainder of the 21st, then convoyed the next day to the village of Polli, approximately ten miles south of their previous position and adjacent to a branch of the Kyonganch'on river. The division arranged to have small rubber boats delivered to the Rangers' assembly area. The company then began an intensive four day training program emphasizing raids and movement in the rubber boats. They also practiced firing M-1 carbines equipped with infrared sniper scopes, shipped the same day along with the boats.⁴⁴

While the Rangers trained at Polli, the 25th Infantry Division received a change of mission. General Ridgway, on 26 February, unveiled his plan for OPERATION RIPPER, a continuation of the United Nations' counter-offensive back toward the 38th Parallel. Once again Ridgway's concept of the operation called for the 25th Division to spearhead an assault. The Tropic Lightning Division's task during RIPPER was to cross the Han River east of Seoul where the river joined the Pukhan River. Once across, the division was to attack to the high ground north of the city. This action would outflank North Korean forces in Seoul and threaten them with envelopment. The remainder of Eighth Army would advance on line, phase line by phase line, in support of the 25th Division's initial offensive

⁴³ Operations Summary for 20 February 1951, Ibid; G-2 Periodic Intelligence Summary, 19 and 20 February 1951, Ibid; Metcalf, "Unit Historical Report," 8 March 1951 (Report for February 1951); Charles Ross, letter to author, 21 August 1989; Merle Simpson, letter to author, 19 August 1989; recollections of Ranger John Summers in *Eighth Army Ranger Company Newsletter* 21 (25 August 1988), 1; 3.

⁴⁴ First Lieutenant Glenn Metcalf, Jr., "Unit Historical Report," 8 March 1951 (Report for February 1951), Eighth Army Ranger Company, AYUT 8213, *Command Reports Non-organic Units Japan Logistical Command*, Box 5004, RG 407, WNRC.

actions. In order to give his units time to build-up five days' worth of supplies in forward areas, Ridgway set 10 March, later accelerated to 7 March, as D-day. The division's G-2 and G-3 sections gave priority to the gathering of intelligence about possible crossing sites and enemy dispositions . These requirements provided a tailor made opportunity to employ the Rangers for reconnaissance and raid missions.⁴⁵

Coincidentally, the Rangers were in a position to begin such missions without delay. On 25 February, the company had moved to another assembly area closer to the Han River to prepare for future operations in the area. The division, late on 26 February, ordered the company to prepare a platoon-size patrol for a raid across the Han scheduled for the night of 28 February. The Ranger mission was to raid the village of Yangsuri, destroy surrounding entrenchments, and, once again, snatch a prisoner. Based on information obtained from previous prisoners, the G-2 briefed Captain Ross to expect squad size elements in entrenchments around the village. For the next two days, the Rangers conducted a series of reconnaissance patrols along the south bank of the river looking for crossing sites in preparation for their mission.

Captain Ross assigned the 2d Platoon under Master Sergeant Pitts to perform the raid. Ross decided to accompany the patrol to lend his assistance if needed. To prevent a recurrence of the situation surrounding the 20 February crossing, Ross tasked 1st Platoon to provide an overwatching force at the crossing site. The Rangers departed their assembly area near the village of PunWonni at 1915 hours and carried their boats to the water's edge while 1st Platoon set-up in their security position. At 2200 hours the first wave of boats,

⁴⁵ Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 732-735.

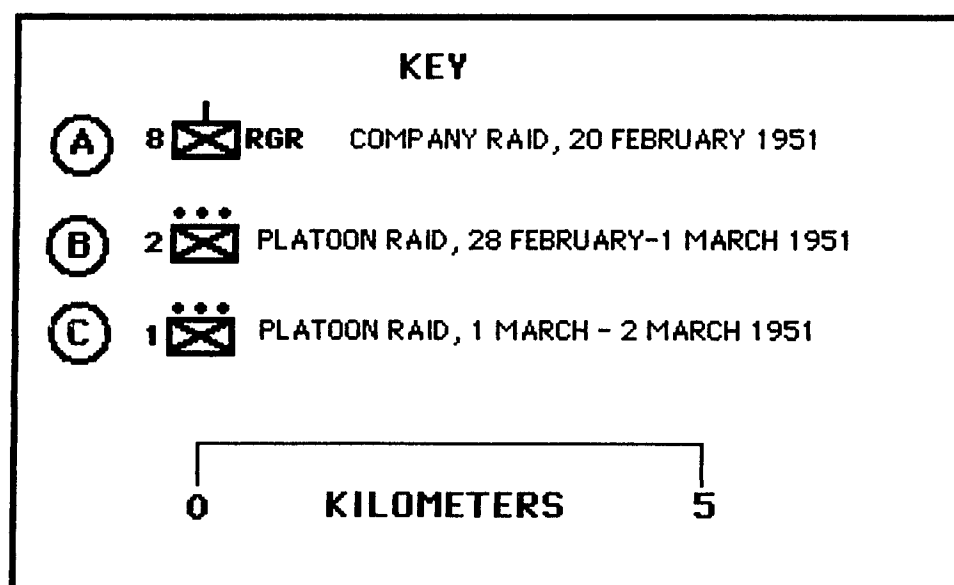
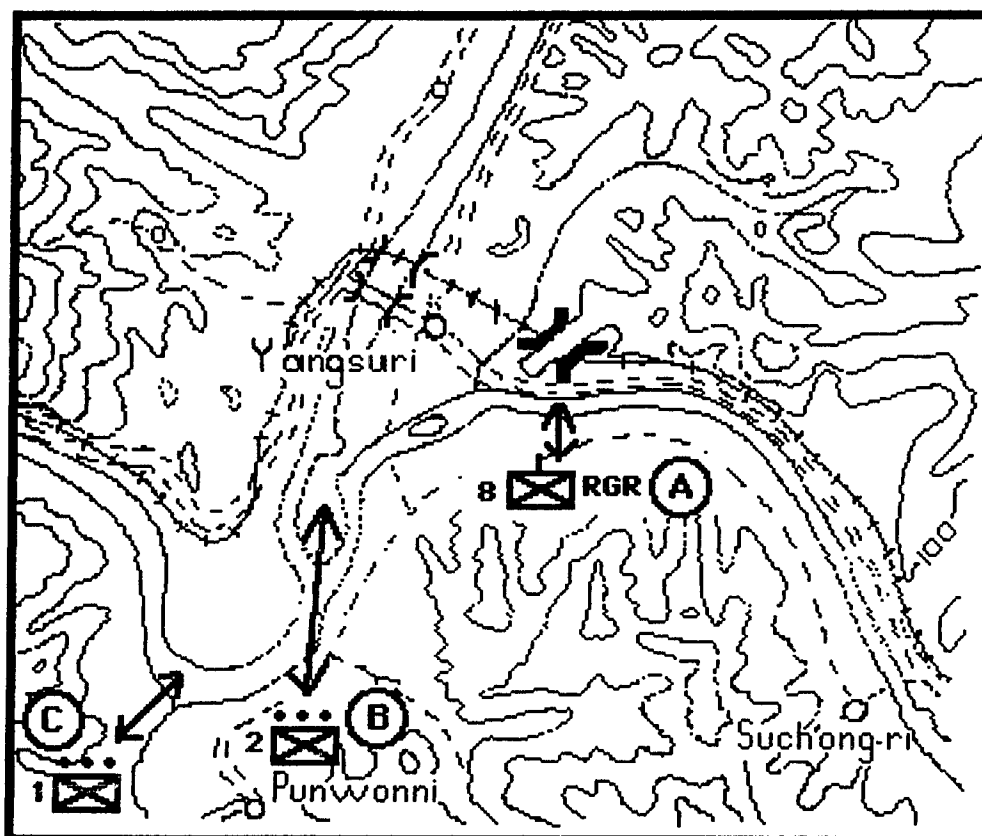


FIGURE 8 : EIGHTH ARMY RANGER RAIDS ACROSS THE HAN RIVER
SOURCE: MAP SHEET SEOUL, KOREA.

consisting of five two-man boats, started across the river. The river's swift current, now swollen with huge chunks of ice and melting snow, made paddling extremely difficult. Half-way across the river, three boats overturned. The six occupants grabbed the boats and swam toward the friendly shore to try again. Meanwhile the three other boats, including Captain Ross's, made it to the far shore. Ross and the five other Rangers on the enemy side of the river secured the beachhead while the remainder of the platoon ferried themselves across in eight-man boats. Once it had reorganized, the platoon moved out toward Yangsuri. At the objective, Pitts set up security while assault teams searched the village. The teams failed to find any enemy soldiers or equipment. The platoon pushed a mile further inland in search of the enemy but made no contact. The Rangers backtracked to the landing site, loaded their boats, and returned to friendly lines south of the Han by 0330 hours.⁴⁶

Still wanting to know more about the enemy situation along the Pukhan River, the division instructed Captain Ross to organize another patrol to search the railroad tunnels north of Yangsuri. Ross chose Charlie Bunn's 1st Platoon for the mission to depart after dark on 1 March. The patrol pushed off in rubber boats at approximately 2105 hours. The current and blocks of ice floating down the river once again made the going extremely rough. Half-way across the river the boats struck a sheet of ice. After attempts to break through the ice with their oars failed, several Rangers jumped from the boats to try to pull them across; however, the ice was too fragile to support their weight. Unable to push or pull the boats across the river, the Rangers abandoned the mission and paddled back to the

⁴⁶ Operations Summary, Section IV, 28 February 1951, *25th Infantry Division Command Reports*, Box 3776, RG 407, WNRC ; recollections of Ranger Charles Ross in *Eighth Army Ranger Company Newsletter* 21 (25 August 1988) : 14-15.

friendly side. For the next two days, Captain Ross sent patrols out to scout for more feasible crossing sites for the Tropic Lightning Division's upcoming assault across the river. During these patrols, the Rangers gathered technical data about the river's current, banks, and bottom conditions. On the morning of the 4th, the 25th Division relocated the Rangers to an assembly area in the rear and started to position its other units further forward for start of OPERATION RIPPER.⁴⁷

As the artillery pounded the northern shore of the Han River on 7 March to kick off the 25th Division's attack, the Rangers refitted and conducted refresher training in their assembly area. The company remained in the rear until 12 March when the division attached it to the all-black 24th Infantry Regiment for use as reconnaissance patrols. Ironically, the Rangers established their command post in the vicinity of the village of Yangsuri, the objective of two of their cross-river raids. During their four days with the 24th Infantry, the Rangers conducted day and night patrols, sometimes as far as six miles to the regiment's front. Although the patrols encountered little enemy opposition, they were able to capture several demoralized North Korean soldiers. On 17 March, the Eighth Army Ranger Company reverted to divisional control and received a warning order for another behind the lines combat mission.⁴⁸

The Tropic Lightning Division had driven approximately nine miles north of the Han River since the start of the offensive. On 17 March, the division held the high ground

⁴⁷ Operations Summary, Section IV, 1-4 March, *25th Infantry Division Command Reports, March 1951*, Box 3779, RG 407, WNRC; Glenn Metcalf, Jr, "Unit Historical Report," 1 April 1951 (Report for March 1951), Eighth Army Ranger Company, AYUT 8213, *Command Reports for Non-Organic Units Japan Logistical Command*, Box 5004, RG 407, WNRC.

⁴⁸ Operations Summary, 5-17 March 1951, *25th Infantry Division Command Reports, March 1951*; Metcalf, "Unit Historical Report," 1 April 1951 (Report for March 1951) Eighth Army Ranger Company AYUT 8213, *Command Reports For Non-organic units in Japan Logistical Command*, Box 5004, RG 407, WNRC.

northeast of Seoul and planned to continue its assault to the northwest to capture the town of Chongson on the 38th Parallel near the confluence of the Imjin and Hantan Rivers. The next step in this process was to seal the road and rail line running northeast out of Seoul through Pupyong-ni. This avenue offered the enemy an opportunity to escape through the rugged mountains north of the village. The Rangers' mission for 19-20 March was to infiltrate seven miles to Pupyong-ni and set-up road-blocks and ambushes to stop the enemy from using this route. To enhance the Rangers' chances of success in the event of heavy contact, the division G-3 allocated them some artillery priority of fires and close air support sorties.⁴⁹

After coordinating his routes of advance with the division G-3 and supporting units, Captain Ross and two platoons moved from Yangsuri to a forward assembly area near Kumgong-ni on the evening of 18 March. The company, less the platoon left behind at Yangsuri, moved out early the next morning in order to get to the objective in time to make a daylight surveillance. To avoid detection during movement, the company broke into squad-size patrols which slowly proceeded to a rendezvous point, making maximum use of wooded areas and masking terrain. At 1525 hours, Captain Ross reported that the Rangers had linked up and occupied a hide position within two hundred meters of the proposed road-block site. Reconnaissance parties moved closer and observed the objective.

Around 2100 hours the Rangers departed the hide position, established the road-block approximately seven hundred meters south of Pupyong-ni, and set-up in ambush positions to cover their obstacle with fire. For the next five hours the Rangers maintained a vigil around the road-block. Security elements sited two suspected enemy soldiers and two

⁴⁹ Narrative Summary, *25th Infantry Division Command Reports*, March 1951, Box 3779, RG 407, WNRC.

civilians out of small arms range to the south of the roadblock, and reported numerous flares in the area. The Rangers had no enemy contact at their objective, however, and between 0100-0200 Captain Ross gathered in his elements to start the trip back to friendly lines. Because the darkness of the night concealed their movement, the Rangers' exfiltration route was more direct and took less time to negotiate. The company made contact with forward elements of the 24th Regiment at 0430 hours and conducted a passage of lines through friendly lines at 0500 hours. After an intelligence debriefing, the Rangers departed by trucks for their assembly area on the division's right flank. Joined by the other platoon the next day, the Eighth Army Rangers remained in their assembly area resting and training for three days.⁵⁰

As it continued its methodical advance on a narrow front during the last two weeks of March, the 25th Infantry Division utilized the Rangers in a more conventional role. Placed once again under the operational control of the 24th Infantry Regiment, the company moved from its assembly area after dark on 24 March and travelled west to set up blocking positions. The Rangers screened from position to position as the 24th Infantry assaulted to the north. During movement on one patrol, the company stumbled across a bombed-out enemy position sited on a ridge-line astride the 24th's main avenue of approach. Napalm and bomb shrapnel had killed thirty-nine Chinese soldiers in their defensive positions. Ranger patrols later captured two prisoners as part of their operations. On 26 March, the company provided security for the regimental command post's displacement to a new

⁵⁰ Operations Summary, 19-20 March, Ibid; G-2 Daily Journal, 19-20 March, Ibid; Metcalf, "Unit Historical Report," 1 April 1951 (Report for March 1951) Eighth Army Ranger Company AYUT 8213, *Command Reports For Non-organic units in Japan Logistical Command*, Box 5004, RG 407, WNRC; Charles Pitts, letter to author, 10 August 1989.

position. Once the command post had completed its move, the Rangers occupied an assembly area of their own to prepare for what would be their last mission.⁵¹

LAST MISSION AND STAND-DOWN

As they sat in their assembly area, the Eighth Army Rangers could take pride in their recent combat accomplishments. Since January the Tropic Lightening Division had made a concerted effort to employ the company to take better advantage of its night-fighting and raiding skills. The Rangers were also cognizant that other divisions would look at their performance in determining how to use their own Ranger companies. The Eighth Army Ranger Company's role as an organizational laboratory was about to end abruptly, however, as the Airborne Ranger companies deployed to the Far East.

The Airborne Ranger companies began to arrive in Korea in December 1950-January 1951. While the Eighth Army Ranger Company fought with the 25th Infantry Division, the 1st, 2d, and 4th Airborne Rangers had also engaged in a variety of combat operations with their parent divisions. By mid-March, three more of the elite companies, fresh from mountain and cold weather training, were enroute to Far East Command to join their other Ranger counterparts.

The arrival of the Airborne Ranger companies in Korea posed a difficult problem for Eighth Army planners regarding the future of the Eighth Army Ranger Company. The Army had organized the Ranger companies with the intent of assigning one per infantry division. The Department of the Army had assigned the first three companies to Eighth

⁵¹ Operations Summary, 24-26 March 1951, Ibid; Metcalf, "Unit Historical Report," 1 April 1951 (For March 1951) Eighth Army Ranger Company AYUT 8213, *Command Reports For Non-organic units in Japan Logistical Command*, Box 5004, RG 407, WNRC; Charles Pitts, interview with author, 5 September 1989.

Army, which then attached them to the 2d Infantry, 7th Infantry, and 1st Cavalry Divisions. When the second Ranger training cycle's companies arrived, the 5th Airborne Ranger Company was to go to the 25th Infantry Division. Eighth Army did not want the Tropic Lightning Division to have two companies, but was uncertain about what course of action to pursue.

Colonel Van Houten raised this issue with General Bolté in February 1951 and pointed out two things. First, the Department of the Army had formally activated the Airborne Rangers companies as part a permanent part of the force structure. The Eighth Army, however, had organized its Ranger Company as a "Bulk Authorization Unit" for temporary purposes only. The Ranger Training Center commander argued (rightly) that T/O&E units took precedent over temporary ones. Second, and probably most important to Army budget planners, only one company had authorization to draw parachute pay. Every member of the 5th Ranger Company was airborne qualified, but this was not true for the Eighth Army Ranger Company. Van Houten and the G-3 foresaw resulting morale problems if only one company in the division could draw jump pay. FECOM concurred with Van Houten's arguments and made plans to discontinue the Eighth Army Ranger Company once the 5th Airborne Ranger Company arrived in theater. To lessen the blow to the members of the Eighth Army Rangers, FECOM decided to authorize those airborne qualified personnel in the company the opportunity to volunteer for duty with the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team in Korea. Neither Department of the Army nor FECOM released this information, of course, until the last minute to preserve the morale and fighting spirit of the Eighth Army Ranger Company.⁵² Back in Korea, Captain Ross

⁵² Colonel Van Houten to Colonel Krause, Memorandum, 17 February 1951, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives; Glenn Metcalf, Jr, "Unit Historical Report," 1 April 1951 (Report for March) Eighth Army Ranger Company AYUT 8213, *Command Reports For Non-organic units in Japan*

and his Rangers were blissfully unaware of these plans as they prepared for an upcoming mission behind enemy lines.

The 25th Infantry Division's G-2 briefed Captain Charles Ross on available intelligence for a Ranger raid mission set for the evening of March 27. Reports gathered from fleeing refugees indicated that a Communist Chinese unit was forcing civilians to dig and then occupy defensive positions around the town of Changgo-ri. It was, the G-2 believed, a Chinese attempt to conceal the unit's size and actual defensive dispositions. The chief intelligence officer also speculated that the enemy unit in the town was a stay-behind rear guard for the Chinese forces that had evacuated the Seoul area.⁵³ The Ranger company was to infiltrate six miles north to Changgo-ri and raid the town to determine the enemy's true strength and dispositions. Ross was to coordinate a passage of lines through the 3d Battalion, 24th Infantry after dark and for re-entry into friendly lines through the 35th Regiment's positions after completing the raid.

Following the G-2's briefing, Ross formulated his operational plan based on the factors of mission, enemy, troops available, and terrain. Because the enemy's strength was unknown, he decided to employ the whole company for the raid. Ross's concept of the operation called for the Rangers to infiltrate past Changgo-ri to the north. The company, with platoons abreast, would then make a continuous assault through the village from north to south. Once on the south side of the village, the company would follow an alternate route to return to friendly lines.⁵⁴ After formulating his tactical plan, Ross issued

Logistical Command, Box 5004, RG 407, WNRC; Hogan, "The Evolution of the Concept of the Rangers, 1942-1983," 252-253.

⁵³ G-2 Daily Journal and Periodic Intelligence Summary, 27 March 1951, *25th Infantry Division Command Reports*, March 1951, Box 3779, RG 407, WNRC.

⁵⁴ Charles L. Pitts, interview with author, 5 September 1989.

an operations order to his platoon leaders. He then coordinated for artillery support, placing target reference points along the company's routes of movement and on top of the objective. He set departure time for 2200 hours, 27 March 1951.

The Rangers passed through the 24th Regiment's positions on schedule and proceeded north hugging the wooded, hilly terrain to the west of the road leading into Changgo-ri (FIGURE 9). The company arrived in the vicinity of their objective around 0100. Due to the difficulty of land navigation at night, the company stopped on the western, instead of northern, side of the town. Not wanting to waste any more time, Captain Ross deployed his forces for the raid, using a small creek that ran through the town as a navigation aid. He elected not to use preparatory fires on the objective to initiate raid. Instead, Ross had the Ranger assault line move by stealth into town, withholding their firing until fired upon. The assault force encountered an enemy outpost as it advanced into the town. The Rangers quickly overran the position, but not before they had alerted the remaining enemy forces. A general fire-fight ensued. For the next 2 1/2 hours the Rangers probed the Chinese defenses, destroying a rice cache, killing three confirmed Chinese soldiers, and wounding numerous others.

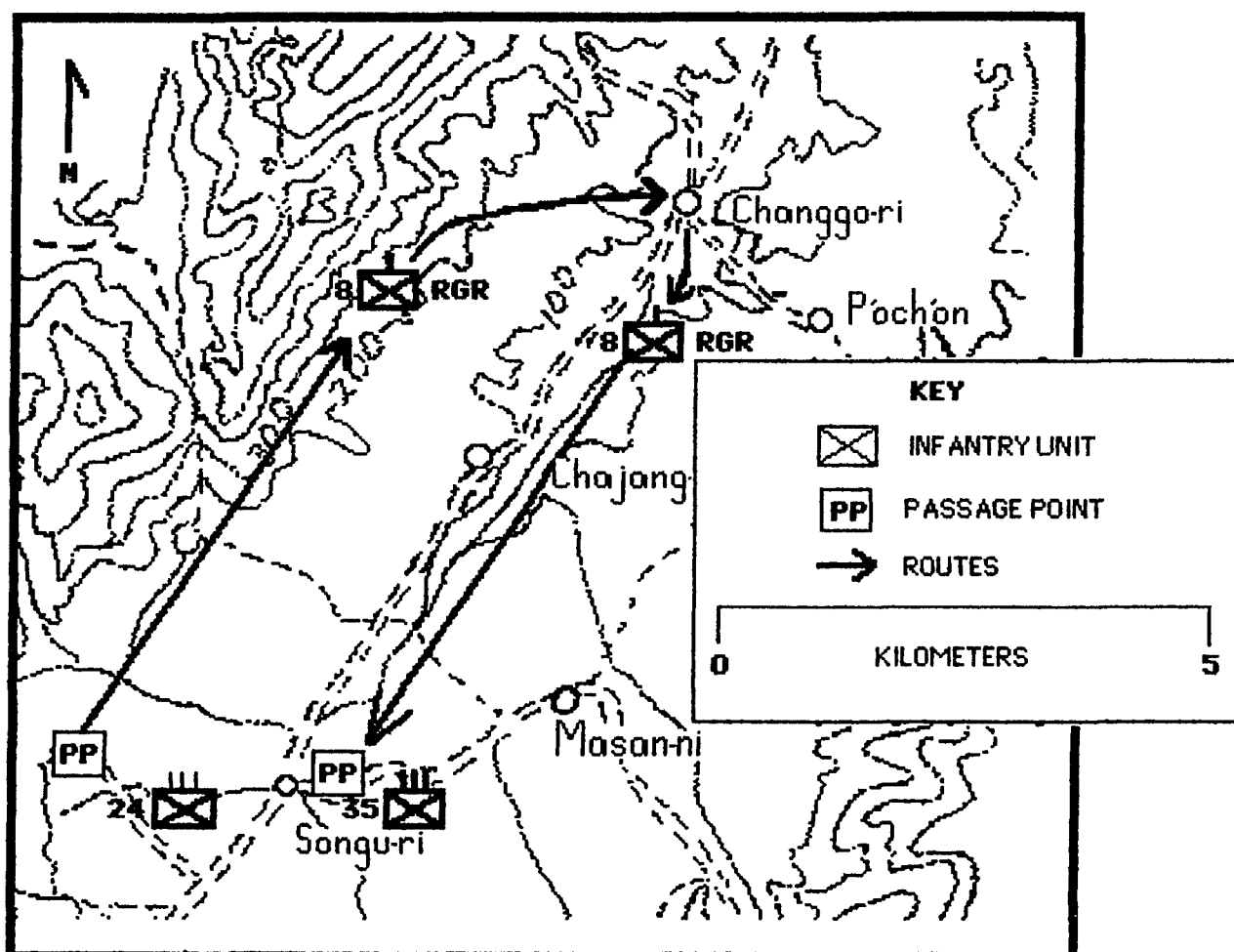


FIGURE 9 : RAID AT CHANGGO-RI, 27-28 MARCH 1951

SOURCE : AUTHOR'S RECONSTRUCTION; MAP SHEET SEOUL, KOREA.

At 0340 hours, Captain Ross signalled his Rangers to withdraw. As friendly forces departed the objective, Ross called for artillery on top of the town to break-up Chinese formations concentrating for a counter-attack. The company exfiltrated back toward friendly lines using an alternate route to the east of the road running to Changgo-ri. The Chinese pursued the Rangers for some distance, but the company avoided contact by continuing to place effective artillery fire on the enemy. Captain Ross signalled the re-entry code to the 35th Regiment just before 0500 hours, and the Rangers passed through F Company, 35th Regiment five minutes later. An hour later the Rangers gathered in a rear

assembly for their G2 intelligence debriefing. From the company's account, intelligence officers confirmed their suspicions that the Chinese had indeed left behind a strong rear guard to cover their withdrawal northwards. The Rangers' detailed information of the objective area later assisted the 35th Regiment in their attack on Changgo-ri on 29 March.⁵⁵

Following the mission, Captain Ross had the onerous task of informing the Eighth Army Rangers that their company was to be disbanded. The Ranger commander allowed the men to rest in their assembly for several hours before calling the company together for a meeting. Ross bluntly read General Orders Number 172, issued by Headquarters Eighth Army on 27 March, which stated that the "Eighth Army Ranger Company, 8213th Army Unit is discontinued in Korea effective 28 March 1951." The order, per previously agreed upon plans, directed the 25th Infantry Division Commander to reassign Ranger personnel consistent with his unit's needs, but required him to offer qualified parachutists the chance to volunteer for an airborne assignment.⁵⁶ Shocked by the turn of events, the Rangers loudly complained about the company's fate. They had no choice but to accept orders, however.

⁵⁵ Operations Summary, 27-28 March 1951 and G-2 Daily Journal 28 March 1951, 25th Infantry Command Reports, March 1951, Box 3779, RG 407, WNRC; Metcalf, "Unit Historical Report," 1 April 1951 (For March 1951) Eighth Army Ranger Company AYUT 8213, *Command Reports For Non-organic units in Japan Logistical Command*, Box 5004, RG 407, WNRC; Charles L. Pitts, interview with author, 5 September 1989; Recollections of Rangers Merle Simpson and John Summers in *Eighth Army Ranger Company Newsletter* 21 (25 August 1951): 1; 3.

⁵⁶ Headquarters, Eighth United States Army, General Orders Number 172, "Subject: Discontinuance of Bulk Authorization," 27 March 1950 in Metcalf, "Unit Historical Report," 1 April 1951 (For March 1951) Eighth Army Ranger Company AYUT 8213, *Command Reports For Non-organic units in Japan Logistical Command*, Box 5004, RG 407, WNRC.

Within a week, the company's enlisted soldiers had transferred to infantry or service units within the 25th Division; a handful volunteered for airborne duty. The officers transferred to assignments in the 187th Regimental Combat Team, the 4th Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, or Headquarters, Eighth Army.⁵⁷ On 31 March 1951, Eighth Army officially attached the 5th Airborne Ranger Company to the 25th Infantry Division to replace the Eighth Army Ranger Company.⁵⁸

During its six month life-cycle, the Eighth Army Ranger Company made contributions as light infantry specialists and an organizational laboratory. For a unit its size, the Ranger company compiled a respectable combat record. The Rangers fought in four major campaigns with 164 days of continuous front-line duty. The South Korean government later awarded the company a Korean Presidential Unit Citation for its efforts. The Rangers proved that American soldiers could operate at night and behind enemy lines if they had the proper training, leadership, and aggressive mental attitude. In its role as a laboratory, the Eighth Army Ranger Company highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of

⁵⁷ Captain Charles G. Ross, "Subject: Roster of Personnel," Eighth Army Ranger Company, 8213th Army Unit, 3 April 1951, copy in author's possession. Interestingly, Ross later transferred to the 1st Airborne Ranger Company and served as their commanding officer until the company deactivated in August 1951.

⁵⁸ Despite the lobbying efforts of Ralph Puckett, the Eighth Army Ranger Association, and the national Ranger Infantry Companies Airborne Association, the Eighth Army Ranger Company is not considered as part of the official lineage of the 75th Ranger Regiment. Although the Eighth Army Ranger Company organized under two recognized Ranger T/O&Es, the Department of the Army did not officially "activate" the unit. The Army considered such a unit a temporary Table of Distribution Unit (TDA). Army policy prohibits the perpetuation of a TDA unit's history unless that unit had consolidated with another T/O&E unit before disbandment. While the unit is not part of the official lineage and honors of the Ranger Regiment, the Department of the Army considers the Eighth Army Ranger Company an important part of the Ranger heritage. See: Center For Military History, Action Memorandum, "Subject: Special Operations Forces Lineage and Honors," 27 June 1986 and Colonel C. Reid Franks to Ralph Puckett, 3 June 1988, both in "Rangers-General" file at Organizational Histories Branch (Washington D. C. : CMH), document number HRC 714.7.

the current T/O&E and doctrinal concepts. As the "first" Rangers in the Korean War, the company established baselines standards and practices for the remaining Ranger companies to follow.

CHAPTER V

CREATING HAVOC IN THE ENEMY'S REAR

Recovering from the chaos caused by Chinese intervention in November, United Nations' forces stopped retreating and returned to the offensive in the winter and spring of 1951. A change in Eighth Army top leadership facilitated this turn of events. Lieutenant General Matthew B. Ridgway, the renowned airborne commander of World War II fame, had assumed command after General Walker's untimely death on December 23, 1950. After a brief meeting with General MacArthur in Japan, where he was told to "do what he thought was best", the new Eighth Army commander flew to Korea to take charge on December 26th. Wanting to "make an immediate improvement in Eighth Army's combat potential" Ridgway was "determined to return to the offensive as quickly as . . . strength permitted."¹ The new commander, besides providing solid battlefield leadership, utilized small, limited objective offensive actions to build up the Army's confidence and morale. Despite some early set-backs, Eighth Army's offensive gained momentum and forced the enemy back across the 38th Parallel by mid-1951. The three Airborne Ranger companies that deployed from the United States in winter 1950-51 arrived in Korea in time to participate in the first phases of "Ridgway's War."

The Rangers, physically toughened and with their combat skills honed to a fine edge by the program at Fort Benning, looked forward to combat in Korea. The companies were confident that they could raise havoc in the enemy's rear. Ranger raids could act as a potent psychological weapon by drawing off front-line enemy units to guard their rear areas. This would help facilitate United Nations Command's advances. Ranger company

¹ Matthew B. Ridgway, *The Korean War* (New York: Doubleday & Co, 1967), 85.

commanders aggressively sought out such missions from their divisions' headquarters. Ridgway's emphasis on the offensive reinforced the Rangers desire to close with and kill the enemy, especially when they could do it on their own terms. Combat operations in Korea would give the Rangers many opportunities to demonstrate their unique capabilities.

RAID ON CHANGMAL

Arriving in Korea in mid-December, the 1st Rangers joined the 2d Infantry Division on the 23d near the town of Chungju, sixty miles south of Seoul. The division was refitting after its near annihilation by the Chinese during the late November retreat through the Kunu-ri roadblock. Housed in an old schoolhouse, the company spent the first few days in country processing into the division and drawing equipment. The company's leaders, while awaiting a definite mission, reviewed standard operating procedures and basic tactics.

The 1st Company's officers and NCO's, many of them experienced combat infantrymen, were well-qualified for their jobs. Captain John "Black Jack" Streigal initially commanded the company. He had served in an infantry regiment during World War II. A much respected and admired leader, Streigal would develop hepatitis soon after arriving and would not command the company in actual combat. First Lieutenant Alfred H. Herman, Jr., a St. Louis native and a 1945 graduate of West Point, had served in several infantry assignments before volunteering for the Rangers. An expert shot with a pistol, he earned the reputation as an extremely demanding leader who was somewhat abrasive in his dealings with enlisted men. Herman was the company's executive officer until assuming command from Streigal on 6 January. The company's ranking enlisted man, First Sergeant Romeo Castonguay, had served in the cavalry in the 1930's. He had earned a battlefield

commission in World War II, but had been forced to revert back to enlisted ranks in force reductions following the war.

The company's three platoon leaders had all seen action during World War II. The first platoon leader, First Lieutenant Mayo Heath of Franklin, Indiana, had served as an enlisted man with the 82d Airborne Division where he earned two Silver Stars for bravery in combat in Europe. First Lieutenant James E. Green, a highly decorated veteran who had earned a battlefield commission in the European theater, led the 2d Platoon. After Herman's elevation to command, he assumed duties as executive officer. A veteran of Pacific combat with the 6th Infantry Division, First Lieutenant Alpherd Vismor, Gainesville, Georgia, commanded the 3d Platoon. An extra officer who would soon take charge of a platoon, First Lieutenant Robert N. Fuller had served with the 70th Infantry Division in World War II. During the coming weeks the company's leadership would put their experience into use in a variety of combat situations.²

The Rangers' first opportunity for combat came in the closing days of the year as the company moved north with the rest of the division. General Ridgway, assessing available intelligence, believed that the Chinese were about to launch a New Years' offensive. Ridgway wanted to thwart a possible attack down Route 29 along the Hongch'on-Wonju axis; therefore, he ordered the 2d Infantry Division to occupy blocking positions north of Wonju. He also wanted a regimental- sized force to occupy the town of Hongch'on, twenty-five miles north of Wonju. Major General Robert B. McClure, the 2d Infantry Division commander, directed the 23d Infantry Regiment to spearhead the

² Sources for these descriptions come Joseph Lisi, letter to author, 12 September 1991; Black, *Ranger in Korea*, 38-39, 66; *Register of Graduates United States Military Academy*, 491; John T. Ward, "Rough and Tumble Outfit in Korea: Benning Training Toughened Rangers," *The Atlanta Constitution* (25 February 1951), copy in Ranger Collection, unsorted documents, MHI

division's movement to Wonju then continue toward Hongch'on. McClure attached the Rangers to the 23d Infantry for the upcoming actions.³

The 2d Division's movement north of Wonju resulted in a meeting engagement. The 23d Regiment had passed through Wonju on 29 December and headed towards its final objective when it encountered a North Korean roadblock near the village of Hoengsong. The regiment, assisted by South Korean reinforcements, aggressively attacked to dislodge the enemy. Although eliminated, the enemy actions at the roadblock prevented the Americans from completing their advance before the Chinese offensive began. Checked near Hoengsong, the regiment ordered the Rangers to patrol aggressively to the north and northwest of the city.

The 1st Ranger Company received its first baptism of fire with the 23d Infantry around Hoengsong. The Rangers found that their actual combat patrols were much more difficult to conduct than in training. On New Year's Eve, for example, the North Koreans captured a four man patrol led by Staff Sergeant Reginald King. In another action a friendly sentry killed Sergeant Jerome O'Leary when he failed to respond to a challenge during a patrol along a railroad west of town on 2 January.⁴ When the North Koreans mounted a major attack towards Wonju which caused the 23d Infantry Regiment to fall back, the Rangers conducted a series of harassing patrols to delay the enemy. The enemy assault forced the 2d Infantry Division to evacuate the key transportation center on 7 January 7th. For the next three days the 23d Infantry counterattacked to no avail. As friendly troops fell back to defensible terrain to the south, the Rangers employed their

³ Billy C. Mossman, *Ebb and Flow, November 1950-July 1951*, The United States Army in the Korean War (Washington D. C. : Center of Military History, 1990), 184-185.

⁴ 1st Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne), Morning Reports, 31 December 1950-3 January 1951, copies in author's possession. Hereafter referred to as 1st Ranger Morning Reports.

demolitions skills by blowing up rail-lines. By mid-January American forces had blunted the combined Chinese and North Korean offensive and were ready to conduct their own advances.

During January plenty of opportunities existed for the Rangers to utilize their specialist training with great effect. On 17 January the Rangers, still attached to the 23d Regiment, received the mission to set up an area ambush southeast of Wonju. The company was to set up a series of small ambushes along suspected enemy escape routes and kill as many enemy soldiers as possible during the duration of their three day patrol. Little contact was made during this patrol, which confirmed the 2d Division's assessment that the North Koreans had retreated from the area. On the 21st the division attached the Rangers to the 9th Infantry Regiment.⁵

For the remainder of the month the company exploited its ability to make night cross country movements in rugged terrain. In an attempt to regain contact with the enemy, the 9th Regiment used the Rangers to conduct extended reconnaissance in force patrols, which sometimes stretching out to 30-40 kilometers (18-24 miles) in front of friendly lines. The regiment's only contact with the Rangers during these patrols was through prior coordinated overflights of Ranger patrols by small liaison aircraft. Air crews dropped messages, and the Rangers signalled back using colored panels. Where possible the 9th Infantry gave the company specific missions to ambush enemy forces, destroy communications sites, or burn rice caches. Using platoon sized patrols, the Rangers sought out the enemy operating around the village of Sullim-ni. The small patrols, clad in white overgarments for camouflage, ambushed three separate enemy patrols on 24 January, killing fifteen and taking two prisoners. On the 26th Ranger patrols discovered and burned

⁵ Periodic Operations Reports, 1-21 January 1951 in 23d Infantry Regiment Command Reports, January and February 1951, Box 2695, RG 407, WNRC.

several enemy rice caches. Two days later the company located and eliminated twenty-five enemy soldiers in a roadblock during an intense fire-fight. When the company received instructions to report to the 38th Infantry Regiment, it had proven its ability to operate on independent patrols for extended times.⁶

A February 8 report by the 9th Regiment to the G-3, 2d Division constituted the first official combat report on the Rangers' performance. In the report Major Robert Skelton, the regimental adjutant, noted that the company's "independent platoon-size groups were a fast-moving harassing force which overwhelmed all small enemy patrols which it encountered." The Rangers had shown considerable skill in operations covering the most rugged terrain and in sub-zero temperatures. Because of their "esprit, physical ability, and training" the Rangers were "superior to other units" and, as such, did not have a "mental hazard" to prevent them from performing this type of duty. The outstanding deficiency of the company, according to Skelton, was its lack of long-range communications equipment. The 9th Regiment recommended the addition of a SCR 619 long range radio be added to the Rangers' TO/amp;E to improve communications with the division and overhead aircraft.

Calling the Ranger company an "excellent outfit" the report listed combat patrols against enemy OPs, mortar positions, and command posts; reconnaissance in force operations; and air drops behind enemy lines as the best missions for the unit. Skelton warned that the Rangers would be most effective if they had specific intelligence on targets before they departed on their infiltration missions. Without it the unit would have to waste valuable time performing reconnaissance instead of combat actions. The regiment felt that the Rangers became "less efficient" the greater the time that they spent behind enemy

⁶ Periodic Operations Reports, 21-29 January in 9th Infantry Regiment Command Reports, January 1951, Box 2688, RG 407, WNRC.

lines.⁷ Despite the 9th Regiment's laudable comments, the Rangers had yet to prove their worth in their primary specialist mission-- raiding. The 38th Regiment would soon give them the chance to do so.

After conducting a few days of security patrolling for the 38th Infantry Regiment, the 1st Ranger Company received orders for its first raiding mission on February 5th. The enemy had retreated back toward Hongch'on in late January. As part of X Corps' OPERATION ROUNDUP, the 38th Regiment had advanced to and occupied Hoengsong.⁸ The regiment's S-2 had received information reporting the presence of North Korean communications sites in the vicinity of the town of Changmal, nine miles to the northwest. Colonel John C. Coughlin, the 38th's commander, wanted the Rangers to find and destroy the enemy positions.

Lieutenant Herman coordinated the plan for the raid with division headquarters. To achieve maximum surprise the Ranger commander wanted to arrive at the objective between 2200 - 0200 hours. This would allow the company more than enough time to pinpoint the targets, destroy them, and withdraw under cover of darkness. The company would depart friendly lines about midday on 6 February in order to arrive during that time period. Herman planned to stay in rugged high ground to mask the company's movements from enemy observation. The Rangers would travel "light," carrying only extra ammunition that would be needed on the raid. The distances involved and the high terrain would disrupt communications between the Rangers and friendly forces; therefore, the 38th Regiment

⁷ Major L. R. Skelton To AC of S, G-3, Subject: Ranger Operations, 8 February 1951, Inclosure 13 to 9th Infantry Regiment Command Reports, January 1951, Box 2688, RG 407, WNRC.

⁸ On the details of OPERATION ROUNDUP and the advance toward the Han River see Mossman, *Ebb and Flow*, 248-252; 259-265.

requested that a liaison plane make periodic contact with the patrol. The G-3 agreed to provide the plane which would overfly the Rangers' route at 0900, 1200, and 1500 hours to monitor progress. Lieutenant Herman asked that the plane contact the company at 1700 on the 6th and 0900 on the 7th, when he would have a better estimate of the situation and could render any casualty reports. When Colonel Coughlin approved the final plan and all coordinations had been made, Herman returned to his men and briefed them.⁹

The 1st Ranger Company conducted a passage of lines through the 9th Regiment around 1300 hours on 6 February and proceeded on its mission. During movement Lieutenant Herman kept the company in restricted terrain which limited enemy observation. Crossing two major ridge-lines in the process, the Rangers hiked for several hours. As the company closed upon the objective area, the Ranger commander placed a squad out on each flank to provide security. Around 2300 hours, the right flank squad encountered an enemy outpost on the outskirts of the small hamlet of Sadong. A fire-fight ensued. Herman maneuvered another squad in support. Together the two squads killed ten defending North Koreans. Unfortunately, two squads placed in an overwatch position during the assault got separated from the company. Unable to re-establish contact with their platoon, these squads returned to friendly lines on their own the following day. The fire-fight and attempts to correct the break in contact had taken up precious time; therefore, the Ranger commander was anxious to reconsolidate quickly and move out.

Before they could restart movement, however, the company had to take care of its casualties. Two Rangers were wounded in the meeting engagement. A bullet shattered one Ranger's elbow, and automatic weapons fire had stitched two holes in another's leg. Not wanting to hamper the patrol further, Herman left the men in a concealed position

⁹ G-3 Journal, 5 February 1951, 2d Infantry Division Command Reports, Box 2477, RG 407, WNRC.

promising to return in the morning or send help. One platoon left a squad to guard the wounded. Coupled with the loss of the two squads, the 1st Ranger Company now had only two platoons of men to carry out the raid. Lieutenant Herman still believed that he had adequate forces to continue with the mission. Two hours and four miles later, the Rangers reached the outskirts of Changmal.¹⁰

Herman moved the Rangers along a rice paddy to within ten yards of the village's outskirts before stopping. The town consisted of approximately thirty makeshift huts strung along a small trail. Herman elected to attack with one platoon and keep the remainder of company in reserve in a concealed position. As the 1st Platoon moved toward the village to form a firing line, a North Korean sentry challenged them. The Rangers remained silent, but a KATUSA attached to the patrol whispered "Many, Many!" into Herman's ear. The enemy soldier challenged the patrol again but still did not alert the rest of his unit. Moving quickly into position, the Rangers opened fire. Lieutenant Green, moving with the 1st Platoon, remembered that he "fired his carbine as a signal and the platoon opened up with everything they had." Although the Rangers had achieved surprise, the enemy swiftly reacted.

For the next fifteen minutes the Rangers and enemy soldiers exchanged fire. "Running out of the huts like bees out of hive" the North Koreans provided ample targets for Ranger Browning Automatic Riflemen, who sprayed them with tracer ammunition.

¹⁰ Except where noted, this account of the Changmal raid is based upon G-3 Journal, 5-8 February 1951, 2d Infantry Division Command Reports, Box 2477, RG 407, WNRC; John T. Ward, "Rough and Tumble Outfit in Korea: Benning Training Toughened Rangers," *The Atlanta Constitution* (25 February 1951); United Press, "Use Only Two Squads In Rout of Reds: Rangers Drive Cut Two Regiments" no listing or page number, copy in The Ranger Collection, unsorted documents, MHI; Glenn Stackhouse, "2000 of Foe Put to Flight by 26 Rangers," *Washington Post* (10 February 1951), 1; Telephone interviews with Rangers Glenn Dahl, 10 September 1991; Joseph Lisi, 11 September 1991, and Anthony Lukasik, 12 September 1991.

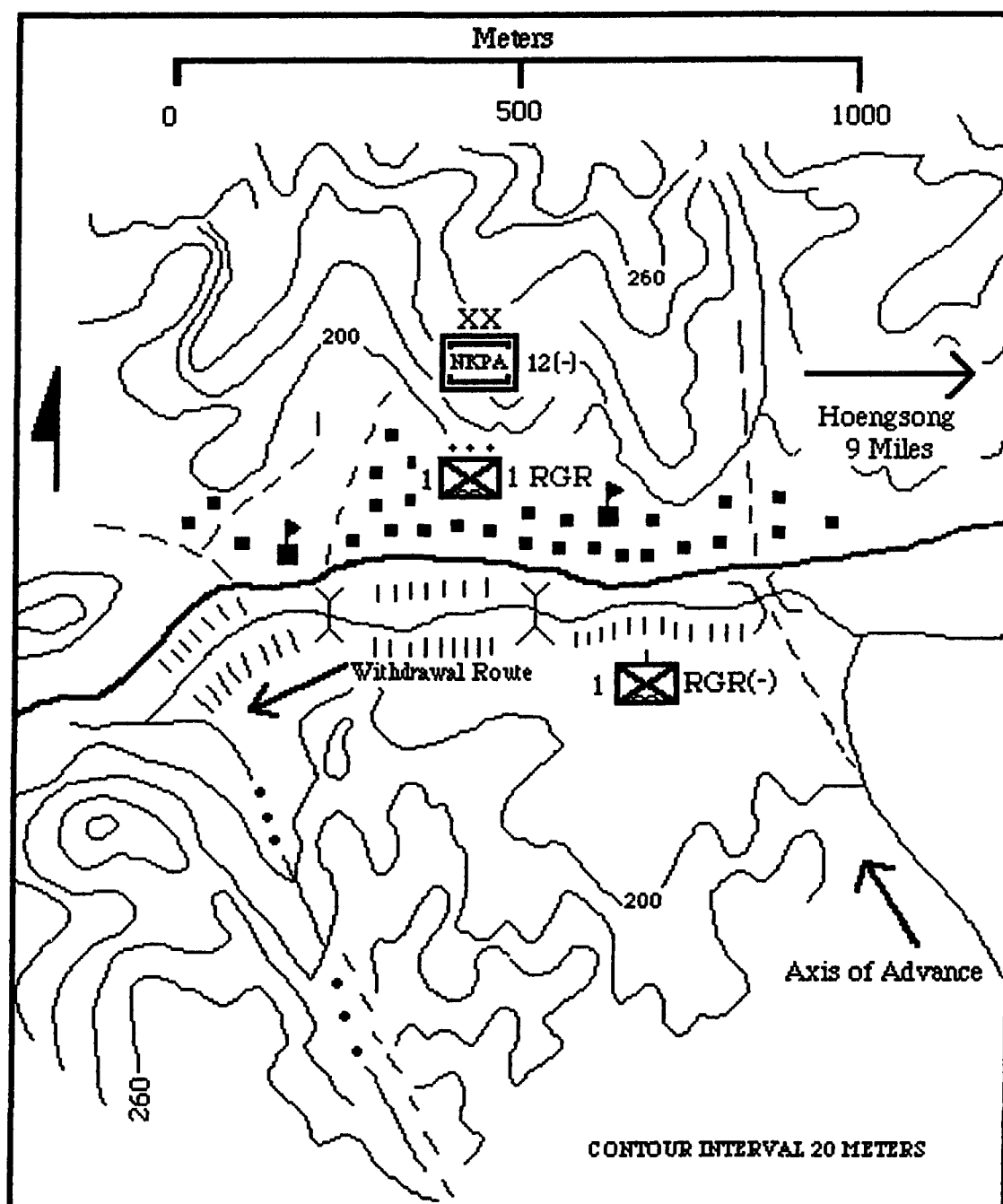


FIGURE 10: RAID AT CHANGMAL
SOURCE: AUTHOR'S RECONSTRUCTION; MAP: WONJU

The rest of the platoon poured fire into the huts, inflicting heavy casualties. Lieutenant Green watched as the 1st Platoon shot down enemy soldiers trying to exit the huts from every available window. The North Koreans, recovering from the effects of the surprise attack, set up five machine-guns on the high ground overlooking the village and began to return fire. While some 1st Platoon members sprayed the village with automatic weapons fire, others threw grenades at the machine-gun positions. The Rangers' tracer fire set several huts on fire, and the village began to burn and fill with smoke. Fifteen minutes after initiating the raid Lieutenant Herman signaled the Rangers to withdraw. In the process of leap-frogging back across the rice paddy to link up with the remainder of the company, the 1st Platoon captured a prisoner. The Ranger commander later estimated that the company had killed between 50-100 enemy soldiers, and destroyed five machine-guns, three "Burp" guns, and twenty rifles in the raid. Herman would later joke with reporters that the Rangers only had "twenty-six men on the firing line."

The Rangers broke contact and headed back towards friendly lines by an alternate route. The company moved for two hours away from the objective then stopped to rest. The company began moving again around 1000 hours on 7 February. As they approached Hoengsong, the Rangers sighted numerous enemy outposts surrounding the city. The men paused long enough to cut the enemy's communications wire. The company passed through the 38th Infantry's lines around 1500 hours.

During their return trip the Rangers had not been able to bring their wounded back with them. Hiding in an abandoned hut, the Ranger squad treated the wounded men and waited. When assistance was not forthcoming, the squad leader sent two men back towards Hoengsong for assistance. The men made it to the 38th Regiment's lines around 1600 and reported the situation. The regiment sent a helicopter to evacuate the men, but it developed engine trouble and had to turn back before it reached them. On 8 February

Lieutenant Herman sent a squad-sized patrol to retrieve the wounded. This patrol also failed to reach to men when eight enemy soldiers, demoralized by the raid, surrendered to them and had to be escorted back through friendly positions. Finally, First Sergeant Castonguay took matters into his own hands by returning to the squad's hide position himself. The grizzled veteran supervised the construction of litter for the Ranger with the leg wound, and the squad carried the injured soldier back to the 38th Infantry's lines, crossing five ridge-lines in the process.¹¹

Although the Rangers had not found the communications sites, they had located an even better target -- an enemy headquarters. The prisoner taken by the Rangers revealed that he was a member of the *12th North Korean Division*. He told Herman that two North Korean regiments had been "in and around Changmal" before the raid. The 38th Regiment further corroborated this story on 8 February through the other eight enemy soldiers captured by the Rangers. During interrogation, the prisoners, also members of the *12th Division*, confirmed the previous piece of intelligence and indicated that the North Koreans had moved out of the area to the northwest.¹² The 2d Infantry Division's G-3 later praised the Rangers stating that the mission had turned out "really okay." The 38th Infantry believed that the Rangers had done "a fine job" and planned to reward their efforts

¹¹ 38th Infantry Regiment S-3 Journal, Entry # 40, 7 February 1951, copy in The Ranger Collection, unsorted documents, MHI; Telephone interviews with Rangers Glenn Dahl, 10 September 1991; Joseph Lisi, 11 September 1991, and Anthony Lukasik, 12 September 1991; Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 66-67.

¹² G-3 Journal, Entry #83, 7 February 1951 and Entry # 81, 8 February 1951, 2d Infantry Division Command Reports, Box 2477, RG 407, WNRC.

with "some decorations."¹³ Despite encounters with Clausewitz's "fog and friction" of war, the Rangers' raid had obtained impressive results.

During their first two months in combat the 1st Ranger Company had performed well in two of its light infantry specialist roles. The 2d Infantry Division had employed the Rangers in a manner consistent with tentative Ranger doctrine. While serving with the 23d Infantry Regiment the company had conducted a series of combat patrols and put its demolitions training to good use. Independent, long-range patrolling for extended periods in support of the 9th Regiment had challenged the Rangers, but they had obtained fair results for their efforts. The raid on Changmal demonstrated the capability of the company to wreak havoc in the enemy's rear area out proportion to their size. Within days of the Rangers' successful raid, however, the 2d Infantry Division would use the company in its third specialist role -- as shock troops. This action, which was forced upon the division by external events, would generate considerable controversy, and animosity, between the Rangers and their conventional counterparts.

CHIPYONG-NI: THE RANGERS AS SPEARHEADERS

The Eighth Army's advance toward the Han River came to an end on 11 February when the Chinese launched a massive counterattack towards Hoengsong. The immense enemy assault smashed the 8th ROK Division and forced the 38th Infantry Regiment out of its forward positions. As the intensity of the Chinese attack increased, General Edward M. Almond, commander of X Corps, tried to create a stable defensive line running along a line from Yoju - Wonju - P'yongch'ang across his sector. Almond was able to position the bulk of the 2d Infantry Division to defend Wonju in the corps' center sector. The 7th Infantry

¹³ Record of Telephone Conversation, 38th Infantry and G-3, 2d Infantry Division, 7 February 1951, copy in Ranger Collection, unsorted documents, MHI.

Division prepared defenses around P'yongch'ang in the east. The 23d Infantry Regiment, which had occupied the village of Chip'yong-ni after actions around the Twin Tunnels earlier in the month, was in an exposed position on the western flank. The X Corps commander initially wanted the regiment to pull back towards Yoju, 15 miles to south.

General Ridgway, however, countermanded this order. Chip'yong-ni was a major transportation hub which would enable the enemy to envelop the American IX Corps' eastern flank. Ridgway, therefore, wanted the 23d Regiment to stay in position and defend the city. He ordered Almond to reinforce the regiment as best as he could. Besides containing the Chinese penetration, the Eighth Army commander saw the defense of Chip'yong-ni as another test of American fighting spirit and resolve.¹⁴

Although Chip'yong-ni was about to be encircled, Colonel Paul Freeman felt that his regiment was in a good defensive position. Chip'yong-ni sat in a small valley surrounded by eight prominent hill masses with rice paddies at their bases. Several of these hill masses, especially the Pongmi-san to the northwest and the Mangmi-san located from one to two miles to the south, dominated the town. Instead of thinly spreading his forces to cover each piece of towering terrain, the regimental commander concentrated his combat team in a tight, mile-wide diameter perimeter stretching along a series of lower hills inside the more pronounced heights. In addition to the three battalions of the 23d Infantry Regiment, Freeman had a French battalion; the 37th Field Artillery Battalion; Battery B, 503d Field Artillery Battalion; Battery B, 82d Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion; Company B, 2d Engineer Combat Battalion; and the 1st Ranger Company in support. He placed his 1st Battalion around the northern part of the perimeter, the 3d Battalion in the east, the 2d Battalion in the south, and the French in the west. He

¹⁴ Mossman, *Ebb and Flow*, 282-285; Ridgway, *The Korean War*, 106-107.

designated Company B, 23d Infantry and the 1st Ranger Company as the regimental reserve and placed them behind the 1st Battalion's positions.

The 2d Infantry Division had attached the 1st Rangers to Freeman's regiment on 9 February. The company had travelled by truck convoy to Chipyeong-ni. Despite increasing enemy activity in X Corps' sector, the Rangers did not encounter any problems moving to the city. The men, once shown the reserve position, began to dig defensive positions and assist the 23d Regiment emplace obstacles. Fresh from its successful raid at Changmal, the Rangers grumbled about their defensive assignment. Since the 23d Regiment was well aware of the Rangers' capabilities from previous experiences, Lieutenant Herman repeatedly begged Colonel Freeman for patrolling or raiding missions. The regimental commander, however, was more preoccupied with establishing a sound strongpoint defense. On 10 February friendly patrols reported indications of increased Chinese movement around Chipyeong-ni. Discussing this information with the regimental S-2, Herman volunteered his company for a raiding mission to capture prisoners. Reluctantly, Colonel Freeman approved the Ranger commander's request, allowing him to make a long-range patrol towards the Yangpyong-Chipyong road to the northwest.¹⁵

Lieutenant Herman selected the small hamlet of Miryong-ni, approximately two miles northwest of Chipyeong-ni as the company's objective. He planned to skirt around Hill 345 to mask the Rangers' movement and approach the town from the east. Short of the objective, one platoon would peel off and set up a blocking position south of town. Another platoon would attack from the north and "shoot-up" the town. The intent was to drive any Chinese soldiers into the platoon to the south. Herman planned to keep his third

¹⁵ Interview General Paul S. Freeman with Colonel James Ellis, Transcripts from Oral History Interview, Side 1, Tape 1, Interview 1, Session 2, April 16, 1974, The Paul L. Freeman Papers, MHI, 2.

platoon in reserve initially then to use them to search each house for prisoners. If no contact occurred, the company would continue to search the high ground to the northwest of the Miryong-ni. With Colonel Freeman's approval, Agencie France Presse correspondent Jean Marie de Premonville planned to accompany the patrol. Herman attached the correspondent to the 1st Platoon. After mission briefings and inspections the Rangers moved to their initial rally point to prepare for departure.¹⁶

The Rangers passed through the 1st Battalion's defenses around 1900 on 11 February. The cold, crisp night air chilled the men as they moved rapidly towards the objective. Two hours later, the company reached the hamlet and deployed according to plan. Mayo Heath's 1st Platoon spread out and began to move through the town. When they failed to encounter any enemy, Herman consolidated the company. The Rangers then headed out the west side of town. As the patrol headed up a ridge Chinese forces opened fire, killing two Rangers. The Rangers formed a firing line and returned fire. The Chinese had the advantage of the high ground, however, and were able to concentrate their fires on the company. The Rangers attempted to maneuver up the hill, but enemy 82mm mortar fire hampered their efforts. Three more Rangers were shot or received shrapnel wounds from the mortars. After seventy minutes of fruitless fire-fights, Lieutenant Herman ordered his men to withdraw. As the Rangers maneuvered back through the town, Jean de Premonville stood next to Lieutenant Heath watching the fighting. Suddenly, a burst of enemy machine-gun fire ripped into his body. Heath ordered nearby Rangers to tear a door

¹⁶ Colonel James W. Edwards, "The Siege of Chipyeong-ni," Folder, Accounts of the Siege of Chipyeong-ni, Box: Korean Manuscripts, Diaries, and Documents, 1950-51, The Paul L. Freeman Papers, MHI; "Newsman", Caption under Acme Photo by Ed Hoffman discussing de Premonville, The Ranger Collection, unsorted documents, MHI; Anonymous, "The Second Division Korean War Ranger Unit, 1950-1951," unpublished manuscript, Glenn Dahl Folder, Box: Post 1945, especially Korean War, Ranger Collection, MHI, 4. .

from a nearby schoolhouse to use as a stretcher for the correspondent. The Frenchman murmured that he "had come for a story and . . . gotten one" before dying from loss of blood and shock on the way back to Chipyeong-ni. The Rangers reached friendly lines around 0100 without any prisoners.¹⁷

Colonel Freeman and the other commanders criticized the Rangers' raid performance. Freeman recalled that the Rangers had "stirred up a hornet's nest" without producing any results for their patrol. Lieutenant Colonel James B. Edwards, commander of the 2d Battalion, was even more disparaging, stating that the company "Like the Marines . . . 'talked a good fight' " but failed to produce "when the chips were down." According to Edwards, the Rangers "weren't even capable of performing their specialty, night raids."¹⁸ While many of their comments are undoubtedly colored by retrospective analysis, Freeman's and Edwards' statements reflect the conventional infantryman's disdain for elite formations. The Rangers were sensitive to the criticism leveled at their performance, and soon mutual suspicions developed between the company and the 23d Regiment's chain of command. The regiment's anti-elite bias and reciprocal antagonism would play important roles in subsequent actions involving the Rangers at Chipyeong-ni.

By February 13th the Chinese had fully encircled Chipyeong-ni with elements of five divisions. Patrols, operating throughout the day, reported increased enemy activity. That night the Chinese probed Freeman's defenses in force. Around 2330 hours flares, artillery and mortar fire, and cacophony of bugle sounds greeted the defenders. All-around the perimeter the 23d Regimental Combat Team met four, uncoordinated regimental-size enemy attacks with massive firepower from artillery, tanks, and small arms. Fighting until

¹⁷ Periodic Operations Report #142, 12 February 1951, 23d Infantry Regiment Command Reports, January and February 1951, Box 2695, RG 407, WNRC.

¹⁸ Freeman Interview, 2-3; Edwards, "The Siege of Chipyeong-ni," 11, 47.

after dawn on the 14th, Freeman's forces beat off the assault, killing over 648 enemy soldiers at the cost of 100 friendly casualties. Throughout the day on 14 February the regimental combat team strengthened its defenses, evacuated some wounded by helicopter, stockpiled ammunition, and waited. The Chinese waited until after dark to initiate another assault.

Chinese artillery pounded the 23d Regiment's whole perimeter until midnight, then switched its fires to an intense, hour-long shelling of selected targets. The enemy launched supporting attacks on the north face of the defenses while their main effort crashed into the 2d Battalion's defenses in the south. The enemy applied steady pressure against G Company's defenses and was finally able to infiltrate through some weak areas around 0300 hours. George Company repulsed several assaults while suffering from a high casualty rate. When the Chinese breached their defenses, the remaining soldiers retreated from the hill. Most of the artillerymen from Battery B, 503d Field artillery, located in a "bowl" behind G Company, abandoned their firing positions and fell back. When Lieutenant Thomas Heath of G Company appraised Edwards of the situation, the battalion commander committed his reserve to help. He also asked Colonel Freeman for assistance. Due to heavy action elsewhere in the perimeter, Freeman could only spare a platoon from the Ranger company.¹⁹

The Rangers had spent 13-14 February licking their wounds from the failed raid at Miryong-ni. They had improved their defenses and suffered through harassing artillery fire, which killed one Ranger and wounded others. Like the rest of the men manning the defenses, the Rangers had spent the two nights huddled in their foxholes peering through

¹⁹ Mossman, *Ebb and Flow*, 285-290, 295-296. The best of account of G Company's defense and subsequent counterattack to restore its position is in Russell A. Gugeler, *Combat Actions in Korea* (Washington D. C. : Center of Military History, 1970 [reprint]), 100-125.

the darkness. The evening of the 14th, the Rangers watched and listened to the raging fire-fights around the perimeter. Inactivity increased their tensions and fears. The orders to reinforce some portion of the defenses came almost as a relief to some Rangers. Around 0130 hours a portion of the company helped C Company beat off an attack. But the Rangers' main action occurred at 0330 when Colonel Freeman ordered Lieutenant Herman to send a platoon to assist the 2d Battalion close the penetration in G Company's sector. Upset that his unit was being committed piecemeal, Herman accompanied 1st Platoon to George Company's area.

Enroute to George Company's area, the Rangers met up with First Lieutenant Robert Curtis, a staff officer from 2d Battalion. He explained that the Rangers' mission was to counterattack in conjunction with F Company's support platoon to retake G Company's positions. The Rangers would then dig-in and hold the location until they could be relieved the next morning. Although he did not object to the Rangers' assault, Herman vehemently protested the company's use to defend G Company's positions. He told Curtis that the platoon would take its objective much quicker than a conventional unit could, but did not have the weapons or manpower to hold onto the terrain for very long. The arguments continued until they reached the G Company command post.

Once there, Lieutenants Thomas Heath and Curtis discussed the situation. Heath suggested that Curtis command the counterattack since it was to be made by a composite force. Curtis agreed and began to issue instructions. When he ordered the Ranger commander to prepare to assault on the right, Herman continued to argue and brought up the question of rank. Herman refused to take orders from Curtis as he was junior in rank to both of the Ranger leaders present. Finally, Curtis contacted the 2d Battalion command post on the radio and informed Edwards that Herman would not attack until he received a direct order from Colonel Freeman. Edwards then directed Captain John Ramsburg,

battalion S-2, to take command of the force. Herman's reluctance had further delayed the counterattack.²⁰

Once Ramsburg, who had previously commanded a rifle company, arrived on the scene he immediately took charge of the situation. He issued orders for the attack. Herman, however, continued to protest that while the Ranger platoon could attack, it could not hold out on the defensive. Herman thought that it would be best to commit his whole company to the mission. Not wanting to listen to what he undoubtedly considered whining, Ramsburg "straightened him [Herman] out with a few choice words."²¹ The Rangers were to assault on the right, F Company in the center, and the remnants of G Company on the left. The assault would begin after brief preparatory fires by George Company's 60 mm mortars. Because the mortar section was extremely low on ammunition, Captain Ramsburg personally directed their fires. As the assault line moved forward some mortar rounds landed among the Rangers. Lieutenant Herman, who thought that friendly mortars had dropped short rounds on his men, began to yell for a cease fire. Ramsburg, wanting to get Herman out of the area, ran over to the Ranger lieutenant and ordered him to gather his wounded and evacuate them. Herman complied with the order while Lieutenant Mayo Heath led the Ranger 1st Platoon up the hill.²²

²⁰ Robert Curtis, "Chipyong-ni", unpublished manuscript, (1988) in USFK/EUSA *Staff Ride Read Ahead Packet for Battle of Chipyong-ni*, March 1990, 183-85; Edwards, "The Siege of Chipyong-ni," 39-40.

²¹ Curtis, "Chipyong-ni", 3.

²² The remainder of this account is based on S-3 Journal, entries for 14 and 15 February 1951, 23d Infantry Command Reports, Box 2695, RG 407, WNRC; Robert Geer to Robert Black, Letter, 27 September 1984, The Ranger Collection, unsorted documents, MHI; Edwards, "The Siege of Chipyong-ni," 41-53; Curtis, "Chipyong-ni", 3-14; Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 73-79; Dahl, Lisi, and Lukasik, Letters to author, September 1991.

The Rangers formed a skirmish line and, yelling and screaming the whole way, aggressively assaulted to the top of the hill. The Rangers quickly swept toward the crest of the hill. The platoon reached the military crest when the Chinese occupying G Company's old foxholes opened fire on them. The fire devastated the platoon. Lieutenant Heath was shot in the chest and killed. Ranger Lew Villa was hit in the hip and leg by automatic weapons fire. A bullet smashed into First Sergeant Castonguay's face, tearing away his nose; he would later die on a stretcher on his way to the aid station. Friendly fire added to Ranger casualties. When an enemy machine-gun fired into the Rangers' right from the direction of the French battalion, one tank commander mistook the Rangers for Chinese. He quickly sprayed the platoon with .50 caliber machine-gun fire. Before Lieutenant Curtis could stop the tank commander, he had killed several more Rangers.

The Rangers who were not wounded used fire and maneuver to get to the top of the hill. Sergeant Joseph Philips and Corporal Robert Geer reached the topographical crest and took cover in a foxhole. Reporting that they were on their objective, the Rangers yelled to Captain Ramsburg asking for reinforcements, litters, and ammunition. Philips and Geer gathered some of the wounded around their foxhole, placing them in an area covered from enemy fire. Geer's brother Richard, who had been shot in the knee and left leg, crawled to the Rangers' only position. Glenn Hall, who had been providing machine-gun fire in support of the attack, also reached the crest of the hill. When his machine-gun jammed, Hall grabbed a carbine lying next to a foxhole and continued to run up the hill. He then tried to establish contact with F Company on the Rangers' left flank. As he traversed the ridge-line, Hall killed several Chinese. Unable to find the men of F Company, he crawled into a hole to continue firing upon the Chinese. Hall, wounded by grenade fragments, continued to hold his position to secure the Rangers' flank until ordered to withdraw. For

his independent actions, the Ranger corporal would earn a Distinguished Service Cross.²³ Across the ridge-line the surviving Rangers kept up a steady hail of lead on the Chinese, but could not stop them from counter-attacking.

Short of ammunition and being hard pressed by the Chinese, Philips and Geer ordered the wounded to retreat down the hill. Richard Geer, shot a third time, leaped down a ten foot embankment to attempt an escape. A grenade exploded in front of Robert Geer, destroying his BAR and partially blinding him. As blood streamed down Geer's face, a Chinese soldier tried to run him through with a bayonet. The Ranger corporal, now without any weapon save his commando knife, knocked the bayonet away and buried his own blade into the enemy soldier's chest. He later jumped down the embankment and carried his brother to safety. Those Rangers who could move under their own power fell back down the hill, assisting those unable to walk. At the bottom, they loaded the wounded onto a 3/4 ton truck for evacuation. The Rangers, however, had difficulty moving the 3/4 ton because a disabled half-track carrying a Quad-.50 caliber machine-gun blocked the trail leading back to the main road. Captain John Elledge, an artillery liaison officer from the 37th Field Artillery Battalion, resolved this problem by finding a tank to pull the vehicle out of the way.

The whole assault had failed. Lieutenant Heath of G Company and Captain Ramsburg had both been wounded. Only five members of F Company survived the attack unscathed. Recognizing how desperate the situation was, Lieutenant Curtis formed a defensive line a quarter mile behind G Company's original positions utilizing the twenty survivors from the assault. Captain Elledge then climbed aboard the Quad-.50 and hosed

²³ Headquarters, Eighth Army, General Orders #420, 10 June 1952, Award of the Distinguished Service Cross (Posthumous) Award, Corporal Glenn M. Hall, Copy of citation in The Ranger Collection, unsorted documents, MHI. Hall survived the battle but was killed in action in May 1951.

down the hill, which kept the Chinese from attacking. Unfortunately, the artillery captain did not pause when firing the weapon, which burned out the barrels and made the weapon useless for further support. Curtis then sent most of the walking wounded back toward Chipyong-ni and informed battalion of the situation. When notified of the results of the counterattack, Lieutenant Colonel Edwards called Colonel Freeman requesting more help. Freeman released the remainder of the Ranger company and B Company for 2d Battalion's use. This depleted the regimental reserve. Edwards headed to the area himself to direct another counterattack.

Edwards had to wait until 0945 hours before his whole counterattack force assembled. In the interval, he requested a resupply of ammunition. Regiment had already asked X Corps for an air drop of vital supplies, including ammunition. When the planes came over, the Rangers put their Fort Benning training to good use by controlling the drop. Finally, the counterattack forces reached the assembly area. Besides B and the 1st Ranger Company, Edwards now had a platoon of four tanks and two Quad-.50s. He placed the B Company commander in charge of the composite force and ordered him to counterattack as soon as he was ready. Edwards called for a ten minute artillery and mortar barrage to assist the assault. The 2d Battalion's commander did not issue detailed orders, however, leaving execution of the counterattack up to the B Company commander.

During his initial attempts to retake the hill, this officer committed his forces in a piece-meal fashion beginning at 1015. The Rangers supported the maneuvers by fire from the hasty defenses formed earlier by Lieutenant Curtis. Throughout the morning and into the early afternoon, B Company attempted to dislodge the Chinese. Each time its attack was repelled with heavy losses. Around 1130, the composite force attempted a more coordinated attack. This time the Rangers were included as part of the assault element.. Lieutenant Herman asked for more mortar fire to support his attack; however, regiment was

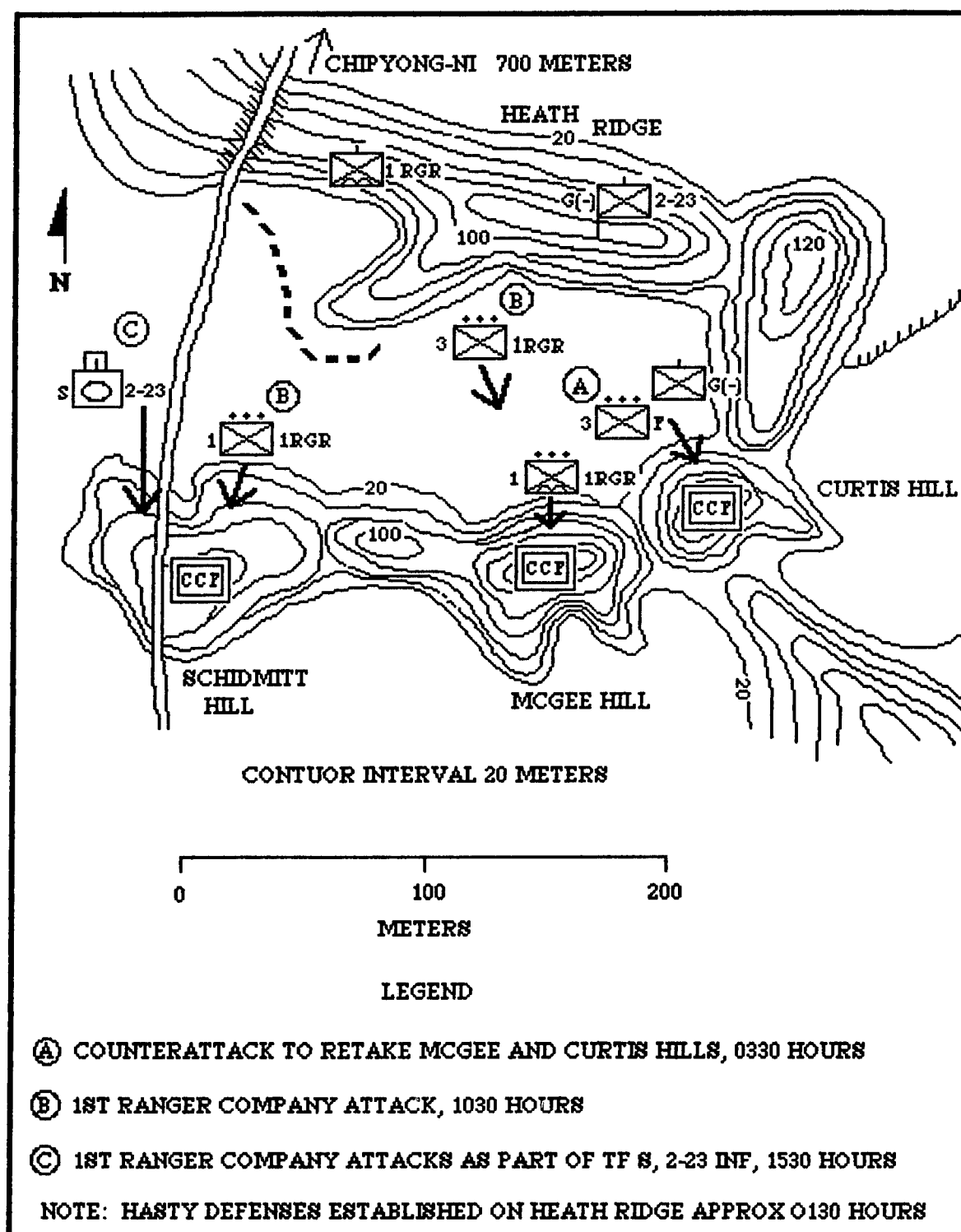


FIGURE 11: RANGER ASSAULTS AT CHIPYONG-NI, 15 FEB 1951

SOURCE: JAMES EDWARDS MANUSCRIPT; AUTHOR'S RECONSTRUCTION

MAP: YOJU, KOREA

short of ammunition and denied his request. Finally, around 1400 hours, Edwards called off the attacks and requested air strikes. The air strikes dropped steel bombs and napalm on the ridge but still did not dislodge the Chinese, who had dug in on the reverse slope.

Edwards' next attempt to solve the tactical problem was to form Task Force S, consisting of the tank platoon, the Rangers, and the 2d Battalion's personnel and administration platoon. The task force would advance down Route 24A, penetrate past the main enemy defenses, and fire east into the Chinese positions on the southern slopes.

Acting as part of Task Force S, the Rangers reluctantly performed as conventional infantry troops. The Rangers' mission was to cover the tanks' advance by knocking out enemy bazooka gunners along Route 24A. Lieutenant Herman again complained that the men in his company were "hit and run specialists" and were not capable of performing "conventional attacks and defenses." Edwards reportedly told him that "he was an infantryman now" and to attack or "report to the rear under arrest." The Ranger commander chose to comply with Edwards' directives, ordering the 2d and 3d Platoons forward. The Rangers maneuvered into a roadcut between G Company's old position and the French defenses. The tanks followed closely behind. As the attack continued the tanks had to stop while the P & A platoon removed several mines from the road-way. Several Chinese bazooka gunners popped out of foxholes on the east side of the tanks. The Rangers sought cover on the opposite side of the tanks. The task force and tank commanders misconstrued this as a cowardly act and had to "kick them out" from behind the tanks and a ditch on the far side of road. Thoroughly maddened, the Rangers moved around the tanks and began to engage the enemy's anti-tank gunners. Lieutenant Robert Fuller directed the fires of his platoon at the enemy. Sergeant Anthony Lukasik showered the enemy with automatic fire but was struck in the head and forehead by Chinese counterfire. Ranger Robert Morgan directed the fires of one Quad-.50 against an enemy

machine-gun position. The Rangers' firepower finally suppressed the objective long enough for the road to be cleared of mines.

With the road open, the tanks, with all their armaments blazing, drove forward and behind Chinese positions. The Rangers followed, adding their fires to the battle. Around 1630 hours the combination of tank, artillery, and small arms fire caused the Chinese to break and run back toward Hill 345 further to the south. Within fifteen minutes, the men of Task Force S sighted friendly tanks from Task Force Crombez coming to their relief. After both armored forces had linked up, the two friendly elements began to mop up the remaining Chinese, who started to melt away. The siege of Chipyeong-ni had ended.

Suffering greatly from the effects of battle, the 1st Ranger Company had encountered many difficulties at Chipyeong-ni. Some of its problems were self inflicted. Fresh from the successful raid at Changmal, the Rangers went out of their way to let the men of the 23d Infantry Regiment know about their fighting prowess. The 23d's infantrymen were not impressed by the Rangers' elite status and chided them for their raid's failure. This exacerbated relations between the units in a situation where the lives of each organization's members depended upon one another.

The Ranger commander's actions are especially questionable. Lieutenant Herman's constant pressure for a raiding mission, coupled to his arrogant, over-confident attitude, probably angered many of the officers in the 23d Infantry's chain of command. During the counterattacks, Herman was insubordinate and almost relieved from command. The Ranger company commander's attempts to look out for the welfare of platoon, while laudable, jeopardized the success of the mission. Herman simply did not understand the tactical "big picture," which is confusing since his company was the regimental reserve. The reserve commander, since his unit may be committed in support of any of the regiment's units, must keep abreast of all tactical developments. Apparently the Ranger

commander did not understand, or never bothered to check on, the regiment's status. Had he done so, Herman may have understood Colonel Freeman's decision to use only one Ranger platoon on the initial counterattack. Despite criticisms of their company commander, the Rangers courageously performed every task required of them and played a key role in the final counterattack in G Company's area.

The Rangers would later claim that the 23d Infantry Regiment had misused them during the battle, which had led to their high numbers of casualties. This assertion is unfounded. Given the resources available and the gravity of the situation, Colonel Freeman tried to make best use of unit. He had attempted to capitalize of the Rangers' specialist skills by authorizing the raid on Miryong-ni. The 23d's Regimental commander also recognized that the Rangers lacked the numbers and staying power of a conventional rifle company. He, therefore, designated the unit as his reserve. In this role, the Rangers would execute counterattacks where they could maximize the firepower of their greater numbers of automatic weapons and training as shock troops. Freeman's commitment of only one Ranger platoon to the initial G Company counterattack was justifiable based on other threats to the perimeter at the time.

The 23d Regiment's handling of the Rangers at Chipyeong-ni was not completely above reproach, however. If they were to maximize results on a raid, the Rangers required timely, accurate information about their objective area. But the regiment failed to provide the company with any tangible intelligence for its mission at Miryong-ni. As a result, the 1st Rangers encountered an enemy unit which outnumbered them and, therefore, was not able to accomplish its task of taking a prisoner. The failure of raid, after Lieutenant Herman had advertised the Rangers' expertise, confirmed many of the beliefs of the 23d's officers who, like Edwards, thought of the company as a "fancy pants unit . . . whose hit and run tactics consisted mostly of running." Edwards noted that "the stock of

the Rangers sank lower than ever with the combat infantrymen of the 23d Infantry" after this incident.

The regiment's employment of the Rangers in the counterattack is also open to some limited criticism. There is no question that the Rangers, given their training as shock troops, could perform the task. But the counterattacks on G Company's former positions were poorly coordinated and supported, which resulted in high casualties for all involved. The failure to designate clear-cut command relationships further complicated matters. Finally, the 2d Battalion commander seems not to have recognized the effect that 1st Platoon's decimation had on the company's morale. The 1st Platoon's high casualties, caused in some measure by friendly fire, had a demoralizing effect on the rest of company. Edwards would probably have achieved better results had he applied firm leadership to get the company motivated again. Although Edwards was reacting to the immediate tactical situation, threats and disparaging remarks about their combat prowess were counterproductive and did little to motivate them. Thus, inadequate staff planning and support, poorly defined command relationships, and an expressed anti-elite attitude detracted from the most effective employment of the Ranger company. The Rangers would find these patterns repeated over again in the future. In all, there was little love lost between the elements when the Rangers left the regiment and went into division reserve to recoup their losses after the battle.

BUFFALO RANGERS "HIT THE SILK" AT MUNSAN NI

Even as the 23d Infantry held out at Chipyeong-ni, General Ridgway made plans to resume offensive action. When the Chinese counteroffensive lost momentum in mid-February, the Eighth Army commander launched OPERATION KILLER. Beginning on 21 February IX and X Corps maneuvered northwards towards the Han River. The

objective of this operation was to find and destroy as much of the Chinese and North Korean armies as possible. During this operation Ridgway hoped to use the 187th Regimental Combat Team, supplemented by the 2d and 4th Ranger Companies, to block enemy escape routes from the rear. To prepare for this opportunity the Eighth Army Commander ordered the airborne troops to Taegu for refresher training. When it received word to join the 187th, the 2d Rangers were patrolling in front of the 7th Infantry Division.

The 2d "Buffalo" Ranger Company had signed on to the 7th Infantry Division at the beginning of January, 1951.²⁴ The company had flown into K-2 airfield at Taegu on December 30th, then trucked to the division command post, arriving on January 1st. The 7th Division, having completed its evacuation from the Hungnam beachhead, had just assumed positions around Yongch'on. The division, according to 2d Ranger executive officer First Lieutenant James Queen, "did not expect us." Reluctant to tear themselves away from the more pressing job of reconstituting the 7th's combat power, the division's G-3 section attached the unit to the 32d Infantry Regiment for patrolling duty. The 32d Infantry occupied the division's forward most position near the village of Changnim-ni, north of Andong. The 2d Ranger Company drove to the 32d Regiment's positions after

²⁴ The company adopted the "Buffalo" nickname during their cross-country train trip from Fort Benning to Fort Stoneman. While crossing parts of Texas, some 2d Rangers had observed long horned cattle and exclaimed "Look at the Buffalo!" Once the error was discovered it became an inside joke in the company. Upon further reflection, the company decided to keep the "Buffalo" subtitle to commemorate the all black units (9th and 10th Cavalry; 24th and 25th Infantry) that helped tame the American West. James Queen, Letter to author, 20 Sept 1991. William Weathersbee, Letter to author, 17 October 1991.

three days of personnel processing and attempts to draw sufficient ammunition and equipment.²⁵

Within two days the Rangers engaged in their first fire-fight. When the company arrived in the 32d Regiment's area, Colonel Charles Mount, who at thirty-five was the youngest regimental commander in Eighth Army, ordered the Rangers to set up a perimeter around the regimental aid station. Guerrillas, sometimes operating in company-sized elements, had harassed the regiment's rear areas since it had arrived in the area. The regimental commander wanted the Rangers to provide security for his medics until he and his staff could formulate patrol missions for them. First Lieutenant Warrner E. Allen reconnoitered positions and emplaced his company on 6 January. Allen's men covered the aid station and the portion of the main supply route (MSR) that ran through their sector. The Ranger commander issued final instructions for the night to his subordinates, then located his headquarters element in a nearby schoolhouse. As the sun set, the Rangers manned their foxholes and a roadblock, tensely waiting for possible enemy encounters.

The Rangers did not have to wait long. A twenty man guerrilla platoon wandered down the MSR and chanced upon the Ranger roadblock. Machine-gun fire and grenades drove them away. Around 0530 hours the enemy returned, this time with an estimated 150 men. The guerrillas infiltrated through the 32d's forward positions and gravitated toward the aid station and schoolhouse. The guerrillas spotted the medics' tents and opened fire. The Rangers returned fire with a fusillade of automatic weapons fire and grenades. The battle raged until dawn, when the guerrillas broke contact. During the action the Rangers had three men wounded and Sergeant First Class Isaac Baker, a squad leader, died in

²⁵ 2d Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne), Morning Reports, 30 December 1950-4 January 1951, Box Korean War: Documents and Historical Sketches of Ranger Companies, 1950-51, The Ranger Collection, MHI; James Queen, Letter to author, 20 Sept 1991.

action. Several guerrillas, all wearing civilian clothes, also died in the fight. The small battle "blooded" the Rangers and gave them an indication of combat actions to come.²⁶

The 2d Rangers received their first patrol mission on 9 January when the 32d Regiment directed Lieutenant Allen to reconnoiter the village of Changnim-ni. Allen chose Lieutenant Albert Cliette's 3d Platoon for the task. Cliette was a veteran paratrooper who had served in the 11th and 82d Airborne Divisions as enlisted man from 1945 - 49 before graduating from Officer Candidate School in 1949. He had been quick to volunteer for the Rangers when recruiting teams came to Fort Bragg. After issuing instructions to his squad leaders and briefing his Korean interpreter "John", he led the platoon out of friendly lines around 0900 hours.

Two miles later, the platoon entered the village which was deserted save an old mama-san. The old woman told them that the enemy had run into the nearby hills. Once the Rangers had passed through the village several guerrillas fired upon them, wounding a squad member carrying a BAR. During the next several hours the Rangers and guerrillas exchanged small arms fire and maneuvered for an advantage against one another. Cliette and his platoon sergeant, Robert O. Watkins of Columbus, Ohio, each engaged and killed separate guerrillas who had crawled to within twenty-five yards of their position. Determined to wipe the enemy out, the Rangers attempted to fire and maneuver toward their positions, but were unable to get across the intervening rice paddies. Finally, the Ranger platoon leader decided that he could not overcome the resistance and called artillery upon the enemy locations. Within minutes 105mm high explosive rounds exploded on top of the enemy, causing them to break contact with the Rangers. The Rangers pursued for a short distance, then returned to friendly lines. Although he was unable to estimate enemy

²⁶ 2d Ranger Morning Reports, 4-7 January 1951; William Weathersbee, Letter to author, 17 October 1991.

casualties, Cliette was able to confirm that a strong guerrilla force had a base camp close to the village.

For the next week the Rangers conducted a series patrols to their west, east, and south of their base. Allen rotated his platoons through twice a day patrols. The patrols conducted essentially search and destroy operations to find and kill as many guerrillas as possible. Every man in the company, including the commanding officer and the cooks, participated in the patrols. These patrols, besides acclimatizing the Rangers to the frigid weather and rugged Korean terrain, provided some combat leavening. Allen had already dispatched the 3d Platoon on one such early morning patrol when he received a new mission from the 32d Regiment on January 13th.

The Rangers mission was to attack along with elements of the 1st Battalion 32d Infantry to seize the village of Majori, site of a suspected guerrilla base. Recalling the 3d Platoon's patrol back to the command post, Allen issued a warning order then led his company on a forced march through the snow to an assembly area. The Rangers' assembly area consisted of two small hills, identified as 464 and 562, which were located five miles from their command post. The company was to occupy the hills and make final coordination for the assault with A and B Companies, 32d Regiment, both occupying adjacent knolls. The attack was to kick-off the next morning with the Rangers as the lead element. During the night the Rangers observed the village and called mortar fire on areas where they spotted movement.

At 0730 hours the next morning the Rangers began to move toward their line of departure, which they crossed thirty minutes later according to plans. As they approached the village, automatic fire greeted them. The guerrillas had dug a series of mutually supporting bunkers around the village. Because the enemy had taken great pains to conceal their positions with natural camouflage, the Rangers initially had difficulties spotting them.

Lieutenant Allen maneuvered his platoons across open rice paddies to edge of the village. The Rangers fought fiercely against the entrenched enemy using rifle fire, grenades, and bazooka rounds to clear the bunkers. The battle raged for three hours on the outskirts of the village. When the North Koreans attempted to envelop the Ranger company's right flank with a small force, A Company attacked and repulsed the effort.

After suffering several casualties in each platoon, Allen ordered the Rangers to withdraw. Artillery covered the movement while the Rangers dragged their wounded with them back towards the assembly area. Sergeant John Jones, Jr. earned a Silver Star by bravely running through a gauntlet of machine-gun fire to rescue a downed Ranger fifty yards in front of the company. In another incident, a rifle round wounded Corporal J. T. Holley as he prepared to fire a bazooka. Badly hit and exposed to continuous enemy fire, he refused attempts by the aid men to evacuate him. Lieutenant Allen crawled out to Holley and ordered the young Ranger to let the medics treat his wounds. Holley refused stating, "I'll only be a burden and I'm not fooling anybody. I won't last much longer. I'm going to stay right here!" The Ranger company commander attempted to pull him back to safety, but the North Koreans had spotted him and concentrated their fire on the pair. Two rounds struck Allen in the left side; another tore through the map and Bible in his breast pocket and dented his dog-tags. A fourth round ricocheted off his pistol. Unable to get Ranger Holley to move, Allen gave him a rifle and propped him up into a firing position. The Ranger commander then crawled back toward the rest of his company, where he continued to direct the withdrawal of his troops. The fight continued for the rest of the day while the Rangers pulled back.

The next day the company supported the 1st Battalion's assault by fire. First Sergeant Lawrence West formed litter teams and took charge of evacuating the wounded. That day the 3d Battalion relieved the 1st Battalion. The 2d Rangers, minus a detail to

recover the bodies of Ranger dead once the village was clear, hiked backed to their command post. Eight Rangers had died spearheading the 32d Infantry's assault.²⁷

The 7th Infantry Division continued to attach the Rangers to its regiments during February. The Rangers performed reconnaissance and security patrols for the 32d and 17th Infantry Regiments when the 7th Division advanced as part of OPERATION ROUNDUP. On 12 February Lieutenant Allen received a warning order to prepare for a movement to Taegu to join the 187th Airborne for a possible airborne operation. The Ranger commander formed an advance party, headed by Lieutenant James "Big Jim" Queen, to travel ahead of the company and coordinate with the "Rakassan Regiment" until rest of the men arrived. On 20th, the 2d Ranger Company spearheaded an assault into the village of Chuch'on-ni for the 17th Regiment. Two days later the Rangers provided security for C Battery, 49th Field Artillery along the Pyonggong River. One Ranger drowned when the current swept him down river during a patrol. Before releasing the company to the 187th, General Ferenbaugh commended Lieutenant Allen's leadership and noted "The heroism and courage displayed by the officers and men" of the company since being attached to the division. The Rangers, combat tested and exuberant from the division commander's remarks, followed Queen to Taegu on the 27th to begin airborne refresher training in preparation for possible future paratroop operations. ²⁸

²⁷ 2d Ranger Morning Reports, 13-14 January 1951; William Weathersbee, Letter to author, 17 October 1991; Corporal C. E. J. Garmaker, "Rangers in Korea: Soldier Correspondent Goes on Patrol With Rugged Volunteer Unit," *Stars and Stripes, Far East Weekly Review* (24 February 1951), 8-9, 13; Emmett E. Fike, "Many Black Rangers Fought in Korean War, Paid the Ultimate Price," *Bayonet* (24 February 1989), B-1, B-7.

²⁸ 2d Ranger Morning Reports, 1-23 February 1951; James Queen, letter to author, 20 September 1991; Major General C. B. Ferenbaugh to 1st LT Warren E. Allen, Subject: Letter of Commendation, 24 February 1951, The Ranger Collection, unsorted documents, MHI.

As the Rangers travelled to Taegu, OPERATION KILLER hit the Chinese in full force. Ridgway had positioned the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team at Taegu, looking forward to possible operations where he could use the airborne to block enemy escape routes in conjunction with a ground offensive.²⁹ There were few opportunities for such an operation, however, as Eighth Army, fighting against decreasing resistance, reached its limit of advance by 29 February. During the following 24 hour period United Nations' forces extended from Kimpo to Kangnung, thirty miles south of the 38th Parallel.

Ridgway's army paused to regroup for a week in early March then continued offensive action in a new operation, codenamed RIPPER. RIPPER's objective was to eliminate all enemy forces in the Ch'unch'on salient, located below phase line IDAHO. Eighth Army, fighting against tougher resistance, forged ahead on March 7th. Six days later the Chinese began to retreat north, which enabled IX Corps to occupy Seoul on the 15th. As Eighth Army advanced, Ridgway alerted the 187th for an operation labeled HAWK. This operation called for an airborne drop north of the town of Ch'unch'on on March 22 to block enemy routes of egress. The Eighth Army commander intended for the jump to coincide with an advance by ground elements of IX Corps, which would linkup with the airborne troopers within 24 hours. IX Corps' rapid progress, however, caused the Ridgway to cancel his plan. Five days after recapturing Seoul, American troops entered Ch'unch'on, thirty miles northeast of the capital.³⁰

Wanting to reinforce success, Ridgway enlarged the operation ordering I Corps to attack north of the Imjin River. To cut off the Chinese retreat to the northwest, the Eighth Army commander planned to drop the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team and its

²⁹ Mossman, *Ebb and Flow*, 307.

³⁰ Ibid, 332.

Ranger attachments at Munsan-ni. Ground troops of the IX Corps would push the Chinese into the defending airborne forces. Reminiscent of OPERATION MARKET-GARDEN of World War II fame, Ridgway's plan intended to crush the enemy between General William M. Hoge's armored hammer and Brigadier General Frank S. Bowen's airborne anvil. Ridgway named the airborne phase of this plan OPERATION TOMAHAWK. Late in the afternoon of March 22d, he ordered the 187th to prepare for the jump, scheduled for the following morning.³¹

After weeks of preparation, the airborne troops at Taegu welcomed a chance to return to action. The 2d Rangers had arrived in the city on 28 February where it met up with the 4th Ranger Company, also attached to the 187th. While waiting for a mission everyone had made two parachute drops. The 2d Rangers received thirty replacements led by Lieutenant Antonio Anthony, a World War II infantryman recalled to active duty and who had volunteered for Ranger duty. Once the rifle platoons had been filled to authorized strength, Lieutenant Allen created a weapons platoon and placed Anthony in charge of it. The company also trained ten black replacements from the 7th Infantry Division, who had volunteered for Ranger duty but had not undergone Ranger training at Benning. The forty replacements brought the company to authorized strength for the operation. On the evening of 22 March the airborne task force received orders to make an airborne assault on Munsan-ni. Ranger leaders briefed their men on the mission using sandtables simulating the terrain on the drop zone and surrounding area.

The 187th and Rangers loaded aboard the C-46 and C-119 aircraft of the 315th Air Division at dawn on 23 March. Brigadier General Frank S. Bowen had attached the 2d Ranger Company to his 2d Battalion; the 4th Rangers went to the 3d Battalion. The

³¹ Ibid, 335-338; First Lieutenant Martin Blumenson, Executive Summary, "OPERATION TOMAHAWK," unpublished manuscript, CMH.

regiment divided itself into three serials of aircraft for the movement phase of the operation. The movement plan called for the planes to rendezvous over the Yellow Sea, west of the objective, before making a final drop approach. The regimental landing plan designated two drop zones: one a mile northeast of Munsan-ni, the other three miles southeast of the town. The 2d and 3d Battalions with the Rangers were to drop on the northern zone, the 1st Battalion on the southern one. The ground tactical plan called for the airborne units to capture their assault objectives, set up a defensible airhead, and wait for the ground element to push the enemy back into them. The planes in the lead serial began taking off at 0700 hours. Two hours later the first paratroopers "hit the silk" and began their descent to the northern drop zones.³²

The 4th Rangers jumped with the 3d Battalion beginning at 0900. Normal to all airborne operations, dispersion delayed assembly of some units. It took some time for the Rangers to rendezvous before they could move toward their objective. Some Rangers encountered immediate problems as they hit the ground. Eddy Atkins, for example, landed next to a small hut on the southeastern side of the drop zone. A Chinese soldier hidden inside opened fire on the American paratrooper. With his parachute still attached, Atkins jumped into an irrigation ditch and landed in a "honey pot", or makeshift Korean latrine. Furious at his outrageous fortune, he took off his parachute harness, leaped from the ditch, and killed the enemy soldier in the hut. Atkins then moved out to find his platoon. Once they had assembled, the 4th Rangers moved toward their objective on Hill 205.

The 4th Rangers' objective area was on a steep ridge topped by a taller peak. The enemy had dug in on the taller hill mass. Putting up determined resistance, the enemy repulsed the Rangers' first assault. During a second attack, two members of the 1st Platoon reached the crest of the hill, but intense enemy fire quickly sent them running back

³² Blumenson, Executive Summary, "OPERATION TOMAHAWK," CMH.

down the slope. Lieutenant James Johnson, the 1st Platoon Leader, attempted to place better suppressive fire on the hill. He sent one fire team up a ravine to the left of the objective to see if they could place more accurate fires on the objective. The five men -- Tom Crews, Jim Summers, Herman Oakes, Robert Schusteff, and Ralph Sanchez -- climbed the ravine to a second knob of high ground and hid behind some boulders. Every effort to engage targets on the objective ended in failure as the enemy, who had spotted the team's approach, kept firing machine-guns at their location. The fire team called off its mission when friendly air strikes pounded Hill 205 with rockets and machine-gun fire. Despite the addition of close air support, the Rangers did not take the objective until early on the 24th at the cost of one dead and eight wounded.³³

On the eastern corner of the drop zone the 2d Rangers began to assemble in an apple orchard. The 2d Ranger Company had jumped around 0915 with the 2d Battalion. Most of the men landed in close proximity of one another. The Rangers' 60mm mortar section, however, was scattered during the drop and became separated from the rest of the company on the drop zone. Two men received injuries during the jump and had to be evacuated to the battalion aid station. As the Rangers doffed their parachutes and put their weapons into operation, First Sergeant West raced toward the orchard with a group of five Rangers in tow. He spotted two .50 caliber machine-guns overlooking the drop zone. West immediately led a charge to knock out the emplacements. At that moment Lieutenant Cliette arrived with his platoon and joined in the assault. The Rangers knocked out the two

³³ Captain Dorsey Anderson, interview with First Lieutenant Martin Blumenson, *Ibid*; 4th Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) Morning Reports, 23 March 1951, Box Korean War: Documents and Historical Sketches of Ranger Companies, 1950-51, The Ranger Collection, MHI; First Sergeant James Way, Personal Diary of 4th Ranger Infantry Company, Entry for 23 March 1951, copy in author's possession; Edward Atkins, letter to author, 12 September 1991; Edward Atkins, letter to Robert Black, no date, The Robert Black Collection, unsorted documents, MHI; Robert Schusteff, letter to author, 20 October 1991.

guns, killing two and capturing two prisoners. As the remainder of the Rangers moved to their rally point, West and Cliette set up a hasty perimeter. When it had fully assembled, the company maneuvered toward its assault objective on Hill 151, located twenty-five hundred meters to the north of the drop zone.

Enroute to their final objective, the Rangers had a meeting engagement with a small enemy force. Chinese soldiers hiding in the hamlet of Sangdokso-ri fired upon the company as it approached from the south. The 2d Ranger Company attacked with two platoons abreast to clear the village. Lieutenant James E. Freeman's 2d Platoon killed six and captured twenty during its attack up the slopes to the village. Both platoons then cleared each house, calling for the enemy to surrender and throwing hand grenades the inside of the structure if no one replied to the challenges. Once they had searched the village, the Rangers continued their attack toward Hill 151. The 60 mm mortar section caught up to the company as it moved out.

The 2d Ranger Company encountered moderate resistance on its final objective. The Rangers spotted an enemy unit withdrawing from forward positions on the hill. Lieutenant Queen, travelling with the 60mm mortar section, called for heavy mortar fire on the enemy positions to support the Rangers' attack. The Ranger executive officer also guided an air attack of four F-51 fighters onto the targets. Once the company had closed on the objective and deployed into an assault line, Queen called off the aircraft and readied the Ranger mortar section to continue its fire in support of the company's attack. The Rangers fired and maneuvered up Hill 151. The enemy, demoralized by mortar, rocket, and machine-gun fire, sprayed the advancing Rangers with automatic weapons fire, then retreated further north. The 2d Rangers easily swept through the objective. Quickly reorganizing, the company evacuated its sole casualty, a medic named Van Dunk, and

began digging hasty fighting positions. Shortly after the attack, the enemy artillery shelled the hill. Enemy artillery and mortar fire continued intermittently throughout the night.³⁴

Despite some difficulties on the drop and a few remaining isolated pockets of resistance, American forces established a defendable airhead late in the day on 23 March.³⁵ Around 1830 hours Task Force Growden, a tank heavy composite force formed around the 6th Medium Tank Battalion and commanded by Lieutenant Colonel John S. Growden, reached the airborne perimeter. The following morning General Bowen organized patrols around the tanks and sent them to eliminate any remaining resistance in the area. Around 1800 hours on the 24th Bowen received an order instructing him to move his combat team to the east to assist the 3d Infantry Division's advance, which had stalled around the town of Uijongbu. The new order called for the 187th and its attachments to attack east down Route 2Y to seize the high ground above Route 33, 10 miles north of Uijongbu. Seizure of area around Hill 228 would enable the task force to set up blocking positions to cut-off any Chinese retreating to the north. For the next four days General Bowen's troops fought their way to the objective on Hill 228.

Both Ranger companies participated in the drive toward Route 33. The 2d Rangers conducted a series of security patrols for the 3d Battalion on the morning of 24 March. That evening the regiment attached the company to C Company, 6th Tank Battalion for a drive on Sinchon, twenty miles to the east. The Rangers were to guard the tanks from anti-

³⁴ Lieutenant James Queen, After Action Report on 2d Rangers' Jump at Musan-ni, no date, copy in author's possession; James Queen, letter to author, 20 September 1991; William Weathersbee, Letter to author, 17 October 1991.

³⁵ The drop did not go exactly as planned when the lead plane in the first serial carrying the 1st Battalion Commander had to return to Taegu because of engine trouble. This caused confusion among the pilots in the serial, who dropped their sticks of paratroopers over the wrong drop zone. For this and ensuing difficulties see Mossman, *Ebb and Flow*, 337-341.

tank gunners and spearhead the attack into the town. Narrow defiles blocked by debris and heavy rains prevented the tanks from advancing more than seven miles that evening. The Rangers remained with the tanks that evening and pulled security while engineers cleared the roads. The next day the Rangers, removed as the lead element by the 187th, marched into Sinchon and assumed a defensive position on the regiment's right flank. The 2d Company remained in these positions conducting security patrols until the end of OPERATION TOMAHAWK.³⁶

After its seizure of Hill 205, the 4th Ranger Company had served as the security force for the 187th's command post, then joined B Company, 6th Tank Battalion for the move towards Route 33. On March 27th Captain Dorsey Anderson's 4th Rangers attacked as part of the 1st Battalion to clear Hill 227. The Rangers' objective was a small knob of ground (Hill 146) on the battalion's left flank. Supplementing his own supporting fires with the help of the 2d Rangers' 60 mm section, Captain Anderson assaulted his objective with two platoons. Lieutenant Joseph W. Waterbury led his 2d Platoon in the fight and received two wounds for his efforts. The company had six other wounded before taking the hill. The Rangers continued their attack to seize two other hills in support of 1st Battalion's assault on the heights around Route 33. The 4th Ranger Company remained with the 1st Battalion until March 29th when the whole 187th Regimental Combat Team reverted to Eighth Army reserve. Later that same day both Ranger companies trucked to Suwon then moved to Taegu the following day.³⁷

³⁶ 2d Ranger Morning Reports, 23-29 March 1951, Lieutenant James Queen, After Action Report on 2d Rangers' Jump at Musan-ni, no date, copy in author's possession; James Queen, letter to author, 20 September 1991; William Weathersbee, Letter to author, 17 October 1991.

³⁷ Captain Dorsey Anderson, interview with First Lieutenant Martin Blumenson, "OPERATION TOMAHAWK," CMH; 4th Ranger Morning Reports, 23-29 March 1951; Captain Dorsey Anderson to Colonel John Van Houten, Letter, 23 April 1951; First

During OPERATION TOMAHAWK Eighth Army attempted to employ the Rangers to take advantage of their specialist qualifications. The operation marked the first time ever that a Ranger unit had parachuted into combat. The Rangers had conducted patrolling and shock attacks in support of the ground tactical plan. The companies had generally impressed General Bowen with their aggressiveness and ability to get the job done. The missions assigned to the Rangers, however, were little different than those performed by members of the 187th. Department of the Army's primary rationale for qualifying the Rangers as airborne troops, besides providing the special pay desired by General Collins, was to give them the capability to conduct independent company-sized infiltrations of the enemy's rear areas, not jump as part of a standard regimental combat team operation. The shock attacks and patrols performed by the Rangers throughout TOMAHAWK were appropriate tasks given the companies' training, but each airborne rifle company had done the same. General Bowen and his staff, consumed with planning for subsequent missions, never attempted to use the Rangers' infiltration or raiding skills. The Rangers' employment at Munsan-ni, therefore, suggested that Eighth Army leaders did not understand the tentative Ranger doctrine that the Ranger Training Center preached.

In short, once attached to the 187th, the Rangers became just another piece of an airborne outfit. As such, the companies lost the "specialist" distinction for which they had been organized. The jump at Munsan-ni confirmed the notion, held by an increasing number of senior Army leaders, that the Rangers were no different from regular airborne troops. Thus, airborne leaders argued that the companies duplicated efforts and were, therefore, an unneeded luxury. The 2d and 4th Ranger Companies had performed well

during the operation. But doctrinal misconceptions and the idea that the Rangers were a superfluous organization would continue to haunt the Ranger program in coming months.

RAID AT HWACH'ON DAM

Although the bulk of the Chinese units operating in the vicinity of Munsan-ni escaped northwards, OPERATION TOMAHAWK had contributed to Eighth Army's successful offensive. In fact, General Ridgway, at the end of March, deemed the whole RIPPER campaign to be a success. Since March 7th Eighth Army had made continuous advances pushing the enemy steadily back towards North Korea, recapturing Seoul, and inflicting heavy casualties. The offensive had failed, however, to destroy the enemy's main force elements. With this in mind and wanting to retain the initiative, the Eighth Army commander ordered his staff to begin planning for further tactical operations to find and destroy the Chinese above the politically sensitive 38th Parallel.

Ridgway, with permission from American political and military chiefs, issued orders for a continuation of offensive action at the end of March. His plan called for a main attack against a heavily defended road and rail complex located twenty to thirty miles north of the 38th Parallel. Bounded by P'yonggang in the north and Ch'orwon and Kumhwa in the south, this area, later known as the Iron Triangle, contained the major road and rail links between Wonsan in the northeast and Seoul in the southwest. Several other roads in the area provided lateral communications across the peninsula. Ridgway reasoned that the enemy needed to retain this strategic center to be able to move troops forward and laterally in zone. Eighth Army devised a two phased concept of the operation to isolate then assault the Iron Triangle. Phase I, dubbed OPERATION RUGGED, consisted of a broad front advance to seize defensible positions along Phase Line Kansas, which generally followed

the 38th Parallel. OPERATION DAUNTLESS, the second stage, called for I and IX Corps to menace the Iron Triangle itself.³⁸

OPERATION RUGGED commenced on April 2d and reached full force by the 5th. Within four days I Corps had reached its objectives in western Korea. IX Corps found the going tougher in the rough terrain further east. Advancing on IX Corps' right flank astride the Pukhan River, the 1st Cavalry Division encountered particularly stout resistance as it neared the Hwach'on Reservoir adjacent to Line Kansas. The Chinese controlled a dam on the northwest corner of the reservoir. The dam -- a straight-line, overflow type 275 feet high -- had eighteen gates to control the water level in the reservoir. With its spillway gates closed the dam could restrain the water in the reservoir to a depth of thirty-two feet. Aerial reconnaissance confirmed that the gates were indeed closed. According to the IX Corps' chief engineer the Chinese could cause a flood along the Pukhan River if they opened the dam's sluice gates. By elevating the river ten to twelve feet the enemy could destroy bridges across the river, disrupting lateral communications. General Ridgway, who had earlier put aside plans to bomb the dam, adjusted his plans to include it as an objective. Changing unit boundaries to place the dam in IX Corps' zone of attack, he instructed General William M. Hoge to seize the objective.³⁹

The 1st Cavalry Division, despite its planned relief by the 1st Marine Division when it reached Line Kansas, received the mission to capture the dam on 7 April. General Hoge attached the 4th Ranger Company, which had recently returned to corps control, to the division for the operation. The IX Corps Commander thought that the operation would be a short raid. The Rangers, therefore, were the ideal unit to pull off this type of hit and run

³⁸ Mossman, *Ebb and Flow*, 347-350.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 353-356.

mission. Hoge told Major General Charles Palmer, the 1st Cavalry division commander, to use the Rangers against the dam, but did not clearly communicate his intention of using the elite company to perform a raid. Unclear of Hoge's desires, Palmer attached the Rangers to Colonel William A. Harris's 7th Cavalry Regiment for the task. The division commander instructed Harris to occupy the dam area and close the sluice gates.⁴⁰

Following its successful jump at Munsan-ni the 4th Ranger Company returned to Taegu to celebrate its performance. The company received orders reattaching them to the 1st Cavalry on April 4th. The Rangers spent the night of 7 April guarding the division command post. While there Captain Anderson discussed the mission with General Palmer and his G-3, Lieutenant Colonel John Carlson. Anderson suggested an amphibious raid, but the cavalymen opted for a simpler solution. The elite company would advance behind the 7th Cavalry and destroy the dam's operating mechanisms after the regiment had secured the area. The Ranger company commander received permission to conduct a aerial reconnaissance of the objective and orders attaching the company to the "Garry Owen" Regiment. The Rangers linked up with the 7th Cavalry three days later. Coming on the heels of OPERATION TOMAHAWK the upcoming operation offered the 4th Rangers their first real opportunity to put their specialist training to use.

Captain Dorsey Anderson eagerly anticipated the upcoming mission. At last his company was getting the type of missions it was supposed to perform as one of the Army's premier elite units. The first three months in Korea had been frustrating ones for the 4th Rangers. The company had not had a combat mission until Munsan-ni. Shortly after the

⁴⁰ Major General William B. Hoge, Interview with First Lieutenant Martin Blumenson, Eighth Army Historical Study, "Hwach'on Dam," April 1951, copy at Center for Military History. The interviews noted below are inclosures to this study.

company's January arrival, Eighth Army had alerted Anderson for an airborne insertion behind the lines. Placed on a 24 hour alert, the company had conducted mountain training, participated in night operations, and fired weapons to prepare for an assault against a guerrilla headquarters. The mission, codenamed OPERATION DOWNPOUR, had never materialized because the G-2 section could not locate the enemy encampment with any precision.⁴¹ After several cancellations, the 4th Rangers reported back to the 1st Cavalry Division. The Rangers then spent most of their time providing rear area security for the divisional command post or field artillery units. Morale had dropped with each passing day. While the other Ranger companies garnered their share of glory, Anderson and his Rangers waited. The jump at Munsan-ni had tested the company's mettle, but the upcoming raid at Hwach'on was a glamorous mission which could earn Anderson's 4th Rangers the fame they desired.⁴²

The 4th Ranger Company moved into positions behind the 7th Cavalry on April 8th. In their assembly area the Rangers began refresher training on the use of explosives. Captain Anderson flew to a nearby dam with the division engineer to familiarize himself with its operating machinery, presumed to be similar to that at Hwach'on. After drawing several detailed diagrams of the machinery, he returned to the rear to gather the required demolitions for the job.⁴³ While the Rangers prepared for their part of the mission, the 7th Cavalry encountered difficulties seizing the objective.

⁴¹ Operations Summary, *I Corps Command Reports*, February 1951, Box 1511, RG 407, WNRC.

⁴² Captain Dorsey Anderson to Colonel John Van Houten, Letter, 23 April 1951, The Ranger Collection, unsorted documents, MHI.

⁴³ Summary Sheet and Captain Dorsey Anderson, Interview with Martin Blumenson, "Hwach'on Dam," CMH.

Wanting to seize the dam while still getting his unit relieved on time, Colonel Harris ordered his 2d Battalion to prepare for an overland attack on the west side of the dam.⁴⁴ He set the assault for April 9th. Around midnight, however, the Chinese began to open several of the sluice gates using auxiliary generators and manpower. The sudden release of water raised the level of Pukhan River four feet in fifteen minutes. By 1000 hours the river was 86 inches above normal. Although there were no injuries, the rising water washed away one footbridge and caused IX Corps to disconnect four larger bridges. The release now seemed to negate the need to take the dam because there was no longer a sufficient quantity of water to threaten further damage. Nevertheless, General Hoge wanted the machinery put out of commission before the the Marines relieved the 7th Cavalry.

For the next two days the 7th Cavalry attempted to force its way up the western peninsula adjacent to the Hwach'on Reservoir to get to the dam. Lieutenant Colonel John W. Calloway's 2d Battalion launched an attack to seize Hill 454 overlooking the dam at dawn on April 9th. Making a frontal attack up a narrow ridge-line, the cavalrymen ran into a hail of mortar, machine-gun, and small arms fire in the rugged terrain. The assault stalled when the lead element's company commander was killed. Because the division's artillery had already begun to displace, fire support was limited to the one 155mm howitzer still in range of the target. Artillery fire, an air strike, and Calloway's coaxing did nothing to improve the situation. At dusk the battalion stopped trying to scale the ridge. Calloway renewed his attempts the next morning without any further success. Like the rest of the 7th

⁴⁴ The following description is based on Command Summary and Periodic Operations Reports, April 1951, 1st Cavalry Division, Box 4445, RG 407, WNRC; Eighth Army Historical Study, "Hwach'on Dam," CMH; 4th Ranger Company Morning Reports, 7-12 April 1951; First Sergeant James Way, Personal Diary of 4th Ranger Infantry Company, Entries for 8-12 April 1951; Mossman, *Ebb and Flow*, 355-362; Martin Blumenson and James L. Stokesbury, *Masters of the Art of Command* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1975), 100-126.

Cavalry, the men of the 2d Battalion expected to be relieved according to plans on the 10 April, regardless of the outcome. When General Hoge learned about the failed second attack, he berated General Palmer, expressing the belief that the cavalry division's efforts so far had been "half-hearted." The IX Corps Commander wanted the division to make a "bona-fide" attempt to get the dam before leaving the area. Hoge directed Palmer to use the Rangers for his April 11th attack.

Captain Anderson received word to report to the regimental command post for a mission briefing at 2200 hours the night of April 10th. The previous evening the Ranger company commander had proposed two courses of action for the dam operation. His Plan "A" called for the Rangers to make an amphibious assault across the Hwach'on Reservoir to the Tongchon-ni peninsula, along the eastern side of the dam. Once ashore the 4th Rangers would attack north and seize the eastern side of the dam. The Rangers attack would coincide with the 2d Battalion's advance on the western side of the reservoir. Once both sides had been secured the company would send a demolitions team to destroy the sluice gate machinery. A second course of action, dubbed "AA," still had the Rangers crossing the reservoir by assault boats. But this plan called for a quick night raid followed by an extraction at dawn the following morning. Anderson thought that "AA" was the best and most feasible plan. If implemented "AA" offered the Rangers the chance to achieve surprise and withdraw before the enemy could react. Harris and Carlson had rejected both proposals as "ambiguous." Instead, they had implemented Plan "B", the 2d Battalion's assault up the western peninsula. Now that "B" had failed twice, Anderson felt a little smug knowing that one of his original recommendations would now be utilized.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Dorsey Anderson, interview with First Lieutenant Martin Blumenson, "Hwach'on Dam," CMH.

Anderson was correct in assuming that the 4th Rangers would make an amphibious assault but not about a raid on the dam. When he reached the command post, he learned that his unit was to conduct the assault crossing that night. The division had had difficulty procuring the necessary amphibious equipment but had produced ten rubber boats and five motors for the operation. Regiment's plan was a combination of Anderson's Plans "A" and "AA". The Rangers were to cross the reservoir that night and establish a beach-head on the eastern peninsula. At daylight one Ranger platoon would clear an area designated as Objective 80, a piece of high ground overlooking the dam on the extreme southwestern tip of the Tongchon-ni peninsula. The rest of the company was to secure the eastern side of the dam. The 2d Battalion would attack a third time up the eastern side of the reservoir. The 1st Battalion would make a feint across the west side of Pukhan River in support of its sister battalion. Once the cavalrymen had secured their side of the dam, the Rangers would move in and place the charges. The Rangers would have 155mm howitzers and 8 inch guns on call for supporting fires. Before coordinating the details of the mission, Anderson sent a warning order back to the company. The order included instructions for Lieutenant John S. Warren, the executive officer, to move the company to the embarkation site to begin preparing the boats for movement.

Anderson joined the company at the embarkation area around 0230 hours. He quickly issued an operations order for the mission. Fortunately, in anticipation of a mission of this sort, he had task organized the company the previous afternoon. Prior preparation now saved the Rangers valuable time. Anderson's concept of the operation called for Lieutenant Michael Healy's 3d Platoon to lead the company's assault across the reservoir. Third Platoon would blow the dam's machinery once the dam was secure. Second Platoon, commanded by Lieutenant Joseph W. Waterbury, would be next in the order of movement and would reinforce Healy's men at the dam. An attached machine-gun

section from M Company, 7th Cavalry, a fire support coordination team, and the company command group would move with 2d Platoon. Anderson assigned Lieutenant James L. Johnson's 1st Platoon the task of clearing Objective 80. This position would enable Johnson's men to support by fire the assault on the dam. Lieutenant Warren would travel with 1st Platoon, which was last in the order of movement. Because there were only nine serviceable boats and four motors, the Rangers would move across the reservoir in staggered intervals using paddles to maintain noise and light discipline. The Ranger leaders issued orders then moved their platoons to the boats for the amphibious crossing.

The 3d Platoon boarded three boats and began paddling across the water around 0345 hours, followed 15 minutes later by six boats loaded with members of 2d Platoon and the company headquarters. The Rangers cross-loaded the boats to insure the mission could be carried out even if one boat capsized. Forty-five minutes later, Healy was the first Ranger to step ashore on the far side. As the rest of his platoon's boats came aground, the Ranger platoon leader and a five man team scouted the immediate area to make sure it contained no Chinese. Healy left two men with boats to secure the area and act as guides, while he led the remainder of the platoon up a steep finger ridge above the landing site. When they arrived, Anderson and Waterbury moved up a parallel finger and linked up with Healy on the heights. Meanwhile, the boats returned for the 1st Platoon.

Determined to reach the eastern side of the dam before first light, Anderson ordered the Rangers forward. Mike Healy's platoon took the point. He had previously task organized his platoon into three elements for the mission. First he designated a ten man "killer squad", armed with knives, axes, pistols, grenades and carbines, whose mission was to eliminate any Chinese sentries as silently as possible. A demolitions squad would emplace the explosives on the sluice gate machinery. The support team, the third element composed of machine-guns, would provide any necessary supporting fires during the

operation.⁴⁶ Healy's killer squad spearheaded the company's northward movement. Before the platoon had advanced far, the lead Rangers sighted about a half-dozen figures at the very top of the next ridge. The men on top waved at the Rangers; however, because of a heavy mist, the Rangers could not positively identify them as friend or foe. Waving back at the unidentified soldiers, the 3d Platoon continued to climb toward the heights of Objective 79. A burst of machine-gun fire minutes later sent the Rangers scrambling for cover. The men on top of the hill were Chinese whose fires quickly pinned the 3d Platoon in place. A undetermined number of enemy positions blocked Captain Anderson's drive to the dam. Heavy automatic weapons fire raked the Rangers' position from the front and flanks pinning the lead element in place.

After a quick assessment of the situation, Anderson, maneuvered his platoons to form a hasty defense. The Ranger commander planned to hold his position until the 1st Platoon could arrive. Hugging the ground behind the rocks and boulders on the ridge, the Rangers in 3d Platoon returned fire. The platoon's 57mm recoilless rifle team fired three rounds and knocked out one machine-gun. Lieutenant Healy and five other Rangers crawled up the heights of Objective 79 to eliminate another enemy machine-gun position. Locating the gun by its muzzle flashes, Healy and his team grenaded the machine-gun nest, killing the crew. Sergeant Kenneth Robinson and Sergeant First Class G. D. Sullivan led a Ranger machine gun team to the position to provide supporting fires. With the position secure on Objective 79 the rest of the company moved on line with Healy's men and consolidated their defenses around 0615 hours. The enemy further up the ridge-line added mortar barrages to their of rain automatic and small arms fire on the Americans. As dawn broke, the Rangers had taken possession of their first objective, but were still a over 700

⁴⁶ Michael Healy, interview with First Lieutenant Martin Blumenson, "Hwach'on Dam," CMH.

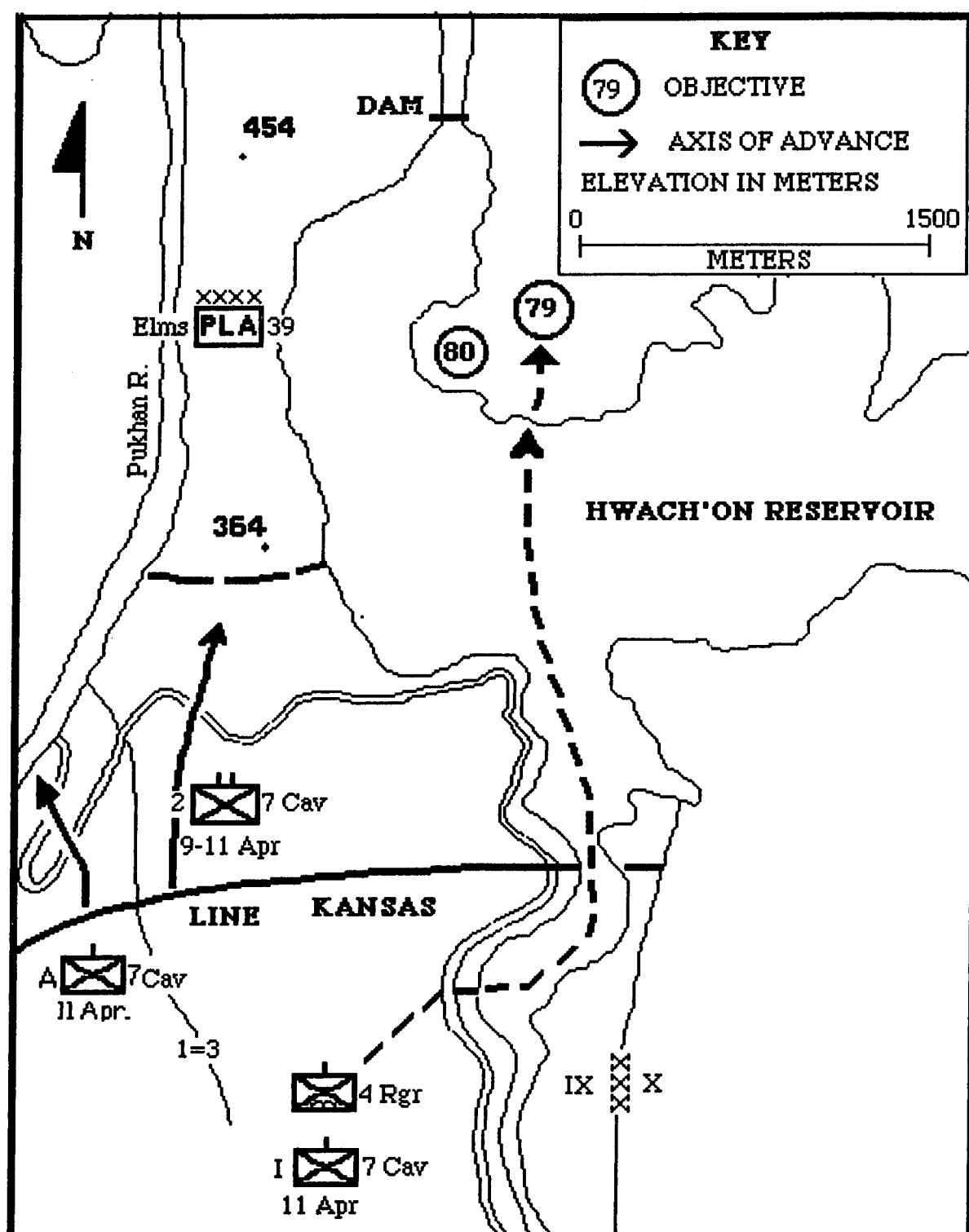


FIGURE 12: 4TH RANGERS AT HWACH'ON DAM
SOURCE: MOSSMAN, EBB AND FLOW, 357.

meters from the dam. A light rain and overcast skies prevented the Rangers from using air support to eliminate the Chinese in their path. The fire-fight had alerted the 1st Platoon that things had not gone smoothly for the company's lead elements.

While the bulk of the company skirmished across the ridge-line, the 1st Platoon moved across the reservoir. Lieutenant Johnson loaded the first two boats with the 3d squad and the assault teams of 1st and 2d squads. As the boats' motors could not be started, the Rangers paddled the twenty-five hundred meters to the landing site. Johnson led his platoon toward the sound of the guns once they landed around 0700 hours. The boats returned to the far side carrying wounded Rangers. Lieutenant Warren with the remainder of 1st Platoon and resupply of ammunition tried to land at three different places, but enemy fire prevented them from doing so. Warren ordered the boats to return to the far shore to wait for a more opportune moment. Captain Anderson was glad to see 1st Platoon when it arrived on Objective 79 around 0800. He ordered Lieutenant Johnson to attack and clear Objective 80, to the company's left rear. This would secure the landing site and enable Warren to bring reinforcements and ammunition ashore.

For the rest of the morning and through early afternoon the 4th Rangers fought a number of battles. Intermittent mortar and rifle fire peppered the company's defenses. Lieutenant Waterbury's platoon killed fifteen Chinese as they tried to maneuver toward the beach to the company's rear. Third Platoon kept up a running gun battle with the enemy machine-guns several hundred meters to their front. First Platoon encountered mortar fire and enemy resistance as soon as it moved toward Objective 80. Lieutenant Johnson set up a base of fire and drove fifteen Chinese out of their positions. He then called for artillery fire on the objective and maneuvered the platoon further forward. When the artillery fire lifted, Johnson sent one squad to envelop the knoll from the right. The enemy concentrated an intense mortar barrage on the Rangers and launched a platoon-size counter-attack toward

them. The enemy attack reached within forty meters of the Rangers' position before the fires of Rangers Wilcoxson, Angland, Chatta, and Brexel forced them to retreat. Outnumbered, Johnson and his men withdrew back toward the company's position. The platoon then occupied hasty defenses between 3d Platoon's left and 2d Platoon's right flanks to guard the company's rear.⁴⁷

Almost as soon as 1st Platoon had returned to the company's perimeter the Chinese launched a massive attack on the Rangers around 1430 hours. For thirty minutes the Rangers fought desperately. The Chinese massed an estimated 200-300 men in a human wave attack designed to overwhelm the Americans. The Rangers met the assault with grenades, rifle, machine-gun, and in Captain Anderson's case, pistol fires. The fire support team attached to the Rangers called for artillery fires. Casualties on both sides mounted. PFC Goolsby, the company's medic, was unable to save one Ranger whose arm was torn off by mortar shrapnel. A rifle round blew a hole in the side of another Ranger's head who had propped himself up to fire his BAR. He died before Goolsby could reach him. A mortar round exploded behind Lieutenant Waterbury knocking him down the ridge. Dazed, he wandered back toward the boats. The rest of his platoon panicked, however, and several fled down the hill, exposing the company's center. A vigorous counterattack led by Lieutenant Healy restored the position. After forty-five minutes of fierce fighting, the Chinese called off their assault.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ James Johnson, interview with First Lieutenant Martin Blumenson, "Hwach'on Dam," CMH.

⁴⁸ Joseph W. Waterbury, Michael Healy, Dorsey Anderson, William V. Goolsby, George Schroeder, interviews with First Lieutenant Martin Blumenson, "Hwach'on Dam," CMH; Edward Atkins, letter to author, 1 September 1991; Bob Schusteff, letter to author, 20 October 1991.

Anderson made a quick check of his perimeter as the firing died out. The 4th Rangers were now desperately in need of reinforcements and ammunition. The company had half a box of machine-gun ammunition, four rounds for the 57mm recoilless rifle, two magazines of pistol bullets, about fourteen rounds for each M-1 rifle, and thirty rounds per carbine. There were no grenades and little ammunition for the BARs. The company had a couple dead and several wounded. Anderson reassured each Ranger as he passed. Returning to his command post, he decided to ask for permission to withdraw. The odds were now stacked against the Rangers' success. Colonel Harris told the Ranger commander to hold his position as I Company, 7th Cavalry was on its way across the reservoir to reinforce him. Anderson informed his platoon leaders of Harris's decision. Resembling a 19th century American infantry company surrounded by Indians on the western American frontier, the Rangers fixed bayonets and grimly waited in the rain for the cavalry to arrive.

The 7th Cavalry's supporting attacks had not had much success on the western side of the reservoir either. The waters in the Pukhan River had remained high, preventing the 1st Battalion from crossing to the western side. The only thing that the battalion could do was call harassing and interdicting fires upon suspected enemy locations and hope they would have some effect. Well-sighted enemy pillboxes poured unrelenting fire on the 2d Battalion's third attack in as many days. Because of poor weather Lieutenant Colonel Calloway was unable to use close air support to destroy the bunkers. Because the area lacked suitable roads or trails into the area, tanks were unable to assist the 7th Cavalry advances. By mid-morning the Chinese had killed three cavalymen and wounded twenty-five others. Colonel Harris concluded that the battalions on the west could achieve little. The Rangers, however, still held their ground across the reservoir and needed reinforcements. Harris ordered the 200 men in I Company across shortly before noon.

Lieutenant Warren met I Company at the embarkation site. Throughout the day the 1st Cavalry Division's G-4 section had searched for more assault boats. The number of boats had grown to twenty-nine, enabling the cavalry company and the last remnants of the 4th Rangers' 1st Platoon to load and cross as a group. The remaining Rangers and the cavalymen shoved off separated by short time intervals. The coxswains in the boats with motors tried to get them started but to no avail. With Warren's boat in the lead the infantryman paddled across the reservoir. The Chinese began to fire mortars at the companies about half way across the reservoir. A piece of shrapnel from a burst struck one boat, causing minor damage and wounding one soldier. The men kept paddling and stepped ashore on the opposite beach around 1330 hours.⁴⁹

The arrival of I Company proved to be somewhat anti-climatic for the Rangers. Once it debarked, the infantry company and the squad of Rangers made their way to Captain Anderson's defensive perimeter. Lieutenant Warren supervised the evacuation of wounded, including Joseph Waterbury, at the beach. He also directed several Korean carriers to take ammunition to the Rangers above. His force now numbering close to 300 men, Anderson anticipated a resumption of the attack toward the dam. General Hoge, surprised by the enemy's tenacious resistance and not wanting to expand the operation any further, gave the 1st Cavalry Division permission to call off their assault -- unless the Chinese immediately ceased resistance. Colonel Harris discussed the situation with General Palmer and decided to withdraw his forces. At 1600 hours Anderson received orders to return to friendly lines. The 4th Rangers were to withdraw first, followed by I Company.

⁴⁹ John Warren, Interview with First Lieutenant Martin Blumenson, "Hwach'on Dam," CMH.

The Rangers began to pull off their position during early evening. Anderson requested smoke to cover his withdrawal but the artillery had insufficient smoke rounds for the mission. Division had tried to procure smoke pots, but only twelve were available, well under the number required for a thick, sustained cloud. Fortunately, the Chinese did not oppose the withdrawal. The Rangers carried their most grievously wounded members to the beach on makeshift stretchers constructed from rifles and field jackets. Anderson supervised loading of the boats, accounted for all his personnel, then ordered the Rangers to return to the embarkation area. Soon after their departure, the Rangers heard the sounds of fighting near their old positions. After beating off a platoon-sized Chinese counterattack, I Company followed the Rangers across the reservoir once the boats returned for it. The 4th Rangers reached the far shore around 2030 hours. As they moved from the beaches, the Rangers noticed the DUKWs and other amphibious equipment that had finally been gathered for the operation. All of it had arrived too late to be used for the company's early morning departure. The 4th Rangers, somewhat dejected by their failure to reach the dam, then marched several kilometers to a truck linkup site for movement to a new assembly area.

The 7th Cavalry's operation at Hwach'on had not made good use of the Rangers. Although it had tried to take advantage of the Rangers' amphibious training, the regiment did not employ them to exploit their expertise in raiding. Planning for the operation had been haphazard throughout. Colonel Harris, not really wanting the mission in the first place, opted for a conventional attack using his own troops. This was a good choice until resistance blocked the western approach. Needing a quick strike employing surprise, the regiment would have been better off implementing Anderson's plan "AA". Unlike General Hoge, however, the cavalymen of the 1st Cavalry Division were not enamored with the Rangers. The Ranger company, therefore, garnered more than its share of the blame for

the failed operation. In the coming months the division, based on the Hwach'on experience, would rarely use the 4th Ranger Company to perform specialist missions.

Throughout their first months in Korea, the 1st, 2d, and 4th Ranger Companies proved their worth as elite light infantrymen, especially in the conduct of operations behind enemy lines. The Rangers infiltrated through enemy defenses, raided rear areas, and patrolled. When targets in the enemy's rear could not be located, divisions used the companies to conduct shock attacks, either independently or as part of a combined arms task force. During lulls in major operations the Ranger companies performed in economy of force roles, providing security for divisional command posts or hunting down guerillas in friendly rear areas. Nevertheless, some friction had developed between the elite companies and their divisions regarding proper tactical employment according to Ranger doctrine. In the coming months, Eighth Army, as more Ranger companies arrived, would attempt to sort out this problem.

CHAPTER VI

NIGHT FIGHTERS AND COMBINED ARMS TROOPERS

As winter gave way to spring in 1951, Ridgway's war heated up along with the weather. Eighth Army's operations through the beginning of April had ejected the Communist forces out of South Korea and forced them back across the 38th Parallel. The limited objective attacks had worked well. With renewed pride and restored confidence, Eighth Army pressured the enemy all along the front. The Rangers had participated in the drives north, successfully performing a variety of combat missions.

Word of the companies more notable actions--the raid at Changmal, the jump at Munsan-ni, and amphibious assault at Hwach'on--had reached the Ranger Training Center. Press releases, letters from the companies, and the "good ole boy" network dramatized these events, boosting the Rangers' elite, romantic image. Instructors used the news to motivate the Ranger companies in training. Throughout their voyage to the Far East in late March, the second cycle Ranger companies discussed the stories they had heard and wondered how they would be used. If they were lucky, the companies might get a chance to make a jump behind lines or conduct an amphibious raid. The way in which the 2d Division used the 1st Ranger Company in March was a more likely scenario, however.

While the other divisions tested their Rangers' airborne and amphibious skills, the 2d Division did not forget about the 1st Rangers' patrolling and infiltration expertise. After Chipyeong-ni, the 1st Ranger Company returned to division control. Because of the casualties the Rangers had incurred in February, the division kept the company close at hand until replacements arrived. The Rangers, assigned the mission of rear area security along the division's main supply route, performed in an economy of force role during

OPERATIONS KILLER and RIPPER. The company broke into platoons to conduct vigorous patrols. The patrols clover-leafed through their areas of responsibility seeking contact with enemy guerrillas. Around mid-month a package of Ranger replacements arrived, which brought the company back up to strength. Captain Charles L. Carrier, who had trained with the 9th Ranger Company at Fort Benning, arrived to take command of the outfit.¹ The veterans quickly exposed the novice Rangers to combat by integrating them into the frequent patrols. On the 19th one platoon captured six guerrillas during a security patrol. Another platoon added four more PWs the following day. The Rangers received a change of mission on the 21st. Once it had reached its RIPPER objectives, the 2d Division assigned the Rangers to the 38th Infantry Regiment for use in infiltration missions along Phase Line Idaho.

The 1st Rangers had an excellent working relationship with the 38th Regiment. When they had last worked with the regiment in February, the Rangers had executed the successful Changmal raid. Colonel John C. Coughlin once again intended to utilize the Rangers' infiltration skills against the Chinese. In planning for Ranger operations, the regimental commander recalled instructions issued by division, which stated that the "keynote of Ranger operation is surprise and rapid movement with brief but decisive offensive encounters."² With this in mind, Coughlin ordered the Rangers to conduct a series of short, small unit forays into the Chinese rear immediately in front of the 38th Regiment.

¹ 1st Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne), Company Roster, 14 March 1951, The Ranger Collection, Unsorted Documents, MHI.

² Headquarters, 2d Infantry Division, Letter of Instruction, Subject: Utilization of the Ranger Company, 19 February 1951 and Letter of Instruction, Subject: Policies Governing Operations, Paragraph 16, "Utilization of the Ranger Company," 4 March 1951, 2d Infantry Division *Command Reports*, March 1951, Box 2511, RG 407, WNRC.

The 1st Ranger Company performed a number of missions which were appropriate according to their organization, training, and doctrine while attached to the regiment. From March 22-30, the Rangers made nightly infiltrations through Chinese lines. Operating in platoon sized patrols, the 1st Rangers conducted prisoner snatches, placed anti-personnel mines across escape routes, and set ambushes. The Rangers also gathered intelligence on enemy locations. The platoons, when they encountered the enemy, opened fire or called for artillery fire. Ranger firefights were brief encounters employing heavy automatic weapons fire. Avoiding decisive engagement, the Rangers quickly broke contact with the enemy and returned to friendly lines.³ The ease with which the Rangers operated at night behind enemy lines seemed to justify the need for the elite company. Although most infantry commanders remained skeptical, Coughlin had maximized the Rangers' special skills and, once again, obtained good results. Whether other commanders would follow suit remained to be seen. Nevertheless, the 38th Regiment's employment of the 1st Rangers provided a model for units just receiving their own elite companies.

During the first week of April the remaining three Ranger Companies designated for Far East Command reached Korea. The companies joined their divisions along Line Kansas just as OPERATION RUGGED crept to a close. The 3d, 5th, and 8th Ranger companies would participate in the last phases of RUGGED as well as OPERATION DAUNTLESS, which began on April 11th. The goal of DAUNTLESS was to probe enemy forces along the periphery of the Iron Triangle. In advancing toward Line Wyoming, the limit of advance for the operation, each division tried to find and fix the enemy so that superior American firepower could be brought to bear. The first step was to locate the enemy. During the day tank heavy teams or task forces would spearhead

³ Periodic Operations Reports #68-74, 22-29 March 1951, 38th Infantry Regiment *Command Reports*, March 1951, Box 2708, RG 407, WNRC.

reconnaissance in force operations into enemy territory. Once they had set up defensive positions for the evening, the task forces intended to employ dismounted infantry patrols to harrass the Chinese. This required patrols capable of night operations and long distance navigation. The divisions attempted to match the Rangers' specialist capabilities with these missions during OPERATION DAUNTLESS. Infiltrations, ambushes, and shock attacks in conjunction with armor initiated the new Ranger companies to combat in Korea.

INFILTRATIONS AND HEAVY-LIGHT OPERATIONS

The 5th Airborne Ranger Company reported to the 25th Infantry Division's command post on March 31st. The company replaced Charlie Ross's 8th Army Ranger Company which had disbanded a few days earlier. Commanded by Captain John C. Scagnelli, a flamboyant veteran of World War II, the 5th Rangers relished their elite status. The men had earned reputations as "hell-raisers" in a number of bar fights and encounters with the military police at Fort Benning and Camp Carson, Colorado. To further distinguish itself as a marauding band of elite warriors, many men took to wearing ear rings, reminiscent of 18th century pirates. Of course, this latter act was not well received by conventional unit commanders. The 25th Infantry Division hoped to direct the Rangers' excess aggression toward the enemy as soon as possible.

The Tropic Lightning Division had learned a great deal about Ranger operations since October 1950. The Division had employed the Eighth Army Ranger Company in a variety of combat situations from anti-guerrilla patrols to combined arms team operations. During February and March, the Division G-3 had utilized the company for infiltrations, roadblocks, and raids behind enemy lines. These missions best suited the Eighth Army Rangers' organization and training. To enable the company to prepare for these tasks while

still remaining active, the division had assigned the company rear area security and patrolling missions. The division contemplated using the 5th Rangers in the same manner.

The 5th Rangers' first mission was to guard a small airfield near the division airfield. To familiarize his command with the Korean terrain, Captain Scagnelli assigned each platoon an area of operations around the airfield. He ordered each platoon to conduct squad sized patrols. The first day around the airfield, April 2d, one squad captured a Chinese infiltrator. The following evening the Rangers received their first real combat mission.

The 5th Ranger Company performed its first mission in the enemy's rear on April 3, 1951. The company was to set an ambush outside a village one thousand meters in front of the division's front lines. Leaving after dark, the Rangers crossed the cold, chest-deep water of the Yong-pyong River. The Rangers, despite pre-combat jitters which caused "shaking knees," safely reached the objective area and set up their ambush. The Rangers sprang the ambush around dawn when an enemy patrol entered the kill zone. Hot lead and tracers peppered the area in front of the company. A portion of the Chinese patrol not in the kill zone brought two machine guns to bear on the Rangers' position. The fire enabled the enemy, who were able to drag their dead and wounded with them, to break contact. The Rangers had no casualties. The 35th Infantry Regiment relieved the Rangers early the next morning.⁴

A week later, on 10 April, the company conducted another infiltration of enemy lines. As part of the 25th Infantry Division's advance toward Line Wyoming, the Rangers were to infiltrate through Chinese lines and occupy Hill 383. Located two thousand meters

⁴ Command Summary, 3 April 1951, 25th Infantry Division Command Reports, April 1951, Box 3783, RG 407, WNRC; 5th Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) Morning Reports, 1-4 April 1951, The Ranger Collection, MHI; Author Unknown, Battleground Korea: The Story of the 25th Division , no page numbers.

in front of the friendly main line of resistance, Hill 383 was key terrain along suspected enemy routes of egress. The Rangers, once they had secured the objective, were to set up a clandestine bivouac and try to capture some prisoners. The company was to hold its position until the 24th Infantry Regiment linked up with them as it attacked on the 11th. The company passed through friendly lines and began its movement around 2100 hours. A "wet" crossing of the Hantan River slowed the company. Around 0430 hours the Rangers reached their objective rallying point beneath the heights of Hill 383. Captain Scagnelli's personal reconnaissance revealed a strong enemy presence on top of the hill. He elected to wait until morning to attack. The next morning Lieutenant Mack McGinnis, a native of Oakland, California, led his 3d Platoon in spearheading the attack. The Rangers, employing artillery in conjunction with the firepower of their own weapons, overwhelmed the Chinese, killing eighteen, capturing one, and driving the remainder off the hill. For the rest of the day the company set up defenses and patrolled the area.

Since the 24th Infantry's attack had not yet reached them, the Rangers remained in hasty defensive positions for the evening. Around 2030 hours mortar shells began to explode throughout the company's foxholes. Shortly after the barrage lifted, two red flares and the sound of bugles signalled an enemy attack. The Chinese encircled the Rangers on three sides. The fourth side, to the company's rear, was a sheer, cliff-like slope. The Rangers fought tenaciously, throwing grenades and firing as fast as they could reload ammunition. The battle raged for approximately forty minutes before Scagnelli ordered a withdrawal. The Rangers jumped and slid down the back side of the hill. At the bottom the company reorganized and began its trek back toward the 25th Infantry Division's lines. A few Rangers became separated from the company and had to use escape and evasion techniques to return to friendly lines. During the firefight enemy fire had killed two Rangers and wounded ten others. Once the company had returned, the division G-2

debriefed the patrol and relayed relevant information to the 24th Infantry Regiment for its attack the next morning. Nevertheless, division was less than pleased that the Rangers had to evacuate the piece of terrain.⁵

The action on Hill 383 once again highlighted the basic premises of Ranger doctrine. The 5th Rangers had demonstrated their capacity for infiltration and night operations. The company's attack took advantage of the firepower generated by their greater numbers of automatic weapons and training in shock tactics. The Rangers could only hold onto their objectives for a short time, however. Like any unit its size, the company could not defend against superior numbers without reinforcements. The best use of the company, as Ranger doctrine suggested, was for quick strikes in the enemy's rear followed by a rapid withdrawal, unless a link-up with friendly forces was immediately forthcoming. The 25th Division staff, despite its improved selection of more appropriate targets, sometimes had difficulty following this guidance. Conceptual failure contributed to the Rangers' less than perfect results in cases like Hill 383. The gap between perceived capabilities and actual battlefield performance caused friction between the company and the division's infantry commanders. This friction would later influence General Sladen Bradley's choice of missions for the 5th Rangers and his recommendations on their future continuation as part of the Army force structure.

Like the 5th Ranger Company, the Rangers in the 8th Company got to employ their specialist skills almost immediately. The company had arrived in Korea on March 31st and linked up with the 24th ("Taro Leaf") Infantry Division on April 2d around the village of Kwangdaese. The company commander, Captain James A. Herbert, West Point class of 1945, had heard some reports and rumors about the way the divisions were employing

⁵ Ibid, 10-11 April 1951.

their Rangers. He could only speculate how his company would be put to use. But the company found that it had a patron in the division. Major General Blackshear Bryan, commander of the 24th Infantry Division, recognized the Rangers' potential to disrupt the enemy's immediate rear areas. As the "Taro Leaf" Division advanced toward the Iron Triangle, Bryan ordered his staff to find appropriate missions for the Rangers. Within days of their arrival the 8th Airborne Ranger Company had received an order for a behind the lines mission.

The 8th Ranger Company lived up to Bryan's expectations during their first assignment. The G-3 alerted the company at noon on April 8th for an evening undertaking. Division wanted the company to penetrate enemy defenses and set up a series of ambushes along a suspected enemy resupply route. The company was to leave after dark and return before midnight. Captain Herbert, after coordinating his routes and fire support plan, issued an operations order that afternoon. Designating primary and alternative objectives, the Ranger commander outlined his plan for an area ambush. Each platoon would operate independently, but within mutual support of the others. At 1918 hours the lead platoon passed through friendly lines, followed by the rest of the company. Within a couple hours all the platoons were in position. One platoon had no contact. Another ambushed a small squad sized element, killing several enemy soldiers. The last platoon, after waiting in the cold and dark for two hours without any signs of movement, moved to its alternative objective. As they approached the site the Rangers spotted a large campfire. The platoon deployed "on-line" and prepared to assault. On its platoon leader's signal, the Ranger platoon opened fire and raced toward the campfire with guns blazing. The platoon killed several Chinese around the fire before turning to knock out a machinegun position. The platoon withdrew when the Chinese started to mortar the area. Although the company

could only confirm killing nine Chinese, the operation gave the Rangers practical experience and boosted their self-confidence.⁶

During the next several weeks the company performed many "Ranger" missions. On one occasion, the company supplied a four man team to division to conduct a night reconnaissance of a target. The team returned with the required information and no casualties. On 13 April the G-3 called Herbert to the division command post to brief him on another company level mission. Intelligence indicated that the Chinese had set up a small feeding and resupply area within the six or seven huts which comprised the hamlet of Topyong-ni, approximately five miles behind enemy lines. Although hazy on the details of the enemy's feeding plan, division wanted the company to ambush any enemy soldiers moving into the area. Herbert decided to split the company into three platoon ambushes. The 2d Platoon would set up outside the hamlet, while 1st and 3d Platoons established their positions on the flanks. Once 2d Platoon had confirmed the presence of the enemy, the unit would initiate an assault. The other platoons would seal off the objective area by killing anyone entering or exiting the area. The company conducted a passage of lines around 2030 hours and hiked four miles into position. When everyone was in position, the 2d Platoon attacked, supported by artillery fire. The Rangers easily dispatched an alerted sentry, scattered the remaining enemy, and destroyed the village by fire. The platoon paused to count six enemy casualties before withdrawing back to friendly lines.

As OPERATION DAUNTLESS unfolded, the 24th Infantry Division continued to advance while the enemy retreated before it. On April 15th the division decided to utilize the Rangers to re-establish contact with the Chinese. The 8th Ranger Company was to

⁶ Captain James A. Herbert, Letter to Colonel Van Houten, 15 April 1951; Eighth Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) Morning Reports, 8 April 1951, The Ranger Collection, Unsorted Documents, MHI.

conduct a series of patrols in front of the 19th Infantry. Division ordered the Rangers to check out the village of Suim-ni, a mile behind the present enemy locations. The platoons once again operated independently. The 1st and 2d Platoons did not spot the enemy. During movement to its objective, however, the 3d Platoon made contact with a large enemy force. Led by Lieutenant Berkeley K. Strong, a veteran combat infantryman from World War II, the platoon closed with the enemy using grenades, automatic weapons and small arms fire. The platoon forced the enemy to withdraw over two ridgelines. With Strong in the lead, the platoon pursued the enemy. The Chinese dropped back to alternate defenses where they again took the Americans under fire. One Ranger emptied the magazine of his BAR into a machinegun position, while others killed the enemy wherever he had taken cover. As the Rangers closed on the position hand-to-hand fighting occurred.

Once the Chinese realized the small size of the Ranger patrol, they quickly counterattacked. The Chinese, covered by mortar and machinegun fire, almost encircled the platoon. Strong ordered his men to maneuver back in the direction of friendly lines. As the Rangers pulled back, enemy fire cut down Rangers Jimmy White and Anthony Velo. Three others were wounded. The platoon threw the remainder of their grenades to keep the Chinese at bay while they made their way back to friendly lines. Just short of the friendly main line of resistance, the 19th Infantry sent out a patrol to assist the Rangers, but the Chinese had called off their pursuit. The division later credited the 3d Platoon with an estimated seventy kills, fifty of which were later physically counted by division patrols. Because of the number of enemy casualties inflicted and the battle's location near hilltop 299, the company later nicknamed the action as the "299 Turkey Shoot."⁷

⁷ Command Summary, 15 April 1951, 24th Infantry Division Command Report, copy in The Ranger Collection, Unsorted documents, MHI; Captain James A. Herbert, Letter to Colonel Van Houten, 15 April 1951; Eighth Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) Morning Reports, 15 April 1951; Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 132-136.

Although he did not consider the last assignment as a typical Ranger mission, Herbert was pleased with the way the division had initially employed the company. He reported to Colonel Van Houten that "The big thing in our favor is the excellent and cooperative method of operation of this division. They're all for us -- and in not too long, I think they'll be proud [sic] to have us." The 8th Ranger Commander was especially impressed by the 24th Infantry Division's commanding general. "General Bryan," Herbert wrote, "is one of the most helpful and thoughtful commanders I have had the privilege of knowing or working for."⁸ Garnering the early support of General Bryan and his staff, the men of 8th Ranger Company held a high opinion of the division and felt that they would be well used in future.

The 3d Ranger Company initial combat actions differed greatly from those of its sister companies. Attached to the 3d Infantry Division, the 3d Rangers were the only company to operate with a parent division of the same number designation. The company, commanded by Captain Jesse Tidwell, caught up to the division on April 3 as it prepared defenses along the Imjin River. The 3d Division held in place while the other elements of I Corps attacked north towards Phaseline Kansas along the Munsan-Kaesong road corridor as part of OPERATION RUGGED. The division patrolled to its front, but lacked exact intelligence on enemy locations. During the next several days the 3d Division employed tank-infantry teams on raids to find and destroy enemy pockets of resistance in its immediate area of operations. The Rangers sent out small squad patrols at night as part of this effort. Unable to identify suitable targets for a behind the lines mission, Major General Robert H. "Shorty" Soule attached the 3d Ranger Company to the 64th Tank Battalion for one such raid on 11 April .

⁸ Captain James A. Herbert, Letter to Colonel Van Houten, 15 April 1951, The Ranger Collection, Unsorted documents, MHI

Although he would have preferred a dismounted raid on some enemy headquarters, Tidwell, who had received a battlefield commission during World War II, was pleased with the opportunity to get his men into action. From a mission briefing at battalion headquarters he learned that the 64th Tank Battalion, with the Rangers and F Company, 65th Infantry in tow, was going to make an armored raid a few kilometers north of friendly lines. The infantrymen were to provide security for the tanks and maneuver against any enemy positions in inaccessible terrain. After the meeting Tidwell led the 3d Rangers over to Captain Daniel Boone's C Company. Tidwell and Boone agreed that the Rangers would ride on the rear of C Company's tanks during movement and dismount on the first hint of enemy fire. The Rangers quickly clamored aboard the tanks and huddled on the rear decks. Captain Tidwell rode with Captain Boone to insure more positive command and control of the operation. Around 0700 hours Team C, 64th Tank Battalion crossed its line of departure.⁹

Team C quickly made contact with the Chinese around the village of Kantongyon at approximately 0830 hours. As small arms fire bounced off the lead tanks, the 1st and 2d Platoons jumped off, took cover, and returned fire. Tidwell kept the 3d Platoon on the tanks as a reserve. He placed Captain Robert I. Channon, company executive officer, in charge of the other two platoons and ordered him to maneuver on the village, supported by tank fire. The two platoons aggressively assaulted. Within minutes the Rangers had driven the enemy out of the town and back towards a small ridgeline to the north. The Rangers pressed the enemy and forced them back over the ridge. Reaching the top of the rise, Channon and his maneuver element paused to survey the situation. An open valley

⁹ 3d Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) Morning Reports, 11 April 1951, The Ranger Collection, MHI; Robert I. Channon, Letter to Author, 10 September 1991; Robert Channon, "History of the 3d Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) in Korea," unpublished manuscript, copy in author's possession, 119-146.

spotted with rice paddies stretched before them. A small ridgeline, resembling a "nose," bisected a portion of the valley to the Rangers' right, or eastern flank, as they faced north. The Chinese, while not apparent on the "nose", had fled in that direction. Channon then radioed Tidwell to inform of the situation. Ordering a continuation of the attack, the Ranger commander told his executive officer to move out when the tanks did. The tanks would support Channon's advance by fire once his maneuver element crossed into the valley. Several minutes later the two tanks that had supported the first attack drove back towards the rest of the tank company.¹⁰

Channon, a 1946 West Point graduate, maneuvered the 1st and 2d Platoon off the ridge into the rice paddy at its base. The Rangers spread out as they crossed the muddy ground. Before the platoons had gone very far mortar rounds began to explode throughout the paddy. Channon now spotted enemy bunkers at the base of the nose-like ridge in the direction of the mortar fire. He ordered the 1st and 2d Platoons to leap frog toward the entrenchments. Caught in the open, the Rangers had few options other than comply. Enemy fire wounded and killed several Rangers as they fired and maneuvered across the rice paddy. A mortar round wounded Channon and Ranger Carl Walker, his radio operator. As the Rangers closed on the far ridge, Channon appraised Tidwell of the situation.

Channon learned that his attack would not immediately be supported by the tanks. Once the Ranger assault element had dropped down off the ridgeline, Tidwell could not directly observe them because of masking terrain. Nevertheless, he assumed that Channon and his men were within supporting distance of the tanks. They were not. The tanks had

¹⁰ The description of the following action is a synthesis from the following sources: Robert I. Channon, Letter to Author, 10 September 1991, and Telephone Interview with Author, 31 December 1991; Robert Channon, History of the 3d Airborne Ranger Company, 147-208; Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 106-110.

moved to the far west of Channon's positions and well out into the valley. That the tanks had received enemy fire from another direction had also complicated the situation. Once he made some sense out of the confusion, Tidwell had Boone send two tanks back to help the 1st and 2d Platoons. Meanwhile, the Rangers's assault had stalled about two hundred yards from the enemy bunkers due to heavy machine-gun and mortar fire. Huddled behind paddy dikes and any other suitable piece of cover, the Rangers continued to return fire and wait for reinforcements. When two tanks arrived, Channon and Lieutenant Peter Hamilton, 1st Platoon Leader, crawled on top to direct their fires. Supported by the cannon and machine-gun fires from the tanks, the Ranger leaders ordered a final assault.

During training at Fort Benning the 3d Rangers had conducted a company-level live fire against a fortified position. That training proved its worth as the 1st and 2d Platoons crossed the last hundred yards towards the enemy trench system. Tank fire destroyed two machine-gun positions at the base of the ridge and suppressed bunkers higher up the hill. Fifty yards from the trenchline, the Chinese let loose with a volley of grenades. The assault line staggered, but continued forward. Lieutenant Hamilton, a seasoned combat veteran who had already received several wounds, encouraged his men through his actions and by shouting: "I've got a cluster to my Purple Heart! They can't hurt you!" Channon directed Lieutenant John Repcik to have his 2d Platoon suppress the upper tier of enemy bunkers while the 1st Platoon cleared the bottom positions. The lead squad of 1st Platoon threw grenades into the trenchline and, after they had exploded, jumped inside with fixed bayonets. Using grenades and automatic weapons fire, the Rangers systematically cleared the trench and adjoining bunkers.

The Rangers encountered fierce resistance as they cleared the ridgeline, which the 3d Division later nicknamed "Bloody Nose Ridge." Sergeant Harold Barber witnessed some Chinese "throwing grenades three at a time." Sergeant Mas Nakajo reportedly

caught a grenade in mid-air and flung it back at the thrower. Corporal William Osborne bayoneted two Chinese defenders when he jumped into the trench. Sergeant Constantina Georgiau shot a Chinese in the face as the enemy soldier peered over the edge at the end of the trench. Company First Sergeant Joseph Cournoyer, who had remained with the assault element throughout the day, provided an inspiring presence shouting "Let's go men! They haven't hit me so they'll no doubt miss you!" as he walked among the Rangers during the assault. Despite wounds, some Rangers continued to fight their way to the top of the ridge. Sergeant Raymond Pierce, suffering from head and hand wounds, continued to fire his BAR into enemy bunkers. Channon, with cuts from shrapnel and a gunshot wound in the calf of his leg, continued to direct the action. After several hours of fighting, the Rangers declared the objective secure around 1800 hours.¹¹

In a separate action further up the valley, Captain Tidwell and the remainder of the company fought a small skirmish and dispersed the Chinese on their objective. Channon, after the wounded had been treated and evacuated, moved his element to link up with Tidwell. The Rangers spent that evening resting and pulling security for C Company's tanks. Despite the advantages afforded to most combined arms actions, the day's assaults had been costly. In all, the actions of the day had cost the company 28 casualties: 3 killed and 25 wounded. The Ranger 1st Platoon had only three men unhurt at the end of the day. Although their close combat training had served them well, the 3d Rangers had performed as regular infantrymen, not specialists during the battle.

The 3d Ranger Company's first combat mission set the pattern for its subsequent employment in the 3d Division. Resembling the 25th Division's employment of the Eighth

¹¹ Headquarters, 3d Infantry Division, "3d Rangers Dislodge Chinese From 'Bloody Nose Ridge', *The Front Line*, 29 April 1951, 3; "Rangers Fight Toe-To-Toe on 'Bloody Nose Ridge' " *Army Times* (2 June 1951), no page number listed both in The Ranger Collection, Unsorted Documents, MHI.

Army Ranger Company in November 1950, General Soule consistently attached the Rangers to armor units for task force operations. On 14 April, for example, the division attached the Rangers to the 3d Reconnaissance Company to form Task Force Rogers, which performed reconnaissance in force missions forward of friendly lines. Eight days later the company again participated in task force operations with the 64th Tank Battalion. The Rangers ended the month back under the control of the reconnaissance company.

The 3d Division's mission during this period probably contributed to the use of the Rangers in this fashion. On the 14th the division attacked north towards Line Utah trying to establish contact with Chinese forces as part of OPERATION DAUNTLESS. This involved mobile operations. Although conventional companies were suited for this type of mission, Soule probably wanted to take advantage of the Rangers' aggressiveness and close combat training in these thrusts. Because of continued forward advances, the division had little need for nightly behind the lines missions since it would probably reach those areas the next day. At Phaseline Utah there were few behind the lines opportunities for the Rangers due to lack of intelligence. The Chinese Spring Offensive also cut short any ideas of using the Rangers for any missions other than combined arms operations or patrolling.

Operational and tactical developments during April and May determined the patterns of Ranger employment for the remainder of the companies' existence. The Chinese launched a full scale offensive on 22 April. Three armies crashed into United Nations forces west of the Hwach'on Reservoir in the initial phase of the campaign. Then the Chinese redirected their main attack at Seoul. A second supporting attack of North Koreans struck X Corps in the east. Eighth Army had anticipated such an action and was able to hold its flanks. When a ROK division in the center of the friendly defenses broke and withdrew 20 miles, General James Van Fleet, who had recently replaced Ridgway as

Eighth Army Commander, ordered a phased withdrawal to the south. The weight of the enemy attack forced Van Fleet to abandon Line Kansas. Eighth Army halted five miles north of Seoul. By 30 April the Chinese offensive had lost its steam due to logistical difficulties and immense casualties. The enemy fell back to recoup their losses and prepare for a second round of fighting.

General Van Fleet, with Ridgway's approval, decided to keep the enemy off balance with a series of aggressive offensive actions. In early May, he ordered Eighth Army to establish a series of regimental size patrol bases seven to eight miles forward of friendly main battle positions. From these forward positions tank-infantry teams ranged further north in search of Chinese assembly areas. Van Fleet also hoped that these patrols would help him piece together the enemy's order of battle and current situation. The Eighth Army commander hoped to launch a counteroffensive as quickly as he could muster sufficient combat power. Before he could do so, the Chinese struck again in mid-May. While slowing the enemy's momentum, Eighth Army kicked off a counter-offensive on 20 May which caught the enemy off guard. By the end of the month, Van Fleet's men had once again reached the vicinity of Line Kansas.

During this period the Rangers received missions consistent with Eighth Army's tactical situation and plans. When the Chinese attacked in April most division commanders utilized their Rangers to patrol, maintain contact between widely separated units, and close temporary gaps in battle positions. The 5th Ranger Company performed all these roles for the 25th Infantry Division. From April 27-30 the 5th Rangers served as the 27th Regiment's reserve and helped hold defenses along Line Golden. Similarly, the 2d

Rangers supported the 7th Division by conducting squad and platoon size patrols to bolster flank security with the adjacent 7th ROK Regiment.¹²

In the 24th Infantry Division's sector the 8th Ranger Company conducted contact patrols between regiments. On the 24th General Bryan ordered the 8th Rangers to move forward of friendly lines and join the division's covering force. The company advanced 4.5 miles and occupied an isolated position on Hill 1010. Despite constant patrolling, the company could not locate the units supposed to be on the division's flank. When the Chinese threatened the division's flank, the division ordered the Rangers out. On their way back, members of the Chinese 60th Division attacked the company around Hill 628. The Rangers had to fight their way out with the support of the 6th Tank Battalion. During the action Captain Herbert was wounded and had to be evacuated. Bryan commended the Rangers for determining that the division's right flank was exposed. The Rangers' actions prevented the 21st Regiment from being cut-off.¹³

Some Ranger companies worked as part of tank-infantry teams to delay the Chinese advance. The 1st Ranger Company, after spending the earlier part of April pulling rear area security patrols around Yaju, returned to 2d Infantry Division control on April 24th. The division attached the company to the 72d Tank Battalion as part of Task Force Zebra,

¹² 5th Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) Morning Reports, 22-30 April 1951, The Ranger Collection, MHI; Operational Summary, 22-30 April 1951, 25th Division Command Reports, April 1951, Box 3783, RG 407; 2d Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) Morning Reports, 21-30 April 1951.

¹³ 8th Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) Morning Reports 24-25 April 1951, The Ranger Collection; Martin Blumenson, "Action on Hill 628: 8th Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne)," 8th Army Historical Study, copy at CMH.

whose mission was to maintain contact with the Marines on the right flank. The 3d Rangers continued to operate with the division's mechanized reconnaissance company.¹⁴

The forward operating bases established by Eighth Army in May offered an excellent opportunity to employ the Rangers' raiding capabilities. The 1st, 5th, and 8th Companies moved forward and worked in conjunction with armored forces to find and destroy enemy patrol bases. The 1st Rangers once again worked as part of Task Force Zebra. Task Force Byorum, with the 8th Ranger Company attached, advanced up to nine miles in front of friendly lines and killed over four hundred Chinese soldiers with air strikes, tank gunnery, and small arms fire. Ranger night patrols kept the enemy off balance.¹⁵

The 5th Rangers spent most of May spearheading assaults as the infantry component of armored task forces. On 2 May the 25th Infantry Division formed Task Force Dolvin around the 89th Tank Battalion and attached the Rangers to it. The task force, split into company teams for the operation, thrust eight to ten miles into enemy territory. During the two day operation, Dolvin's tanks and the Rangers attacked several Chinese concentrations. The Rangers killed thirty-eight Chinese and captured twenty-eight more in actions around the village of Pupyong-ni.

Later in the month the company again fought as a member of another armored task force. The mission of Task Force Hamilton, named after its commander Major W. T.

¹⁴ Operations Summary, 24-30 April 1951, 2d Infantry Division Command Reports, April-May 1951, Box 2543, RG 407, WNRC; 3d Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) Morning Reports, 22-30 April 1951, The Ranger Collection, MHI.

¹⁵ Operations Summary, 17-18 May 1951, 2d Infantry Division Command Reports, April-May 1951, Box 2543, RG 407, WNRC; 8th Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) Morning Reports May 1951, The Ranger Collection; 4th Historical Section, "Task Force Byorum," 8th Army, unpublished manuscript, CMH.

Hamilton, was to conduct a reconnaissance in force toward the village of Chuksong-Nyong, several miles forward of friendly lines. Enroute to their objective, the task force encountered a narrow defile, which the enemy had mined. One mine disabled a tank as it entered the pass, and when engineers went forward to clear the roadway, the Chinese opened fire from a nearby hill. Scagnelli's Rangers jumped from the tanks and assaulted the position on Hill 202. But the Chinese had dug well-prepared defenses on the forward slope of the hill. Heavy artillery and tank fires supported the Rangers assault, but they were unable to dislodge the enemy immediately. The Rangers, after further attacks, reached the top of the hill. Lieutenant Joseph Ulatoski led the 3d Platoon in lobbing grenades and spraying bunkers with automatic weapons fire. Mortar shrapnel wounded the Ranger platoon leader, but his platoon continued to fight. The Rangers killed thirty-five Chinese in the day-long "slug-fest"; however, they could not hold the hill and had to withdraw. Nevertheless, the Rangers' close combat skills had proved valuable once again.¹⁶

When the enemy launched its Second Phase Spring Offensive the Rangers were in the thick of the fighting. The 1st Ranger Company, for example, won a second Distinguished Unit Citation for its defense of Hill 781 along the Soyang River. Acting as a part of Task Force Zebra, the company beat off repeated Chinese attacks before being overwhelmed. During the fighting a sniper bullet struck Lieutenant Herman in the head, mortally wounding him. Automatic weapons fire cut down Corporal Glenn Hall, Silver

¹⁶ Captain John C. Scagnelli, Command Report, 5th Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne), INCO-5, May 1951, Box 5235; Operations Summary, 25th Infantry Division Command Reports, May 1951, Box 3787; Unit Report, 89th Medium Tank Battalion, May 1951, Box 3751; all located in RG 407, WNRC.

Star winner at Chipyon-ni. As they overran the hill, the Chinese captured Captain Carrier and seven other Rangers.¹⁷

In another area, Lieutenant Allen's 2d Rangers acted as a "fire brigade" by plugging gaps between the 7th Infantry Division and the 5th Marine Regiment. On 20 May the company attacked to seize Hill 581. The Rangers charged and killed over ninety Chinese soldiers during the assault. Lieutenant Queen's accurate direction of artillery fire and personal heroism later won him a citation for bravery under fire. The 8th Rangers operated with Task Force Plumley to clear the town of Changgang-ni during the same period.¹⁸ Throughout the fighting the Rangers demonstrated their usual cocky, self-confident combat style that resulted from high cohesion, esprit de corps, and excellent battlefield leadership.

From December 1950 to May 1951 the divisions within Eighth Army had employed their Rangers in a variety of combat roles. Where possible the Rangers had performed well as light infantry specialists. When given the opportunities, the companies proved their ability to infiltrate enemy lines and raise havoc in the enemy's rear area, the raid at Changmal being a prime example. Unfortunately, opportunities for raiding were limited. The divisions, when a tough objective was present, sometimes used the Rangers as shock troops. When serving in this role the Rangers aggressively attacked and destroyed the enemy. Patrolling was another mainstay mission, but other specialist skills were rarely employed. The Rangers' airborne and amphibious capabilities were under-utilized. During their six months of combat the Rangers tested tentative doctrine and organization for their type units, providing Eighth Army with a chance to evaluate the utility of the Ranger "experiment".

¹⁷ General Orders , (For DUC); Glenn Dahl, 10 September 1991; Joeseeph Lisi, 11 September 1991; Anthony Lukasik, 12 September 1991, Letters to author.

¹⁸ 2d Ranger Morning Reports, 20-22 May 1951; James Queen, Letter to author, 20 September 1991; 8th Ranger Morning Reports, May 1951.

CHAPTER VII

RANGERS ON OTHER FRONTS

During the first half of 1951 the Army continued to organize a Ranger company for each of its active duty divisions. As the President mobilized additional National Guard divisions, the Department of Army formed Ranger companies from volunteers within each of these units. Attracted by the romantic image, the lure of danger, and perceived chances for combat glory, many Guardsmen stepped forward. Ranger training instilled a high degree of motivation and a sense of urgency in the members of the new units by focusing attention on their potential deployment to an active combat zone. Only six Airborne Ranger companies, however, shipped out to Korea. The remainder stayed in the United States or received orders to join a division in Europe or Japan.

HOME FRONT RANGERS

Frenzied activity continued at the Ranger Training Center after the first training cycle's graduation on November 11, 1950. Besides overseeing the 1st Rangers' final processing for overseas movement (POM) the Center's staff had to assist the 2d Ranger Company complete the week's worth of weapons training that they missed at the start of the course. Colonel Van Houten and his staff also evaluated the Center's initial instruction with a critical eye, looking for ways to improve the quality of training. As the second training cycle reported for duty, the Ranger staff continued to refine the curriculum. Colonel Van Houten took the lead in selling training changes to Army Field Forces. He also sought every opportunity to enhance the Rangers' elite image with the general public and within the Army community.

Based on the results of the first training cycle, Colonel Van Houten recommended some modifications to the original program of instruction. Two areas received emphasis. First, the Ranger Training Center chose to train one company during rotations through each major subcourse of instruction, rather than the two company method utilized during the first cycle. This action would maintain better unit integrity. Although the Ranger staff recognized that this method would require "more time on the part of the instructors", they expected "more effective instruction" to result. Crew-served weapons training was a second area of concern. Attempting to cross train every Ranger in each company to be proficient in each crew-served weapon proved too time consuming and inefficient. Instead, the Ranger staff wanted the companies to break their men into thirds. Each third, composed of teams from all platoons, would receive more intensive training on a single weapons system - the .30 caliber light machine gun, the Browning Automatic Rifle, or 60mm mortar. The Ranger cadre took a similar approach towards training specialists in combat medicine and communications. The companies could conduct further cross-training as part of their normal training regimen once they left the Ranger Training Center. Army Field Forces accepted Van Houten's recommended improvements and the changes went into effect during the second training cycle.¹

In December the Director of Ranger Training endorsed further revisions in the Ranger course. He suggested a reduction in the number of training hours in the course. Dropping the number of mandatory course hours from 48 to 44 hours per week, Van Houten argued, would allow the Ranger cadre to spend more time on remedial instruction and retraining in weak areas. Expanding the course's length to eight weeks, the Ranger

¹ Headquarters, Ranger Training Center to Chief, Army Field Forces, Memorandum, Subject: Ranger Training Course of Instruction, 27 November 1950; Ranger Training Center, Master Training Schedule, 27 November 1950-13 January 1951, The Robert Black Collection, unsorted documents, MHI .

commandant proposed, would best compensate for the shorter training week. This change would actually increase the amount of time that the Ranger companies spent in field training. Army Field Forces agreed with Van Houten's proposal and forwarded it, with an attached favorable recommendation, to the Department of the Army G-3. General Bolté approved the request for the longer training period effective with the third training cycle, scheduled to begin on 12 February 1951.²

Besides revisions to their own program the Ranger cadre also had to factor basic airborne training into their master training schedule beginning with the companies participating in the third cycle. In late December 1950 the Department of the Army began to activate Ranger companies by drawing from volunteers in mobilizing National Guard divisions. These Ranger companies would receive parachute training prior to reporting to Ranger training. To allow for the attrition that occurred during airborne training, the National Guard manned their companies above TO&E authorizations. When it shipped to Fort Benning on January 7, 1951 the 10th Ranger Company, for example, was eighty-one men over authorized TO/&E limits, amounting to a seventy-seven percent manpower surplus.³ Subsequent Ranger companies followed this precedent.

Instruction at the Airborne School proved to be an excellent precursor to the Ranger course for those unaccustomed to intense, dangerous training. Besides teaching

² OCAFF to G-3, Department of the Army, Letter, Subject: Activation of Additional Ranger Infantry Companies (Airborne), 11 Dec 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives; Office, Chief of Army Field Forces, *Annual History, 1 January-31 December 1950*, unpublished manuscript, Center of Military History, Volume II, Section V, Chapter 13, III: 5; for an example of the extended training cycle see Captain Charles E. Spragins, "Unit History of the 10th Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne)," in the Adjutant General's Office, *Command Reports, 1949-1954, Non-Organic Units*, INCO-10, Box 5235, RG 407, WNRC.

³ Oklahoma-Times Service, "186 Volunteers Start Ranger Training Today" 8 January 1951, unidentified source in The Robert Black Collection, unsorted documents, MHI.

parachuting skills, the course served as the Rangers first "rites of passage" required for admission into elite ranks.⁴ Parachuting served as a test of a trainee's character by forcing him to overcome enormous anxiety and fears in order to perform a difficult, if not unnatural, task. As Major General Aubrey S. "Red" Newman has written, "Parachute jumping tests and hardens a soldier under stress in a way nothing short of battle can do."⁵ It also emboldened those with "action-seeking" personalities and weeded out those who were more passive. According to military sociologist and former Israeli paratrooper Gideon Aron "Jumping encourages self-confidence, determination, self-reliance, masterful activity, aggression, courage . . . all of which are important in the military setting, especially in paratroop commando units, which rely heavily on individual action and are aggressive in nature."⁶ Thus, successful completion of the training inculcated an elite mystique within the Rangers' ranks by separating them from their non-airborne counterparts in terms of skill, status, and psychological outlook.

Throughout the course three rituals reinforced the airborne's elite image. First, in anticipation of airborne training, each Ranger shaved his head- either completely or in Mohawk-style. This stringent action helped to build group identity. Second, each training day began with a uniform inspection by the airborne cadre. The cadre scrutinized each potential parachutist's haircut, inspected identification or "dog" tags, and evaluated the spit-shine on his boots. This procedure was the first of many small tests of members'

⁴ For an analysis of airborne training serving as a rites of passage see Melford S. Weiss, "Rebirth in the Airborne," *The American Military* ed. Martin Oppenheimer (New York: Aldine Publishing Co., 1971), 37-45.

⁵ Major General (Ret.) Aubrey S. Newman, *What Are Generals Made Of?* (Novato: Presidio, 1987), 193.

⁶ Gideon Aron, "Parachuting," *American Journal of Sociology* 80 (July, 1974): 147. This is an excellent article on the individual and group dynamics of military parachuting. Aron characterizes the personality profile of a parachutist as "action-seeking."

to detail. Last, rigorous physical training, including three to five mile runs in combat boots, followed by copious numbers of pushups and pull-ups, conditioned students' bodies to absorb the impact of parachute landings. It also culled out the weak and unmotivated from training. The inspections together with the tough physical training reinforced the idea that only those who could meet the highest standards merited the title of "paratrooper."⁷

"Jump" training consisted of three phases, each lasting one week. During the initial phase, called Ground Week, potential parachutists learned how to perform proper parachute landing falls (PLFs) and exit from an aircraft. Repetitious drills conditioned soldiers to make automatic responses to each stressful situation they would encounter during an actual jump. These drills also served to lessen anxiety and guarantee smooth, safe technical performance of required skills. Throughout the week the airborne cadre used pushups and other punitive physical exertions to motivate and instill a sense of mental alertness in trainees, especially after inadequate achievement on some sequence of instruction. One member of the 14th Rangers remembered that the front "leaning rest" position and phrases such as "drop like a scalded dog" and "push that good old Georgia red clay away from you ten times, soldier" were "indelibly impressed on everyone's memory."⁸ Before passing on to the next phase of training each soldier had to don a parachute harness and make three successful qualifying "jumps" from the 34 foot mock

⁷ For an evaluation of the role of ritual and the development of group dynamics in airborne training from a sociologist's viewpoint see Ramon Lopez-Reyes, "Airborne Training and Group Dynamics," and "Airborne Rituals, Symbols and Behavior" *Power and Immortality* (New York: Exposition Press, 1971), 172-193. On the elite mystique, see Major James K. McCollum, "The Airborne Mystique," *Military Review* (November 1976): 16-21.

⁸ Joe Holloway, "The Fourteenth Company Unit History," Documents and Historical Sketches of Ranger Companies, 1950-51, The Ranger Collection, MHI.

towers. After exiting the door of the tower with a tight body position, each Ranger, while riding down a length of steel cable to earthen mounds below, simulated checking their canopy -- the second point of parachuting performance. If he performed to the instructors' satisfaction, the soldier passed on to the next stage of training.

"Tower Week" provided the Rangers with tests of previously learned skills as well as challenges to their personal courage. After more practice PLFs and exits from the mock towers, groups rotated through the suspended harness - or "suspended agony"- to learn how to steer a parachute. The company then moved to the two 250 foot high "free towers" located on Eubanks Field in the center of the main post area. Each tower had four overhead arms extending from its base, with an umbrella-shaped device attached to the end of each arm. A winch connected the umbrellas to each arm. Control personnel inside the tower raised and lowered the umbrellas during training. At this station Rangers donned a parachute harness attached to an open parachute. Airborne instructors then hooked the parachute to the umbrella, and when the wind direction was correct, had the parachutist raised to the top of the tower. While riding to the top each soldier had a panoramic view of Fort Benning and portions of Columbus. Hanging helplessly 250 feet above the ground provided a rush of adrenalin and an exciting, if not sobering, feeling to many Rangers. The tower was a litmus test for those afraid of heights. When the parachutist appeared to be ready, the instructor on the ground shouted to personnel in the tower, who released the parachute for a "free fall". Each Ranger then had to steer his parachute away from the tower and make a satisfactory PLF. Everyone had two opportunities at this event. A student had to receive a "GO" on at least one attempt to continue on to the following week's training.

Although most Rangers training completed without injuries, accidents did happen during Tower Week. Two men in the 14th Ranger Company hit the tower when the wind

changed direction after they had been dropped.⁹ Neither was seriously injured. Sprained ankles and fractured legs sometimes occurred. Despite these occasional mishaps, the first two weeks' rigorous, repetitious training conditioned the Rangers to make automatic responses during an actual jump.

During the final phase of training the Rangers made five certifying parachute jumps during the day and night. "Jump Week" began with a briefing on malfunctions. The Rangers then marched down to Lawson Army Airfield to don T-7 parachutes and wait for their turn to parachute. After manifesting and jumpmaster checks, "sticks" of parachutists filed onto C-82 Flying Boxcars. During the next few days every soldier made four day and one night jump, making their landings on the hard clay surface of Lee Drop Zone.

Most Rangers landed safely. Some did not. Corporal Philip Hanes, 10th Ranger Company, experienced malfunctions on every one of his jumps. Fortunately, he survived the ordeal to receive his parachutist wings. Others hid injuries from instructors so that they could complete training.¹⁰ PFC Alfred Ball and Corporal Calvin P. Jones, both of the 10th Rangers, suffered fractured legs in their first two jumps but concealed this fact from unit members. Ball completed training. When he landed in a tree during a night insertion, however, Jones shattered his leg and had to drop out.¹¹ The five jumps qualified each soldier for the Basic Parachutist Badge, or "airborne wings", which served as a symbol of

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Often the fear of failure and separation from the group causes many to hide their injuries from instructors in order to complete the training. See Aron, "Parachuting," 134-133; Lopez-Reyes, "Airborne Training and Group Dynamics," 179.

¹¹ Headquarters, Ranger Training Command, *The Ranger* 1:1 (11 April 1951), 3. The RTC published this newsletter "to keep all Rangers informed of the activities and accomplishments of their comrades, both in action and training." Copies located in The Robert Black Collection, unsorted documents, MHI.

his achievement and new found status. Being admitted into paratrooper ranks enhanced the Rangers' image as military elites.

Although airborne training physically and mentally toughened the companies, the Ranger course continued to be the most dangerous and demanding training in the Army. Many found the water and advanced airborne phases especially gruelling. During waterborne training, the Ranger companies learned to utilize rubber boats and amphibious craft. During one exercise, the elite units simulated a "beachhead assault." Crawling down a cargo net slung over the side of a bridge over the Upatoi Creek into rubber boats below, the Rangers paddled three hundred yards upstream to a small beach, where they used rocket-fired grappelling hooks and ropes to scale a sheer cliff. The Rangers also learned a variety of methods to cross water obstacles. The construction of makeshift poncho rafts was but one technique. The Rangers learned to place weapons, equipment, and their uniforms inside of two ponchos then to fold and tie them into waterproof bundles. A two-man buddy team could then cross a large water obstacle while keeping their equipment dry. To cross smaller, more linear water features the Rangers erected rope bridges, utilizing a 120' foot climbing rope and several snaplinks. The bridge, secured to trees on both sides of the water, allowed non or weak swimmers to cross safely. Swimming across icy Victory Pond or wading across the muddy Upatoi Creek at night during the chilly Fort Benning winters tested the motivation and courage of even the stoutest Ranger. As one Ranger instructor put it, "A man who'll go bravely into actual combat can lose his nerve out there . . . You can't fight water."¹²

¹² Anonymous Ranger Instructor quoted by Andrew Sparks, "Fort Benning Trains Army's Toughest Fighters," *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine*, (3 December 1950): 7.

Ranger parachute drops also proved to be challenging, and at times frightful events. Rangers conducted up to seven jumps, both day and night, during the eight week course. Parachuting was one means the Rangers intended to use to infiltrate behind enemy lines. After a drop the companies would assemble on the drop zone and move to accomplish an assigned tactical mission. But many of the airborne operations went awry. During the second training cycle, the 6th Rangers made their final parachute assault during Hell Week while the aircraft flew in excess of 120 mph. This caused wide dispersion and injured many jumpers who landed in trees.¹³ Corporal Ronald Sullivan of the 8th Ranger Company died from injuries sustained when his parachute malfunctioned during one airborne operation.¹⁴ Shifting winds caused nine injuries in the 14th Rangers during one daylight drop. During this same exercise, Colonel Van Houten, a novice parachutist who did not particularly like to jump, stepped out of the plane during a practice overflight and into a 150 mph propeller blast. Fortunately he was not seriously injured.¹⁵

After completing Airborne and Ranger training the companies still had one more phase of training to complete. Authorized in December 1950 and beginning with the second cycle the Rangers traveled by train to Camp Carson, Colorado for mountain and cold weather training. This training added an additional three weeks to the twelve weeks'

¹³ 1LT Robert B. Nelson, "Unit History: 6th Ranger Infantry Company Airborne", *Army AG Command Reports 1949-54, Non-Organic Units, INCO-6*, 1951, Box 5235, RG 407, WNRC, 7.

¹⁴ 8th Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) Morning Reports, 12 January 1951, Documents and Historical Sketches of Ranger Companies, 1950-51, The Ranger Collection, MHI.

¹⁵ Holloway, "The Fourteenth Company Unit History," 5; John K. Singlaub, *Hazardous Duty* (New York: Summit Books, 1991), 171-172. Jump speed at this time was not supposed to exceed 120 miles per hour. Jumping with a static line at excessive speeds has several hazards. The jet stream may blow out a panel on the parachute. The opening shock of the parachute in such situations may also knock a jumper unconscious.

time already needed to prepare a Ranger company for combat. Although fifteen weeks of training seemed excessive to some Army planners, Van Houten believed that mountain and cold weather were worthwhile based on reports that he received from Ranger observers in Korea.¹⁶

The Mountain Training Command at Camp Carson also conducted its training in three stages. During the first week instructors introduced the Rangers to the fundamentals of mountain warfare. Besides classes on the characteristics of tactical operations in an alpine environment, survival, the fundamentals of traversing mountain terrain, and rope work, the Rangers learned how to work with the infamous "Army mule." Several Rangers discovered that the mule's reputation as a stubborn, cantankerous animal was well deserved. Bob Black of the 8th Airborne Rangers learned about the mules the hard way when his mule kicked him and ran off. Black did not catch up with the animal for an hour, and then the mule appeared to have the "haughty look of a victor."¹⁷ After seven days' of preparatory training the Rangers moved into the Rocky Mountains for hands-on practice.

For the last two training phases, lasting eighteen days, the Rangers operated out of the remote Rock Creek Mountain Camp. During the second week of training the Rangers mastered rock climbing, mountain walking, rapelling, and cliff climbing techniques. They also constructed suspension traverses and rope bridges. Companies that underwent training in the winter received instruction in skiing, snow-shoeing, and the use of ice axes and crampons for movement in snowy conditions. Several mountain walks of various

¹⁶ Singlaub to Van Houten, Letter, Subject: Observer's Report, 28 November 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, Records Group 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives; CPT Dorsey Anderson to Colonel Van Houten, letter, 23 April 1951, Copy in The Robert Black Collection, unsorted documents, MHI. Anderson reported that the 4th Rangers had needed to conduct several weeks of mountain training to prepare for a mission behind enemy lines.

¹⁷ Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 61.

lengths, several of them crossing above the timber line, conditioned the Rangers to the rugged environment. The last portion of training incorporated mountain skills with tactical training. Squads and platoons climbed mountains two thousand feet in elevation to conduct raids and ambushes. The final tactical exercise consisted of a two day problem which required the Rangers to set up a clandestine bivouac, coordinate an aerial resupply, and conduct two raids. After they had withdrawn from their last objective, the Rangers exfiltrated through the mountains under cover of darkness to a truck pickup point. The trucks then returned them to Camp Carson for graduation. Mountain training completed the Rangers' preparation.¹⁸ Afterwards the companies deployed to Korea or rejoined their parent divisions.

Colonel Van Houten insured that the Rangers received an outpouring of publicity throughout their training. This was important on two levels. First, Van Houten wanted to legitimize the Ranger program and build support for it within the rest of the Army. The more favorable the publicity, the stronger the case for continuation of the program. Second, public attention promoted the romantic, elite image of the Rangers. Newspapers and journals described the Rangers as "Hand picked companies of the toughest fighting men in our Army" and the "dirtiest, toughest, most vicious fighters in the U.S. Army . . . trained in treachery at the 'School for Saboteurs' ".¹⁹ Characterizing the Rangers as "Happy Hatchetmen," one article reported that Fort Benning was developing "an Army bowery brawler they claim is rougher than a stucco bathtub." That same article claimed that

¹⁸ For more on the Rangers' experiences during mountain training see Spragins, "Unit History of the 10th Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne)"; Holloway, "The Fourteenth Company Unit History"; Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 57-62.

¹⁹ Andrew Sparks, "Fort Benning Trains Army's Toughest Fighters," *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine* (December 3, 1950): 6-7; James R. Kennedy, "World's Toughest Soldiers," *Sir* (September 1951): 16-18, 75.

"When a Ranger sneaks up on a sentry and whacks his head off, he's got to catch it before it falls and makes a noise."²⁰ Such propaganda painted the Rangers as All-American heroes who could overcome enormous odds through their training, courage, and devil-may-care attitude. Favorable publicity undoubtedly aided in recruiting certain personality types for the Ranger ranks. The notoriety gave the Rangers a certain 'larger than life' mystique among civilians and throughout the Army. For their part, the Ranger companies thrived on the attention. Commendatory articles provided psychological reinforcement to the Rangers who already believed themselves to be a military elite above all others, including airborne units and the Marines. This strong group identification added to the Rangers' unit cohesion.

Extensive publicity proved to be a double-edged sword, however, as some Rangers tried to live up to their rough and tough image in nearby bars and dancehalls. During breaks in training the Rangers frequented local establishments looking for beer, women, and a good time. As might be expected, some tried to use their tough guy reputation to provoke other soldiers -- especially "legs" -- into fights. Most Rangers, according to Robert Schustaff of 4th Company, accepted the conventional wisdom that "one paratrooper could lick six straight legs." Those willing to test the assertion quickly found it to be "as red a herring as the blood which appeared on some of [their] noses" when they attempted to prove its truth.²¹

Sometimes these individual fights escalated into brawls involving large numbers of participants and which caused heavy damage to the tavern involved. Before deploying to Korea the 5th Airborne Rangers, for example, "had a howling good time," resulting in

²⁰ Jack Trim, "Not-So- Grim Reapers: Rangers Prowl Fort Benning's Fields as Army Revives Happy Hatchetmen," *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer* (November 12, 1950): C-1.

²¹ Robert Schustaff, letter to the author, 20 October 1991.

"\$1800 dollars in fines and for damages". The Ranger Training Command established officer-led "courtesy patrols" to assist local police and the military police keep the Rangers in line. Incidents continued, however, when the Rangers deployed away from Benning. At Fort Carson the Rangers occupied certain bars and "defended against all comers". As a result, the military police began to travel in packs and were "quick to use their clubs". Fighting was not restricted to the bars though. The 1st Rangers "cleaned house" on a "leg outfit" that insulted them at Camp Stoneman, California. Thus, their portrayal as aggressive warriors in the press may have contributed to a sense of 'self-fulfilling prophecy' among the Ranger ranks. These incidents ultimately proved counterproductive in the long term by giving the Ranger companies a bad reputation among conventional unit commanders.²²

Besides publicity, distinctive uniform items also added to the Rangers' elite image. In October 1950 Colonel Van Houten had discussed shoulder sleeve insignia with the G-1 (Personnel), Department of the Army. He wanted to issue each graduate an arc-shaped shoulder tab instead of the diamond shaped "Sunoco" patch authorized by the Army. The Director of Ranger Training wanted the word "Ranger" stitched in white on a black background surrounded by a red border, following the style of shoulder insignia (also unauthorized) worn by the World War II Rangers. On October 30, the G-1 authorized the

²² Besides incidents in bars, some Rangers apparently tested fired weapons out of the windows of trains on their way to California. While not all engaged in these acts or approved of them, they were sure to incite the disapproval and wrath of conventional officers. Much of the evidence on these points is anecdotal, but it reveals much about the attitudes of the Rangers, as well as providing a commentary on their level of cohesion. On the damages and courtesy patrols see: Headquarters, Ranger Training Command, *The Ranger* 1 (1 May 1951), 2; Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 56, 61-62; Bem Price, "Benning Trained U.S. Rangers Now Make Life Tough Behind Lines of Enemy," *Savannah Morning News* (March 11, 1951): 60. Several 1st Rangers discussed the incident at Camp Stoneman with the author including: Glenn Dahl, telephone interview with author, 9 September 1991; Joseph Lisi, telephone interview with author, 10 September 1991; Anthony Lukasik, telephone interview with author, 11 September 1991.

Ranger Training Center to issue a black and gold Ranger shoulder tab to the companies at graduation. Although the men wore this tab on their shoulder and patrol caps, the Rangers in Korea unofficially adopted the black, red, and white scrolls designed along World War II lines. These scrolls had the company's number and the words "Airborne Ranger Infantry Company" sewn into the patch with white thread. The companies not in Korea wore the Ranger tab above the divisional patch of their parent unit.²³

Not content only with a shoulder insignia, the Ranger companies devised other ways to make themselves stand out from conventional units. Captain Robert Eikenberry, commander of the 7th Ranger Company, had his men run on to the parade field wearing black scarves and white bootlaces during the second training cycle's graduation. Colonel Van Houten was so impressed with the look that he ordered the Rangers to wear those items for all future parades.²⁴ Van Houten also tasked Lieutenant Colonel Wilbur Wilson of the Training and Operations Division, to find a distinctive head gear for the Rangers. Wilson decided upon a black beret and selected Sergeant John Roy to model the look for the Colonel. Van Houten liked the idea, but could not sell the Army G-1 on the idea. Despite their official prohibition, the Ranger companies began to wear the berets around Fort Benning accompanied by a permission slip from their company commanders authorizing their wear.²⁵

²³ Colonel Van Houten to G-1, Department of the Army, Memorandum, Subject: Marauder (Ranger Units), 25 October 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, Records Group 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives; Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 237-241 and Robert W. Black, "Ranger Unit Insignia," *Gung-Ho* (October 1984): 16-19, 94.

²⁴ Headquarters, Ranger Training Center, *The Ranger* 1 (1 May 1951), 2;

²⁵ CPT C. E. Spragins, Beret Permission Slip, The Robert Black Collection, unsorted documents, MHI; Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 117.

Throughout early 1951 the Ranger Training Center made continuous efforts to improve the quality of its training and produce elite fighting units. The expanded program and the addition of mountain and cold weather training better prepared the Rangers to fight in Korea. Distinctive uniforms and plenty of publicity enhanced the Rangers' elite image. As they graduated, the Ranger companies looked forward to their chance to prove their elite status in combat. Unfortunately, not all of the companies got the opportunity to do so.

THE RANGERS "(RE)INVADE" EUROPE

The 6th Airborne Ranger Company was one unit that did not get to deploy to Korea. Believing that the Korean conflict was a sideshow designed by the Soviets to deflect attention from their aggressive actions in Europe, President Truman and the Joint Chiefs of Staffs began to augment NATO forces in late 1950. General Collins had previously earmarked one Ranger company to deploy to Europe as part of the increased American buildup. As a result, the Army attached the company to the 1st Infantry Division -- the "Big Red One" -- in Germany. The experiences of the 6th Rangers in Europe highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of elite units operating in a peacetime training environment.

The 6th Ranger Company activated on November 20, 1950. Most of its members were volunteers from the 82d or 11th Airborne Divisions. The company had undergone training with the 5th, 7th, and 8th Ranger Companies during the second training cycle. Three days into its final field training exercise during "Hell Week" the company received orders for deployment to Europe. Since they volunteered to go into combat with the "best unit" in the Army, most members were (understandably) terribly upset by this turn of events. Nevertheless, the company moved by train on 1 February 1951 to Fort Dix, New Jersey to begin processing for overseas movement.

The choice of the 6th Rangers to deploy to Europe instead of Korea is an interesting one, given the personnel assigned to the company's command group.²⁶ The unit's officers and first sergeant were some of the most experienced combat veterans to volunteer for Ranger duty. Captain James S. "Sugar" Cain commanded the unit. A former enlisted man in the cavalry before World War II, Cain had volunteered for the 1st Special Service Force in July 1942. He participated in amphibious landings with the unit at Kiska, Anzio, and in southern France. Cain fought with the unit until January 1944 when he received a battlefield commission. He deployed as part of Task Force Able to Norway to receive the Germany surrender there in May 1945. After the war he served in the 508th Airborne Infantry Regiment.

Captain Eldred E. "Red" Weber, company executive officer, was a former enlisted man who fought with the 1st Ranger Battalion until its deactivation in 1943, when he joined the 1st Special Service Force. Like Cain, he was sent to Norway as part of Task Force Able. He received a commission in May 1945 and commanded an airborne company in the Airborne Training Battalion at Fort Benning prior to the outbreak of the Korean War.

The two platoon leaders who remained with the company throughout its existence were inexperienced but had served in active Army units before joining the Rangers. Lieutenant Robert B. Nelson, USMA class of 1949 and commissioned as a field artilleryman, had served with the 450th AAA Battalion at Fort Lewis, Washington. Clarence E Skein, a 1950 ROTC Honor Graduate from the University of Wisconsin, was a platoon leader in the 511th Airborne Infantry Regiment at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Lieutenants Alfred Giacherine, Fred A. Lang, Cecil Kidd and Captain William S.

²⁶ The following descriptions come primarily from Nelson, "Unit History 6th Ranger Company".

Culpepper trained with the 6th Rangers at one point , then received assignments to other units.²⁷

Without a doubt the most experienced man in the company was First Sergeant Joseph Dye. He had first volunteered for the Rangers in 1942 and had seen action with the British at Dieppe. As a member of the 1st Ranger Battalion Dye had participated in operations in North Africa, Sicily, and Italy. He was one of only fifty-nine Rangers to escape from the encirclement at Cisterna. After the war he left the Army for a short period then rejoined the 82d Airborne Division, where he served with the parachute test section before volunteering again for Ranger duty.

With such combat tested veterans as this to lead them the 6th Rangers thrived during training at Fort Benning. Whether the unit received the European assignment because of, or inspite of, such quality leaders is unknown. Regardless of the reasons, the chain of command led the 6th Rangers aboard the *USNS George W. Goethals* at the Brooklyn Navy Yard on 7 February. After a ten day ocean voyage the company arrived in Bremerhaven, Germany and rode a train to Kitzingen, where it was to be permanently stationed.²⁸

As they settled into the kaserne the 6th Rangers encountered several unexpected difficulties. The first, and potentially the most troublesome, problem was the state of the men's morale. The men were extremely bitter about being deprived of their chance for

²⁷ After completing initial training with the 6th Rangers, the Ranger Training Center transferred Lieutenants Alfred Giacherine and Fred A. Lang to the 8th and 5th Rangers, respectively, to round out those units before deployment. Kidd came to the Rangers from the 16th Infantry, but was later assigned to the 82d Airborne Division. CPT Culpepper became commanding officer of B Company, 26th Infantry shortly after arriving in Germany. Nelson, "Unit History of the 6th Rangers", 3-4.

²⁸ 6th Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne), Morning Reports, 7-25 February 1951, Documents and Historical Sketches of Ranger Companies, 1950-51, The Ranger Collection, MHI.

combat. Many submitted requests for transfers to the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team in Korea. Captain Cain attempted to combat the dip in the morale by keeping the men busy moving into quarters and, later, by implementing an intense training schedule. Cain had to improvise on the latter because training areas and facilities were extremely small and lacking essential resources.

A second problem concerned discrepancies in the unit's T/O&E. In peacetime most armies generate an immense amount of paperwork; the American Army in Europe during this period was no exception. The Rangers, however, were authorized an augmentation of only one clerk typist and one supply sergeant to administer the company. Captain Cain and First Sergeant Dye found it necessary to supplement the headquarters with a clerk-typist, an additional man to help the supply sergeant, and an armorer-artificier. They drew all these men from the platoons, which detracted from "foxhole" strength during training.

Besides manpower shortages, the company had difficulty drawing its complement of vehicles. The Rangers finally received two 1/4 ton trucks and a 2 1/2 ton truck several weeks after their arrival. As the Rangers in Korea had found, these transportation assets did not prove to be adequate for the company's needs. Because the Rangers did not have a battalion headquarters to support their needs, Captain Weber had to ask other units to borrow additional vehicles when the whole company moved to the field.

The 6th Rangers resumed training on 5 March 1951, two weeks after arriving in Germany. The Rangers began by making four parachute jumps during daylight and one at night within one 48 hour period. These jumps continued to qualify the men for jump pay. Next, the division's First Engineer (Combat) Battalion provided two weeks of intensive demolitions training for the Rangers. Each soldier learned how to estimate the amount of explosive required for a given target, prepare the charges, and emplace them for maximum effect. The company also mastered the use of demolitions to breach minefields, cut timber,

destroy bridges, and construct booby traps. Each squad had the opportunity to conduct "hands-on" training on several targets in the impact area. The demolitions training, along with other refresher training conducted during the remainder of March and April, prepared the Rangers for upcoming field training exercises with the rest of the division.²⁹

The 6th Rangers performed many of their doctrinal missions during major training exercises at Grafenwehr and Wildflecken in the spring and summer, 1951. In May the company conducted squad and platoon level training emphasizing retrograde movements, raids, and counterattacks. The Rangers also fired all their assigned weapons for the first time since arriving in Germany. Acting as part of a regimental combat team in July the Rangers performed infiltrations and raids at night and worked with the 63d Tank Battalion. Lieutenant Robert Nelson's 2d Platoon infiltrated enemy lines and raised havoc in the perimeters of three rifle companies with lax security. Umpires declared all three companies combat ineffective. Before the July problem ended, the whole company made a simulated parachute drop and occupied a "choke point" in the enemies' rear, a traditional airborne mission, to draw away reserves from a friendly bridging site. The maneuver succeeded in diverting a whole regimental combat team towards the 6th Rangers positions. The Rangers ended the summer by practicing river and stream crossings, infiltrations, and guerrilla tactics.³⁰

To maintain the company's fighting trim when large maneuver areas were unavailable, Captain Cain formulated some unique training concepts. The most innovative of these was when he had small groups of Rangers infiltrate into actual air bases to gather

²⁹ Nelson, Unit History 6th Ranger Company, 9; Boyce Eckwright, "Sharp as a Ranger : A Brief Look at One of the Big Red One's Most Interesting Units," *The American Traveler* (March 15, 1951) : 4.

³⁰ Nelson, Unit History 6th Ranger Company, 10-15; 6th Ranger Company Morning Reports, April-August 1951.

intelligence. The most famous of these maneuvers occurred when 1st squad, 2d Platoon infiltrated into Giebelstadt Army Airfield. Lieutenant Nelson gave Sergeant first class Jack DeSilva the mission, outlined the information he wanted the squad to gather, then left it up to the squad leader to plan and execute the exercise. DeSilva and his squad stole a truck from one of the other units on the kaserne and drove to the vicinity of the air base. The Rangers spent the remainder of the day reconnoitering the fence outside of the base searching for an easy access. That night the Rangers crawled through a hole in the fence to the rear of the base and set up a base in the basement of a bombed out building. During noon time on the second day of the mission, the Rangers quietly slipped into the base administration office and rifled through the commander's office. DeSilva and his men left the building with an officer roster, a listing of the aircraft operating out of the base including their on-board armaments, and a detailed map of the area. Another Ranger gained access to a highly classified and well-guarded zone when he claimed to be part of a radar repair detail working in the area. Their mission complete, the Rangers returned to their basement hide-away. After dark the squad left the base the same way they entered and exfiltrated back to their kaserne on foot. The air base commander knew nothing about the breach in his security until the following morning when Captain Cain informed him of the mission's results.³¹

The Rangers attempted a repeat of this mission on two other occasions. In early July a six man raiding party attempted to gain access to Herzogensurach Air Control Warning Station. Despite penetrating a double barbed wire fence into the base, the Rangers were unable to gain access to the central part of the post. Guard dogs picked up the

³¹ Ibid, 11; Headquarters, Ranger Training Command, *The Ranger* 1:3 (May 23, 1951), 4-6; Howard Katzander, "The Rangers Are Here," *The Stars and Stripes Special Feature* (April 15, 1951): VI.

squad's scent, and security guards overpowered four of the intruders. Two men managed to escape to report the situation to Captain Cain before the base commander called him. In another instance, this time during a field training exercise, the Rangers raided the defensive positions of batteries from the 5th Field Artillery. Platoon members stuffed mud down the barrels of the artillery pieces and placed simulated demolitions charges in the breeches of the weapons. To add insult to injury, the Rangers left notes saying "Kilroy was here. So were the Rangers."³² Successful or not, these raiding missions honed the Rangers' infiltration skills, provided practical experience, and increased morale.

Captain Cain's training program also stressed the ability to march long distances with a heavy load. The Ranger commander implemented a progressive roadmarch program designed to move the company forty miles in eight hours. Cain required his men to carry their crew-served weapons for the first fifteen miles. The 6th Rangers became famous for their hard marching. According to the April issue of *Ranger*, the 6th Rangers marched twenty-five miles in four hours, twenty minutes with full packs and weapons. The company even claimed to have made the forty mile march to standard.³³

Since the Rangers would normally operate behind enemy lines, doctrine called for them to occupy a clandestine bivouac as a base of operations. To insure that his company could perform this task to standard Cain had his platoons camouflage their positions while he flew over them in a small plane. If he spotted them, Cain dropped a smoke grenade on their location and forced them to move. This type of training reinforced combat skills vital to the Rangers' survival in wartime.

³² Ibid, 11-12; Katzander, "The Rangers Are Here," VI.

³³ Headquarters, Ranger Training Command, *The Ranger* 1:3 (April 11, 1951), 2; "Ranger Routine: 40 miles, 8 hours," *Army Times* (March 31, 1951), copy in The Robert Black Collection, unsorted documents, MHI.

The Rangers' earned the reputation as one of the 1st Division's finest units. Whether in appearance, at training, or on the athletic field, the 6th Rangers set and maintained high performance standards. The Rangers attempted to live up to Captain Cain's motto of "Look sharp, be sharp, stay sharp." That the company served as a role model for other divisional units is evidenced by a newspaper article written in March 1951 which coined the phrase "Sharp as a Ranger." An official history of the 1st Division picked up on this phrase, stating that "Sharp as a Ranger might well describe these soldiers" who had "become an important part of the Big Red One's potential striking force."³⁴ By setting the standards for other units to emulate, the Rangers, in some respects, probably improved the quality of its sister units' performance.

The Rangers again performed in their specialist roles during a series of field training exercises in the fall, 1951. In early September the company conducted night river crossings along the Main River in support of division EXERCISE DRAWBRIDGE. From September 27-29, as part of V Corps' EXERCISE JUPITER, the Rangers conducted infiltrations to seize key bridges over the Rhine River. On the 30th Captain Cain's men returned to Kitzingen to begin preparations for an airborne drop in the vicinity of Frankenthal Bridge. Cain was the first man to exit from a C-82 "Flying Boxcar" to lead his company in the airborne assault on October 3d. The Air Force's 60th Troop Carrier Group dropped the eighty five Rangers within three-quarters of a mile of the bridge. After consolidating on the ground the company moved to seize the bridge, supported by the simulated fires of F-84E Thunderjet fighter-bombers. The elite troopers successfully assaulted and cleared the bridge while a group of high-ranking generals --including the

³⁴ Boyce Eckwright, "Sharp as a Ranger : A Brief Look at One of the Big Red One's Most Interesting Units," *The American Traveler* (March 15, 1951) : 4; *1st Infantry Division 34th Anniversary History*, 3-4 August 1951, document number O5-1 1951 c.2, MHI.

EUCOM commander, General Thomas Hardy -- watched. After friendly forces linked up with them, the Rangers broke into platoons to operate behind enemy lines for the remainder of exercise.³⁵

EXERCISE COMBINE proved to be the 6th Ranger Company's last major field training exercise. In October the company received orders to begin disbandment. Many used this news as another excuse to volunteer for combat duty in Korea. Others stoically accepted the news -- and orders to a "leg" outfit in Germany. The company officially deactivated on 1 December 1951.³⁶ The 6th Rangers' experiences were, in large measure, repeated by the Ranger companies that deployed to Japan to serve with their National Guard divisions.

FAR EAST RANGERS

Other Rangers also deployed overseas and failed to get into combat. Two Ranger companies, the 10th and 11th, joined their parent divisions in Japan during the summer 1951. Unlike the 6th, however, these companies primarily consisted of National Guardsmen who had been activated for the war. A majority of the men had missed World War II and had volunteered for the Rangers to get their chance to fight in a war. After months of training the companies were in top fighting trim. Members expected to be in combat shortly after arriving in the Far East. Unfortunately, the shores of Nippon were as close as these Ranger companies got to hostile enemy fire. Their service in Japan mirrored many of the same patterns encountered by its counterparts in Europe.

³⁵ Nelson, Unit History 6th Ranger Company, 15-17; "6th Rangers Jump; Capture Key Bridge," *Stars and Stripes* (no date/page), The Robert Black Collection, unsorted documents, MHI.

³⁶ 6th Ranger Company Morning Reports, 1 December 1951, The Ranger Collection, MHI.

The Department of the Army activated the 10th and 11th Ranger Companies in January 1951. The 10th Rangers, organized for duty with the 45th Infantry "Thunderbird" Division, selected 186 men from an initial pool of over six hundred volunteers. Seventy three of the volunteers were from Oklahoma, the division's home state. Captain Charles E. Spragins, a Regular Army officer and fellow Oklahoman, assumed command of the unit at Fort Polk as it prepared for shipment to Fort Benning. Meanwhile, at Camp Cook, California, the 40th Infantry Division called for Rangers volunteers. After thorough screenings of records and personal interviews, the 11th Ranger Company activated with a strength of 197 men under the command of Captain Rudolf M. Jones. Both companies travelled by train to Fort Benning to begin airborne training on January 14.³⁷

The 10th and 11th Ranger Companies underwent all phases of Ranger training before shipment to Japan. Because most of their soldiers were "legs", the companies first underwent three weeks of airborne training to prepare them for parachute drops during the Ranger course. Selected members of the company qualified as jumpmasters and attended the Air Transportability Course during a fourth week at the Airborne School. On 12 February the Guardsmen joined the 7th and 9th Companies to begin the third cycle's eight, grueling weeks of Ranger training at Harmony Church. Proud of their newly earned Ranger tabs, the 7th, 10th, and 11th Companies boarded trains headed for Camp Carson and mountain training on 16 April. For four weeks the Rangers learned mountain climbing techniques, marched up and climbed steep inclines, practiced survival techniques, and conducted tactical exercises. The Rangers, after graduation from the Mountain School,

³⁷ 10th Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne), Morning Reports, 7-14 January 1951, and 11th Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne), Morning Reports, 7-14 January 1951, The Ranger Collection, MHI.

received a two week leave before having to report to Seattle, Washington for shipment to the Far East.³⁸

The Rangers boarded the *General Simon B. Buckner* on 20 June and sailed for Japan. During the voyage many of the men speculated about their future missions. The Rangers hoped that would get their chance for combat. Both companies were to rejoin their parent divisions, which had preceded them. The Army had shipped the 45th and 40th Infantry Divisions to Japan to reconstitute occupation forces that had previously deployed to Korea. These divisions also served as the Far East Command's theater reserve. By the time the Rangers arrived in July 1951, the Korean War was beginning to enter a stagnant, defensive phase, with both sides holding extensive fortified positions along Line Wyoming. Peace negotiations had also started in June.³⁹ Unless the Chinese and North Koreans launched another great offensive, the theater reserve would remain in Japan. The Rangers chances for combat, therefore, grew slimmer with the passing weeks.

Once in the Far East the Rangers quickly resumed their training program. The Rangers arrived in Japan on 1 July and reported to their respective divisions two days later. After several days of unit processing, the Rangers began to train. The 45th Division planned to incorporate the 10th Rangers into special field training exercises being held in the later part of the month. Training Memorandum 19 outlined a progressive program of individual and collective skills to bring the "unit back up to a high state of efficiency." During the interim period from 6 July to 21 July the company trained a minimum of 48

³⁸ Spragins, 10th Ranger Company Unit History; 10th and 11th Company Morning Reports, February-June, 1951, Documents and Historical Sketches of Ranger Companies, 1950-51, The Ranger Collection, MHI.

³⁹ On the defensive phase of the war which lasted from mid 1951-53 and the peace negotiations, see Walter G. Hermes, *Truce Tent and Fighting Front* (Washington D.C. : Chief of Military History, 1966) and Burton I. Kaufman, *The Korean War Challenges in Crisis, Credibility, and Command* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 186-357.

hours, five and one half days a week. Selected officers and noncommissioned officers linked up with the division's Reconnaissance Company and observed their "Aggressor" training. On the 21st the Rangers relieved the Reconnaissance Company and became the opposing force for the Reinforced Infantry Battalion Firing Test, which lasted into early August.⁴⁰

Besides regular field training the Rangers were able to practice their specialist skills. On the last day of July, the 10th Rangers performed the first Ranger parachute drop in Japan. Five days later, on August 4th, the 11th Company followed suit in a drop from Air Force C-119's on Matsushima Air Field area. Later in the month the Rangers from the 40th Infantry Division boarded the *USS Menard* and practiced ship to shore movements and amphibious landings.⁴¹

The infantry divisions had some initial difficulty integrating the Rangers into their organizations. The Rangers played up their elite status among the divisional troops, resulting in several fights. The Rangers gained a reputation as "hell-raisers" when members of the 10th Rangers stole a carved wooden bear from the steps of the city hall in Sapporo and placed it in front of their commander's tent.⁴² In an attempt to quell what he termed as a "Ticklish" situation, Major General Styron, commanding general of the Thunderbird Division, warned his staff that it ". . . seem[ed] silly [that the division] should

⁴⁰ Headquarters, 45th Infantry Division, Training Memorandum Number 19: Interim Training, Ranger Company, 3 July 1951, the Robert Black Collection, unsorted documents, MHI.

⁴¹ Spragins, 10th Ranger Company Unit History; Julian Hartt, "40th's Tough Ranger Paratroopers in First Japan Jump," *Los Angeles Examiner* (no date/page). Copy in the Robert Black Collection, unsorted documents, MHI; Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 204.

⁴² Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 201.

take such a [negative] attitude with these men."⁴³ He instructed his staff to fix the problem. Mutual suspicion still existed between the Rangers and their infantry counterparts when, on September 6, the companies received orders for immediate deactivation. Nine days later the 10th and 11th Ranger Companies furled their guidons for the last time. The Army gave the Rangers the choice of staying with their division or joining the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team. Those who still wanted to see combat and remain on jump status went to the latter.⁴⁴

The US Army continued to organize and train elite Ranger companies through the summer of 1951. Colonel Van Houten and the Ranger Training Command strove to improve the quality of their training. Additional mountain and cold weather training gave the Rangers the versatility to fight in varied combat conditions. As the Ranger companies joined their assigned divisions they set performance standards for other infantry units to emulate, especially in the areas of appearance, aggressive small unit leadership, and tactics. Even as the Ranger program geared up and companies deployed to Korea, Europe, and Japan, Army leaders in the Far East and back in Washington began to question the utility of the elite units. By mid-summer 1951 a number of high ranking officers in the Army hierarchy had decided to change the Ranger concept from the production of elite light infantry outfits to that of expert individuals who could train their parent units to "Ranger standards."

⁴³ Headquarters, 45th Infantry Division, General Staff Conference, 1 August 1951. Copy in The Robert Black Collection, unsorted documents, MHI.

⁴⁴ 10th and 11th Company Morning Reports, 15 September 1951, Documents and Historical Sketches of Ranger Companies, 1950-51, The Ranger Collection, MHI.

CHAPTER VIII

PROJECT HI-STANDARDS

As soon as the Ranger companies arrived in Korea and Europe, the Ranger Training Center began to receive reports on their performance. Accounts from Korea, both from parent divisions and in the press, praised the Rangers' aggressiveness, willingness to close with the enemy, and "desire to get the job done." In Europe the 6th Ranger Company earned a laudatory reputation for its high level of discipline and tactical expertise. Despite these early comments, friction between the Rangers and conventional units began to surface as early as February 1951.

Division reports from Korea began to emphasize the difficulties involved in employing the Rangers. Most comments focused on the Rangers' organizational deficiencies, especially their inability to sustain themselves, the lack of appropriate enemy targets, and the impediments involved with keeping them airborne qualified. Resentment over the Rangers' elite status was also apparent as some commanders began to refer them as "prima donnas." For their part, the Rangers accused the divisions of misusing them. Despite the failure of conventional commanders to employ them properly, the Rangers claimed to have made significant contributions, paid for with high casualties. As he and his staff evaluated these conflicting claims, it appeared to Colonel Van Houten that, within the Korean War laboratory, the "Ranger experiment" ultimately seemed to be failing.

Five months into the crash program to implement General Collins' directives, Colonel Van Houten found himself fighting a rearguard action to save the Ranger companies from deactivation. The Director of Ranger Training, despite personal appeals to influential members in the chain of command, was ultimately unable to insure the

approvals from the commanders of FECOM, EUCOM, and Army Field Forces, had directed the disbandment of the companies. Disavowing the need for elite units in the force structure, Army leaders planned to train conventional outfits to perform Ranger missions. The Ranger Training Command, instead of training elite units, would switch to instructing selected individuals in needed skills. Once these "elite" individuals had graduated, they would return to their units, where, through their instruction and personal example, would raise the standards of their entire outfits. Thus, the Ranger concept evolved in less than a year's time from the production of elite military units to that of highly motivated individuals capable of training their units to elite standards.

THE DEMISE OF THE RANGER COMPANIES

Since the Ranger companies' inception, Colonel Van Houten had always worried about their correct utilization in combat. To begin educating division commanders about the Rangers he sent Ranger staff members to Korea to observe operations and brief division-level staffs. Major John K. Singlaub made the first trip to Korea in November to pave the way for the Rangers' deployment. Singlaub began his task amidst the confusion of Eighth Army's retreat caused by Chinese intervention on the 25th. Unfortunately, he felt "a little useless" trying to brief staff officers on Ranger capabilities while "they were naturally preoccupied with extracting their forces from Chinese encirclement in the icy mountains."¹ Those officers who did listen to Singlaub seemed interested and willing to implement intended doctrine.² Van Houten, after U.N. forces had stabilized the situation somewhat, made his own trip to Korea in December 1950. He had hoped to forestall

¹ Singlaub, *Hazardous Duty*, 177.

² Major General (Ret.) John K. Singlaub, interview with author, 10 September 1991, United States Military Academy, West Point.

Ranger misuse by expressing his concerns to front-line division commanders during his visit. The staff study on Ranger utilization and his letter to General Collins that followed this trip also flowed from his recognition of potential problems.³ While the Ranger Training Center drew-up doctrine to guide commanders, Van Houten monitored the companies' progress through letters from the Ranger chain of command in Korea and official reports from Far East Command.

In February, Far East Command submitted a four part progress report on the Rangers to the Department of the Army. The report noted that, when employed, the Rangers had operated as a complete unit and recommended the addition of four radio operators, three messengers, and an armor artificier to their T/O&E.⁴ The report listed combat patrols against enemy command posts, mortar positions, and observation posts; reconnaissance in force operations; air drops behind enemy lines; and anti-guerrilla operations as the major future operations contemplated for the Rangers. In one portion of the report division commanders assessed their Rangers' achievements. The Commanding Generals (CG) of the 2d, 7th, and 25th Infantry Divisions praised the companies, rating them as "outstanding" and having "proven [their] value." Major General Ned D. Moore, one of Ridgway's airborne protégés from World War II and now CG of IX Corps, had found the 4th Airborne Rangers wanting, however. Moore noted that the company had arrived in Korea in poor physical condition because of "6 to 8 weeks of inactivity while enroute," which had necessitated "additional training" before its commitment to combat. As a result, the 4th Rangers had conducted only routine security and training missions.

³ Ranger Training Center, Staff Study, Subject: "Ranger Type Units," 26 December 1950; Van Houten to Bolté, Letter, 28 December 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

⁴ The report commented upon on the actions of the 8th Army Ranger Company and the 1st, 2d, and 4th Airborne Rangers.

Each of the commanders also noted particular organizational, personnel, or logistical deficiencies within the Ranger outfits. Major General William Kean indicated that a "scarcity of suitable targets where Ranger missions could be performed" existed in his sector.⁵ This early report was the first indication of significant, but not unsolvable, problems in the Ranger program.

Ranger staff officers viewed Far East Command's analysis with great interest and concern. The report, despite some positive feedback, revealed several potential troublespots concerning the size of Ranger formations and their proper tactical role in combat operations. The language of the report misled many to believe that the Rangers only performed company-sized missions. General Collins even noted on the margins of his copy of the report that "The company need not be used always as a unit, I should think that in many cases platoons and perhaps even squads could well be used for specific and independent missions."⁶ In fact, all of the companies had employed their platoons and squads for independent missions, mostly patrolling and in anti-guerrilla operations. The missions assigned to the Rangers to that point were appropriate to their organization and training. Difficulty in locating appropriate targets in their sectors, however, caused division commanders to use the companies more for routine patrolling than for infiltrations and raiding.

The company's inability to administer or sustain itself was also a major source of criticism. Bill Keane had noted in his report that the 8th Army Ranger Company's T/O&E

⁵ FECOM, Operations of Ranger Companies in FECOM, 18 February 1951, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

⁶ Ibid, 3.

"even with authorized augmentation" was still "dependent upon another unit for support when not engaged in combat." To remedy the situation he recommended an increase in the company's administrative and messing sections "to make it self sufficient." After the battle of Chipyeong-ni, Colonel Freeman, jaded by his experience with the 1st Rangers, wrote that the companies were "complete parasites" who "could barely cook their meals . . . couldn't maintain their vehicles . . . couldn't even deliver their mail if there was any, or distribute rations or go to the rear for additional ammunition."⁷

The Rangers themselves recognized their deficiencies in these areas, especially in the area of transportation and logistics. The companies were unable to move all of their organic equipment with only two 2 1/2 ton trucks. The Rangers, therefore, resorted to "midnight requisitions" to increase their number of vehicles. The trucks did not receive proper maintenance, however, because the TO/ & E did not provide for a mechanic. By design the Ranger's T/O & E was a lean structure which emphasized mobility, firepower, and a greater "tooth to tail ratio" than regular rifle companies. By eliminating an appropriate level of administrative elements the Army had actually reduced the Ranger companies' ability to sustain themselves and care for their soldiers.⁸

⁷ FECOM, Operations of Ranger Companies in FECOM, 18 February 1951, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives; Paul Freeman, Oral History Interview with Colonel James Ellis, Session 2, Side 1, Tape 1, 16 April 1974, The Paul L. Freeman Papers, MHI.

⁸ Joseph Lisi, letter to author, 12 September 1991. Midnight requisitions are an old Army euphemism referring to unauthorized borrowing or outright theft of government property, usually accomplished during hours of darkness. Tooth to tail ratios refer to the proportion of actual fighters to administrative or support types within a military organization.

Other comments seemed to indicate that a company size element was not the optimum size for a Ranger organization. Major General Claude B. Ferenbaugh, the 7th Infantry Division's commander, recommended that Ranger strength increase to a battalion for each division. Under his plan, a designated Ranger company from the battalion would habitually work with an assigned infantry regiment. This would foster a closer working relationship between the units and allow conventional commanders to understand better the Rangers' unique capabilities. A battalion headquarters and a headquarters and service company could administer and supply each company, thus alleviating the burden on the infantry regiment's staff.⁹ Ranger staffers also took note of Kean's comments about lack of suitable Ranger missions. They recognized that infantry division staffs did not have the intelligence capabilities to look deep into the enemy's rear. Van Houten's staff also realized that a division G-3 was unlikely to want to get involved in the details of a company-level operation, unless it was absolutely vital. Ferenbaugh's plan and Kean's comments, therefore, seemed to support the Ranger Training Center's previous staff study recommending the establishment of Ranger battalions.¹⁰ Van Houten, sensing an opportunity, ordered his staff to prepare another study to reexamine Ranger organization and tactical concepts.

During the same time frame, Van Houten had to react to a new proposal from the Army Chief of Staff. Favorable command reports and publicity had impressed General

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ranger Training Center, Staff Study, Subject: "Ranger-Type Units," 26 December 1950, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

capabilities of conventional infantry units, asked the Ranger Training Center to determine the feasibility of attaching small groups of Rangers to regular rifle companies. Essentially, Collins wanted to send teams of Rangers to train infantry companies in reconnaissance and combat patrolling. Once the teams completed their instruction, Collins wanted them to lead a series of actual combat patrols for the units as a practical demonstration. This concept was the the birth of the idea of using Rangers as leader-trainers. It also represented the first assault -- albeit a subtle one -- on the Ranger program as then constituted. Van Houten's March 5th responses to this plan and others associated with the leader-trainer concept receive fuller discussion later in this chapter.

On 6 March 1951 Van Houten forwarded a new staff study to Department of the Army for consideration. This document addressed the Ranger Training Center's latest thinking on Ranger organization and tactical employment. Pointing to the "valuable results . . . attained by utilizing both military and non-military forces" operating "behind enemy lines" during World War II, the study's contents addressed the "optimum methods and means" to utilize the elite companies. The document argued that the Rangers continued to be a great asset "to achieve results out of proportion to its numbers in the enemy's rear." According to the study, independent Ranger operations, sometimes conducted in conjunction with partisan activities, would achieve the most desirable results. These operations might be of a long-term strategic nature. Divisional staffs, however, did not have the capability to coordinate these type of activities. To facilitate planning and conduct of all types of Ranger operations in the enemy's rear, the Ranger staff advocated the activation of a Ranger battalion for use by a theater-level commander. The battalion headquarters would provide "an experienced tactical command and staff for operations, an administrative echelon, and opportunities for reconnaissance and raids in whatever size

units that may be required."¹¹ This proposal supported Van Houten's previous attempts to establish Ranger battalions in place of companies. With its own staff to administer, supply and control operations, the Ranger battalion idea also provided the answer to many previous criticisms.

The study also added another interesting twist to the Ranger concept. The staff study endorsed the training of "indigenous and foreign extraction personnel to assist Ranger operations" in the enemy's rear as a new mission for the Rangers.¹² During deep infiltrations into the enemy's rear, the companies would need trained guides and interpreters to accompany them. The Rangers, therefore, would need to train these personnel in necessary tactics and techniques to insure mission success. The Center also included the capability to cooperate with partisans in its March revision of tentative Ranger doctrine.¹³

The study's "partisan angle" was probably more of a bureaucratic ploy by the Ranger Training Center than any genuine desire on its part to assume such a mission. Van Houten, who had lost earlier battles to activate battalions in place of the companies, now sought to play to bureaucratic politics to accomplish his aims. Van Houten knew that EUSAK and Far East Command had activated a number of partisan units with higher-level controlling headquarters. Special operations, including partisan and psychological warfare, were also "hot topics" receiving a great deal from Department of Army and Army Field

¹¹ Headquarters, Ranger Training Center, Staff Study, Subject: "Organization and Employment of Rangers," 6 March 1951, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ranger Training Center, *Ranger Company (Tentative)*, 28 March 1951, document call number U 294.5 B46R36 1951, MHI., 3.

Forces.¹⁴ Tying the Rangers to partisan and other special operations would give them an expanded specialist role. Since most of these type operations would occur under the direction of the theater-level command, a Ranger battalion "provide[d] the most suitable organization" capable of "flexible employment."¹⁵ It would also act as a liason with the theater staff. An association with the proliferating number of partisan and special operations units might help legitimize the Rangers' elite status, special combat capabilities, and shield them from use for conventional infantry missions. The organization of battalions would also enhance the Rangers' ability to perform their core function of operations in the enemy's rear. By expanding the Ranger concept to include cooperation and training of partisans, the Director of Ranger Training sought to insure survival of the fledgling organization and deflect criticisms coming from Army Field Forces observers.

Army Field Forces sent combat observers to Korea in March. One of the teams' tasks was to evaluate the merits of the Ranger companies. The observers were not impressed with Rangers and said so in their report. The team, headed by Brigadier General Robert P. Williams, recommended against sending more Ranger companies to FECOM. Williams' team felt that divisional Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoons or conventional infantry companies could perform all of the Rangers' missions. The team's final report

¹⁴ Besides the partisan units organized by Colonel John H. McGee, G-3 Miscellaneous Division, EUSAK, Far East Command organized the Combined Command for Reconnaissance Activities Korea (CCRAK) to conduct covert, clandestine operations in the enemy's rear. Some Rangers had been involved in training partisans for McGee and on at least one occasion participated in a partisan operation. For more on partisan activities see U.S. Army Forces, Far East, "UN Partisan Forces in the Korean Conflict," (Carlisle Barracks : MHI, 1953); Colonel Rod Paschall, "Special Operations in Korea," *Conflict* 7 (2), 155-178; and Shaun M. Darragh, "Hwanghae-do: The War of the Donkeys," *Army* 34 (Nov 1984): 66-69, 72-75. Colonel Alfred H. Paddock's *U.S. Army Special Warfare Its Origins* (Washington D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1982) surveys the origins and developments in special operations from 1941 to 1952.

¹⁵ Headquarters, Ranger Training Center, Staff Study, Subject: "Organization and Employment of Rangers," 3-4.

called for the dissolution of the Ranger Training Center and a re-examination of the whole concept.¹⁶

Van Houten combatted such criticisms by writing letters directly to the Chief of Staff to "brag" about his Rangers. In a January 29 letter, he had relayed excerpts from a former Fort Benning Public Information staff officer who had visited Korea. The reporter, during a trip to see the 1st Cavalry Division, stopped by to see the attached 4th Ranger Company. He could not :

remember being so impressed with the sheer doggedness and cold, anxious anticipation of battle from a group of men. Without exception these men are savagely craving a fight with the Communists -- the sooner, the better -- something out of a Warner brothers' movie, but I rather imagine there is nothing superficial or false about their determined expressions.¹⁷

In relaying such information to the Chief, the Director of Ranger Training attempted to create a favorable image of the Rangers in General Collins' mind. Van Houten was also quick to report, what he considered to be, misuse of the Rangers. In March he forwarded a letter from First Lieutenant Alfred Herman of the 1st Rangers to Collins. The letter explained the Rangers' role at Chipyeong-ni and accused the 23d Infantry Regiment of improperly employing the elite formation.¹⁸

Spring 1951 proved to be the pivotal period in the Rangers' organizational life cycle. The companies' fate hung in balance in April and May as the Department of Army

¹⁶ Hogan, "The Evolution of the Concept of the U. S. Army's Rangers," 284.

¹⁷ Van Houten to Collins, Letter, 29 January, 1951, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

¹⁸ Van Houten to Collins, letter, 26 March 1951, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives. Van Houten summarizes the contents of Lt Herman's letter in his own letter. Herman's letter is not included in this box, however.

and FECOM evaluated the worth of the whole Ranger concept. Van Houten briefed General Mark Clark, now commander of Army Field Forces, on the strengths of Ranger training and the achievements of the elite companies in mid-March. Clark was unenthusiastic about the creation of elite units. He did, however, admire the product of Ranger training. He ordered Van Houten to investigate ways to extend Ranger training to selected infantry leaders.

Although the Ranger Training Center had failed to impress Clark, it still enjoyed strong support from its patron, the Army Chief of Staff. Collins took further action to legitimize and enhance the status of the Rangers. In early April he approved a measure to change the Ranger Training Center from a provisional school billet to a separate command.¹⁹ Effective on 5 April, the Army redesignated the Ranger Training Center as the Ranger Training Command. This action seemed to signal the Army's further commitment to expand the Ranger program. Collins happened to be at Fort Benning attending a conference on guerrilla warfare during the week of April 5-11 when the switch was made. Van Houten and his staff continued to build support for the program when General Collins visited the Command on April 11. The Chief of Staff spent most of the afternoon observing the current cycle of Rangers conduct amphibious crossings of the Chatahoochee River utilizing rubber boats. Staffers went out their way to impress upon Collins the ruggedness of training and the capabilities of Rangers for special missions. When he left Harmony Church later that day, the Chief praised the Rangers, commenting that their "type of fighting" was exactly what the Army needed in Korea.²⁰

¹⁹ Accomplished per General Orders 43, The Infantry Center, 2 April 1951 found in Headquarters Detachment, Ranger Training Command (Airborne), 3440 ASU, Morning Reports, 5 April 1951, The Ranger Collection, MHI.

²⁰ Headquarters Ranger Training Command, *The Ranger* 1, (1 May 1951), 2.

The Eighth Army commander's assessment of the Rangers was at odds with that of his superior's, however. In early April, General Matthew B. Ridgway asked his staff and subordinate commanders to evaluate the performance of the Rangers then in theater. Brigadier General George C. Stewart, commander of the 2d Infantry Division, rated the 1st Ranger Company's performance as "outstanding without exception" and noted that the unit offered "a splendid example of our American soldier's aggressive spirit and will to win." Stewart wanted each Ranger company to become an organic part of each infantry division.²¹ X Corps' G-3 section noted that its attached Ranger companies had "been doing fine work."²² But Eighth Army's interim report on the Rangers mentioned some specific deficiencies. The report noted that some division commanders had reservations employing the Rangers for behind the lines missions because they were too large to be used as a unit for divisional-type infiltrations -- squads and platoons seemed better suited for these tasks. The commanders also feared that the elite companies would deviate from planned routes, thus disrupting a unit's artillery fire plan. On balance the report emphasized the the Rangers' capabilities as well as limitations.²³ Despite some favorable comments, Ridgway remained skeptical of the concept and continued to gather appraisals.

Van Houten, wanting to keep abreast of developments, sent Lieutenant Colonel James Y. Adams to Far East Command to discuss Ranger operations in May, 1951. While

²¹ G. C. Stewart to Ridgway, Letter, 5 April 1951, The Edward Almond Papers, General Files, X Corps, Korean War; MHI.

²² Office, Chief of Army Field Forces, Notes on Combat in Korea, 16 April 1951. documenty call number DS 917.1.A 61 (4/16/51) du, Infantry School Libray, Fort Benning, Georgia.

²³ "Ranger Units" in FECOM, "Special Problems in the Korean Conflict," unpublished manuscript, document call number 8.5.1A AN, CMH, 83-84.

visiting division, corps, and army level staffs, Adams discovered that FECOM had plans to consolidate the Ranger companies into a provisional battalion organization, to be attached to the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team for operational employment. This would ensure that the 187th Airborne, already short of trained parachutists, would have a steady stream of qualified replacements. When Adams reported these proposals to Ranger Training Command, Van Houten reacted by sending a personal letter to Major General Maxwell D. Taylor, now the Army's G-3.

In his letter the Ranger Commandant noted the strengths and weaknesses of Far East Command's approach. From the start of the Ranger program, Van Houten had felt that "possibly company-sized units with Divisions would not necessarily be the final solution after adequate testing and perhaps battalion-sized units under headquarters higher than Division would produce better results." In fact, Adams had deployed with a copy of a proposed Ranger battalion organization prepared by the Ranger Command. The plan to organize a provisional Ranger battalion was a good idea, according to the Ranger Commandant. While attachment to the 187th might help alleviate some of the problems the Rangers had with administration, supply and airborne training, Van Houten objected to a permanent relationship with the regiment because the Rangers would "become just another Airborne Infantry Battalion." The commandant did not believe that the Ranger concept had been tested sufficiently after only five months of combat in Korea. FECOM's focus on the Rangers' airborne capability, he argued, had received too much emphasis. The Ranger companies' training had concentrated upon the production of "individuals and units capable of rapid, accurate, and stealthy cross country movement at night to attack, destroy, and harass, to gain information and return to friendly lines." In those respects the Rangers differed in orientation from regular airborne units. Airborne insertion was one of many ways the Rangers could accomplish these tasks. Van Houten closed his letter by forcefully

advocating the organization of a Ranger battalion under Eighth Army's control for testing, stressing doctrinal Ranger-type missions.²⁴

Before Taylor could digest the contents of Van Houten's letter, FECOM's official analysis arrived three days later. The study attacked the Ranger program. The document's major criticisms focused on the Rangers' organizational deficiencies, special access to manpower, and employment difficulties. Far East Command's letter is worth noting at length because its contents formed the basis for future efforts to eliminate the Ranger companies.

Far East Command believed that the size of the Rangers' organization negated many of its potential capabilities. Without explaining why, the study stated that the company was too small to be entrusted with deep penetration missions. Command arrangements also complicated utilization of the Rangers. Because of the separation between Army and Air Force command and control elements, conventional division staffs had had a hard time planning and conducting an airborne operation solely for the Rangers. Divisions simply did not want to waste precious man hours to go to the trouble of coordinating a jump for a single company. The document postulated that the organization of a "battalion-sized Ranger battalion at corps level" might "be more appropriate" and insure better employment. Using a battalion for an airborne insertion, however, would still violate standard operating procedures which called for drops in no less than regimental combat team strength.²⁵

²⁴ Van Houten to Taylor, letter, 16 May 1951, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

²⁵ General Headquarters, Far East Command to Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, letter, Subject: Ranger Companies, 19 May 1951, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives. Quotes in the next three paragraphs come from this document.

A second fault with the Rangers, according to the letter, was the Rangers' special access to personnel. Because they "attract personnel that are high in leadership potentiality and battlefield efficiency," Ranger units caused "a serious dilution of quality personnel and potential leaders in normal infantry units." The study, while praising the Ranger program for producing "unquestionabl[y] . . . fine units", argued that the Rangers would be better employed by spreading them "throughout conventional infantry units."

Racial and language difficulties also detracted from the Rangers' utility in Korea. Far East Command believed, *contrary to available evidence*, that the Rangers could not operate behind enemy lines because of "racial differences between the Oriental and Caucasian." Racial and language differences increased the enemy's chances for compromising Ranger patrol missions. General Ridgway, reacting to the poor treatment given to United Nations' prisoners of war in North Korea, had restricted the Rangers from conducting deep penetrations of enemy territory to decrease their chances of capture.

Far East Command's study of Ranger companies, however, contained many factual inconsistencies, demonstrated a lack of understanding of tentative doctrine, and reflected an institutional, anti-elitist bias. The study purposely failed to note the numerous times that the Ranger companies had successfully infiltrated enemy lines, both as a whole unit or in platoon and squad size elements, to conduct combat patrols. The failure to grasp tentative Ranger doctrine is evident in Far East Command's comments about deep operations. General Collins marauder's memorandum clearly directed the Rangers to serve as short range penetration units. The Ranger concept had not called for so-called "deep penetrations", but rather shallow infiltrations of forward enemy divisional rear areas to destroy targets of opportunity. By attacking command and control centers and other facilities in the enemy's immediate rear, the Rangers were a potent psychological weapon. To combat this threat, the enemy would, Army planners hoped, draw off front line forces

to protect their rear areas, thus facilitating friendly offensive operations in sector. The conduct of "deep operations" was not, therefore, the Rangers' tactical focus. Finally, the letter expressed the commonly held belief that elite units acted as drain on quality manpower and were generally unneeded. In his 1 April report to Eighth Army, Brigadier General Joseph S. Bradley, commanding general of the 25th Division, had expressed this anti-elitist attitude. The general reported that the 25th Infantry Division had employed the 5th Rangers "on what was considered to be proper ranger missions without profitable results"; therefore, he concluded that the company was "a luxury rather a useful unit."²⁶ These three themes, based more on opinion than fact, would continue to crop up in any future discussions about the Ranger companies.

Matthew Ridgway, suspicious of the Rangers from the start, accepted the premises of his staff's report. Besides the rationales listed in the study, several other, less apparent factors also influenced the Eighth Army commander's thinking about the Ranger companies. The first consideration had to do with the nature of fighting in the theater of operations. Outnumbered and short of combat troops, United Nations forces tried to defend a continuous, if thinly-held, line across the Korean peninsula. The enemy's infiltration tactics exploited the rugged terrain and enabled their troops to penetrate weak spots. To respond to this development, Ridgway had instructed his forces to occupy strong, all-around defensive positions on key terrain. At night units were to stay in position and use massive firepower to repel enemy assaults.²⁷ In this scenario, the Rangers' ability to conduct night patrols would have enhanced friendly security. Ranger

²⁶ BG J. S. Bradley quoted in FECOM, "Special Problems in the Korean Conflict," Chapter 5, "Ranger Units," unpublished manuscript, document call number 8.5.1A AN, CMH, 84-85.

²⁷ Major Robert A. Doughty, *The Evolution of US Army Tactical Doctrine, 1946-76*, Leavenworth Paper No. 1 (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1979), 9.

night patrols, however, would have potentially disrupted defensive fire plans if the companies deviated from planned routes, which would have jeopardized defensive plans relying on massive firepower to repel attacks. In the event that the companies became trapped behind enemy lines, the divisions would have to organize a relief force to bail them out. This might lead to further weakening of a unit's defenses. In the general's mind, the risks of using the Rangers probably outweighed the benefits.²⁸

Another, more subtle, basis for Ridgway's attitude had to do with the Rangers' airborne status. Whether the companies depleted conventional units of significant numbers of quality leaders remained debatable, but the Rangers certainly drained away qualified parachutists from airborne units. Unlike a straight leg infantry unit whose replacements could go directly from basic training into a rifle company, airborne replacements had to graduate from the Airborne Course before they could join their companies. The Rangers, therefore, competed with the airborne divisions and the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team for manpower. When qualified paratroopers volunteered for the Rangers personnel shortages developed, which took time to fill.²⁹ Ridgway, former commander of the 82d Airborne Division and XVIII Airborne Corps in World War II, had used the 187th on several missions and felt the unit could perform the same type missions as the Rangers, especially since they both possessed an airborne capability. It is reasonable to believe that, in Ridgway's mind, the Rangers probably represented a redundant organization with less capabilities than the combat proven airborne formations. The Army, therefore, needed only one military elite in the force structure -- the airborne.

²⁸ Although Ridgway is not specifically mentioned, these factors are highlighted in FECOM, "Special Problems in the Korean Conflict," Chapter 5, "Ranger Units," 83, 85.

²⁹ Chapter 3 above discusses the impact of large numbers of paratroopers volunteering for the Rangers.

During the summer 1951, Department of the Army, Army Field Forces, and the Ranger Training Command vehemently debated the merits of the Ranger program. In June, General Taylor ordered the Army's General Staff and Army Field Forces to restudy the Ranger concept to determine whether the elite units were required. He also asked them to examine the feasibility of offering Ranger training to selected combat arms units. When General Ridgway requested permission to deactivate the Ranger companies in Korea, Taylor demurred, waiting for the results of the studies.³⁰ The G-3 did send a message to General Thomas Handy, European Command, asking for his Ranger requirements. Taylor tended to support Ridgway's point of view and told General Collins so. In a personal letter to the Chief, the Army G-3 argued that it was "a waste to use the Rangers on normal infantry missions." He recommended the deactivation of the companies in Korea and reassignment of their personnel to the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team as replacements. According to Taylor, the best future course of action was to provide Ranger training to individuals then spread them throughout conventional units. Despite these suggestions, Taylor recognized that the move would be controversial, especially given the amount of favorable publicity heaped upon the Rangers by the press. He called for a special publicity program to explain the changes in the Ranger concept. Collins postponed a decision until the results of the staff studies and General Handy's comments were available.³¹

³⁰ Ridgway to Department of the Army, letter, 2 June 1951, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives. Ridgway repeated the arguments outlined in FECOM's 19 May letter. He especially emphasized the Rangers' small size and racial incompatibility to conduct behind the lines missions in Korea.

³¹ Taylor to Collins, Letter, Subject: "Ranger Companies in FECOM," 6 June 1951, and Colonel M. F. Haas, Secretary of the General Staff, to Taylor, Memo, Subject: "Ranger Companies in FECOM," 14 June 1951, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch.

As momentum picked up to disband the companies in June and early July, defenders of the Rangers counterattacked. Several staff sections rallied to support the retention of Ranger units, but in a modified form. Brigadier General Clarence Eddleman, chief of G-3's Plans Division, argued forcefully for the continuation of the Ranger program in a memorandum to General Taylor. Eddleman, as the G-3 of Walter Krueger's Sixth Army, had planned and controlled Ranger operations in the Pacific. Using the 6th Ranger Battalion's experiences to underscore his points, the plans officer advocated the formation of Ranger battalions, which he contended were the smallest size Ranger units that could accomplish desired results. He rebuffed the idea of racial and language differences making it impossible for commanders to employ the Rangers behind enemy lines, stating "that is a problem of varying degree to be faced in any foreign theater or country in which we shall be required to operate, and must be solved." The chief of plans further recommended the organization of a "Ranger battalion per active Army to perform special missions for the Army commanders."³²

Reports submitted in July buttressed Eddleman's case. One study from the G-3's Organization and Training Division supported the activation of a Ranger battalion at Army level or under the control of a theater-level special forces command. The author of this document asserted that airborne units operated in a different manner than the Rangers, and thus, could not assume the latter's duties. Once airborne units parachuted behind enemy lines, they held key terrain in regimental-sized defenses and awaited link-up with conventional ground forces. The Rangers, on the other hand, generally exfiltrated back to friendly lines in small "packets." Colonel Ralph C. Cooper of the War Plans Division,

³² C. D. Eddleman, Memorandum For: The Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, Subject: Utilization of Rangers, 30 June 1951, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch.

believing that the Army needed to retain the capability and trained manpower to infiltrate enemy lines as well as serve as a nucleus for guerrilla units, also supported the battalion concept.³³

These arguments came too late to stop General Taylor from ordering FECOM to deactivate its Ranger companies. On 25 June, the Army G-3 once again addressed the issue with the Chief of Staff. Taylor persuasively asserted that the experiment had failed. He emphasized that units larger than the companies, especially airborne regimental combat teams, could more effectively perform the same missions as the Rangers. To deflect criticism of the disbandment, the Army should stress the fighting quality of the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat team, which former Rangers would join as replacements. When the Army G-1 concurred with Taylor's plan, Collins, who also wanted to support the wishes of his theater commander, agreed to the deactivation. Taylor then sent a message to Ridgway on 2 July authorizing him to break up the Ranger companies. Eighth Army received instructions on 11 July. Two weeks later EUSAK issued General Order 584 ordering divisions with attached Rangers to de-activate the companies effective August 1st and assign their personnel to the 187th.³⁴

The divisions quickly notified the Ranger companies of their impending disbandment and reassignment. The divisions stuck to official pronouncements as to the reason for the companies' deactivation: Racial differences between Orientals and

³³ Organization and Training Division, Memorandum for LTC Davis, Subject: Need for Ranger Units, 11 July 1951, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch; Colonel Ralph Cooper to Chief, Organization and Training Division, Subject: Rangers, U.S. Army, Operations, 23 July 1951, *General Decimal File, 1950-51*, 322-325, RG 319, National Archives.

³⁴ Taylor to Collins, Memorandum, 25 June 1951 and Memorandum For Record, 3 July 1951, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives; Headquarters, Eighth U.S. Army, General Order 584, 25 July 1951, copy in The Robert Black Collection, unsorted documents, MHI.

Caucasians made long range patrols in the enemy's rear too difficult. The Rangers who wished to remain on jump status would be reassigned to the 187th. Those who preferred otherwise would become replacements for their parent divisions until their rotation home.

Once the announcement had been made, a few of the divisions tried to minimize the psychological impact on members of the Ranger companies. The 2d, 3d, and 7th Divisions issued letters of appreciation to each Ranger, which were to be placed in their official personnel file. All the letters praised the Rangers' accomplishments. General Clark Ruffner, Commander of the 2d Infantry Division extended his "heart-felt thanks" for playing "an invaluable role in tactical successes of our unit against the enemy." The 7th Infantry Division Commander, Claude Ferenbaugh, bestowed "a sincere 'Well Done' " on the 2d Rangers' performance. He noted the unit's "outstanding cooperation, devotion to duty, aggressiveness, and esprit" as "as constant source of satisfaction." The 3d Rangers received similar comments from Major General Robert H. Soule of the 3d Infantry Division.³⁵ Despite the praise, these letters did little to soothe the Rangers' intense disappointment.

When official orders reached them, the Rangers' initial reactions were those of betrayal and disillusionment. After months of tough training in the United States and hard fought combat in Korea, the Rangers felt that had proved their worth as an elite organization. As they had all operated behind enemy lines, few Rangers believed the rationales provided for their disbandment. Morale plummeted in the last two weeks before deactivation. But the Rangers continued to perform combat missions through the remainder of their existence. By August 3d Eighth Army had moved all the Rangers to

³⁵ Rufner to 1st Ranger Company, Ferenbaugh to 2d Ranger Company, Soule to 3d Ranger Company, Subject: Letter of Appreciation, Robert Black Collection, unsorted documents, MHI.

Pusan to prepare for reassignment. According to Robert W. Black, many Rangers took out their frustrations in the city through heavy drinking bouts, vandalism, and fights. The next day, after a senior officer thoroughly "chewed them out" for their rowdy behavior, Eighth Army shipped the Rangers to the 187th's camp as replacements.³⁶

The deactivation of the companies in Korea caused the Army to reappraise the direction of the Ranger concept. Each staff section seemed to have its own views and plans regarding the Rangers. Three general courses of action emerged. General Collins would ultimately have to decide whether the other Ranger companies would remain on the Army's active rolls and which plan to implement.

Colonel Van Houten led a personal crusade to save the remaining Rangers by organizing them into battalions. The Ranger Commandant used official studies from the Ranger Training Command and personal letters to friends on the Army General Staff in an attempt to influence events. Van Houten forwarded further proposals for a Ranger battalion to G-3 in June and July. These plans outlined a new Ranger battalion T/O&E composed of 48 officers, 10 warrant officers, and 717 enlisted men. The battalion would be organized into a headquarters company, a combat support company, four rifle companies, and a medical detachment. The proposed table continued to emphasize great firepower by authorizing higher numbers of automatic weapons than contained in a normal infantry battalion.³⁷ Van Houten followed up these recommendations with a personal appeal to a friend, Major General Robert E. Duff, in G-3. In his letter the Ranger Commandant asserted that "the requirements for units to operate behind enemy lines could

³⁶ Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 202-203.

³⁷ Van Houten to Major John Davis, 19 June 1951 and Van Houten to Adjutant General, 5 July 1951, Subject: Proposed T/O&E, Ranger Infantry Battalion (ABN), *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

better be met with a battalion organization under control of headquarters higher than Divisions." Asking for support for this proposal, Van Houten also queried Duff on the most current information regarding the continuation of Ranger program so that the Ranger Training Command could make future plans.³⁸

While Van Houten lobbied for the organization of Ranger battalions, the G-3 considered proposals about the Rangers from the Office of the Chief of Psychological Warfare (OCPW), which coordinated special operations. OCPW's Special Operations Division had responsibility for creating a formal unconventional warfare capability in the Army. The division was especially interested in forming units to train indigenous, or partisan, forces for operations in the enemy's rear. Brigadier General Robert W. McClure staffed the division with a number of experienced guerrilla warfare experts from World War II. In a number of early proposals the division mixed current Ranger with OSS concepts from World War II.³⁹

Lieutenant Colonel Russell W. Volkmann, who had directed guerrilla forces on Luzon for three years and was one of the main authors of early special forces studies,

³⁸ Van Houten to Duff, Letter, 19 July 1951, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

³⁹ During World War II, the Office of Strategic Services gathered strategic intelligence, conducted special operations behind enemy lines, and trained partisans. The OSS, to conduct unconventional warfare, sent small teams behind enemy lines by covert means, including by parachute. These teams then performed a variety of missions including: cutting and harrasing enemy lines of communications; attacking vital enemy installations; organizing, training and sustaining local partisan groups; and furnishing intelligence to Allied armies. Although some of these tactical missions were similar in nature to Ranger and Commando missions, the OSS's orientation remained focused on the use of indigenous forces. For a sampling of works on the OSS see: OSS Assessment Staff, *Assessment of Men: Selection of Personnel for the Office of Strategic Services* (New York: Rienhart & Co, 1948); R. Harris Smith, *OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972); Kermit Roosevelt, ed. *War Report of the OSS*, 2 vols. (New York: Walker and Co., 1976); Corey Ford, *Donovan of OSS* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co, 1970); Edward Hymoff, *The OSS in World War II* (New York: Ballatine Books, 1972).

received at least tacit approval for some of his work from the Army Chief of Staff. General Collins, while visiting the guerrilla warfare conference at Fort Benning on 5 April, had remarked that "the Infantry School should consider Rangers as well as other troops and indigenous personnel to initiate subversive activities. I personally established the Rangers with the thought that they might serve as the nucleus of expansion in this direction."⁴⁰ This was a remarkable statement from Collins, whose original memorandum aimed at establishing an elite force along British commando lines. The only hint of using the Rangers in such a role was the memo's listing of guerrilla warfare as one elements of Ranger training. Interestingly, the Ranger Training Center had proposed expanding the Ranger role into partisan operations previously. Although no documentary evidence exists, Collins and Van Houten had, perhaps, discussed this agenda previously. Regardless of the Chief's original intentions for the companies, Volkmann clearly perceived that Collins would have no objections to the use of the Rangers for special operations.

Relying on the Chief's statement, Volkmann and his fellow staffers formulated a number of proposals to create an unconventional warfare capability, all of which included a role for the Rangers. One tentative plan called for the establishment of a Ranger company composed of three platoons, each of a different nationality, to teach counter-guerrilla tactics to Army aggressor forces. Another scheme involved activation of six additional Ranger companies, manned by Eastern Europeans who had emigrated to the United States, for duty with Army divisions in Europe. Formed in addition to the Rangers already slated for the theater, these companies would conduct commando operations, organize partisans for guerrilla warfare, disseminate propaganda, and recover downed air crews. A final proposal advanced the idea of "Special Forces Ranger Companies" which would utilize

⁴⁰ Collins remarks quoted in Paddock, *U. S. Army Special Warfare Its Origins* , 119.

American and European aliens trained for behind the lines operations. These units would be available to assist commanders in a D-Day scenario, much as the French Resistance had done in World War II. To command and control all of these special forces, OCPW wanted to establish a Special Forces Command at Fort Benning.⁴¹

Almost as soon as these recommendations surfaced in the Department of the Army, the OCPW began to back away from them. By the end of the summer, the Special Operations Division began to make a distinction between Special Forces and Ranger organizations. The former would "in all probability be involved in subversive activities" involving indigenous partisan forces; uniformed Ranger units would not. The original merging of the Ranger and OSS functions was more the product of fuzzy thinking and lack of a clear-cut conceptual framework for special forces than a genuine desire to save the Rangers on OCPW's part. Ironically, the deactivation of the Ranger companies in Korea gave OCPW the personnel slots to activate the 10th Special Forces Group.⁴²

Despite proposals and luke warm support for Ranger battalions or Special Forces Ranger Companies, a move was under way in Army Field Forces and the Army G-3 section to dissolve Ranger units once and for all. On 5 July, G-3 received CINCEUR's thoughts on the Rangers. General Handy agreed with Ridgway's comments and stated that no need for Ranger units existed in the European theater. He did, however, hold out the possibility that a Ranger battalion might be needed in times of emergency to conduct special operations for the commander. Handy's comments reinforced the main lines of thinking at Army Field Forces. The thrust of Army Field Forces' arguments against the Rangers centered on making the best use of available manpower. The United States only had

⁴¹ Ibid, 120-125.

⁴² Ibid, 126-127.

limited assets to deal with the immense armies of its principal enemy, the Soviet Union. Ranger units, because of their drain on quality manpower, were expensive in terms of time and resources devoted to their specialist training. With additional training, the study maintained, airborne units and conventional infantry companies could conduct ranger-style, short range penetration missions. For deeper missions American trained indigents would be best since racial and language differences would detract from the ability of uniformed specialist units to accomplish their tasks. Recognizing no apparent need for the Rangers, Army Field Forces, therefore, recommended the disbandment of the remaining companies. Headquarters intended to allow Ranger personnel to choose between their parent unit, an airborne unit, the Airborne Department, or a newly formed Ranger Department for their next assignment once the companies disappeared.⁴³

Army Field Forces did want to retain Ranger training. The study sought the inactivation of the Ranger Training Command, which would be replaced by a Ranger Department as an adjunct of the Infantry School. The Ranger Department would establish a course of study, including jump training, to instruct junior infantry officers and non-commissioned officers in requisite specialist skills. Although graduates would not receive a special military occupational number (MOS), they would be authorized to wear a suitable insignia to distinguish their accomplishment. Jump pay would serve as a further incentive to entice soldiers to undergo the training. Thus, Army Field Forces foresaw future Rangers as role models for their conventional infantry counterparts -- an idea first expressed by General Clark in conversations with Van Houten during his March visit.

⁴³ Study contained in Colonel R.C. Cooper, Chief of War Plans Branch to Chief of Plans Division, 2 August 1951, Subject: Rangers, Tab C: Study -- Future Need For Ranger Units, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives; Briefing For General Taylor's Conference on Ranger Program, 23 August 1951, copy in Robert Black Collection, unsorted documents, MHI.

The Army G-3 had its own "spin" on the Ranger issue. After thorough analysis of FECOM's, EUCOM's, and Army Field Forces' comments, the G-3 section wrote its own studies which also called for the deactivation of the Rangers. The Operations Division supported the idea that airborne divisions, with additional training, could accomplish Ranger missions. This would be congruent with previous practices of not forming special units for missions that a standard organization could accomplish. If Ranger units were to continue to exist, the Operations Division thought they should be partisan trainers.⁴⁴

Another study from the Organization and Training Division scathingly criticized the Rangers. This study, staffed by Major Hammond and approved by Colonel John G. Hill head of the Organizations Branch, pointed out four "fundamental faults" with the Ranger program. The first fault was the oft-repeated remark that Rangers posed a drain on high quality manpower. Instilling their men with a "type of pseudo morale and esprit" was a second problem. According to Hammond's study, the Rangers had developed into "prima-donna units whose morale [was] based upon such things as extra pay, special insignia, and imaginary qualities they have been led to believe that they alone possessed without actual demonstration of worth. This kind of morale [was] bad for both the individual soldier and his unit." Third, the report argued that the Army had overstressed the dangerous nature of service with the Rangers, which had led to their receiving extra pay. In fact, the study claimed that the average infantryman had been exposed to more danger -- and with less pay -- than the Rangers. Hammond listed the Army's overestimation of the Rangers' capabilities as a final deficiency. Commanders had "expected [the companies] to accomplish the impossible." On this last point, the document once again pointed out the

⁴⁴ LTC Davis to the Army Chief of Staff, Draft Summary Sheet, and Colonel Curtis Herrick, Chief of Deployments Branch to LTC Davis, Subject: Future Need for Ranger Units and Training, 19 July 1951, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

difficulties that racial and language difficulties imposed on operations in the enemy's rear areas.⁴⁵

Organization Branch's study reflected the anti-elitist sentiments of Major General Reuben E. Jenkins, who succeeded Taylor as G-3 on 1 August. Jenkins, an infantryman who had served as Jacob Dever's Chief of Staff in Europe during World War II, had little use for elite units. Before officially assuming his duties as G-3, Jenkins had received a briefing on the Ranger program from Colonel Hill. Jenkins was adamantly opposed to the "formation of prima donna units" which had lowered the standards of conventional infantry "by draining them of their best soldiers." He believed that the Army was "100% wrong to predicate the qualification of a soldier for ranger or marauder type duty upon his possession of mental and/or physical standards which are higher than those required for regular infantry duty." Further, "small Ranger units of supermen" had not met what was expected of them in combat. Jenkins, therefore, intended to lead the charge to disband the remaining companies.⁴⁶

In late August Jenkins presented his case against the Rangers to General Collins. After reviewing the history of the Ranger program and the comments from commanders in the field, he recommended a reorientation of the Ranger concept. The G-3 enumerated the many reasons why the remaining Ranger companies should be deactivated. Jenkins wanted to give appropriate training to all airborne, infantry, and armor units to enable them to accomplish short range penetration of the enemy's front lines. Indigenous forces,

⁴⁵ Major Hammond to Chief of Staff, Memorandum, Subject: Ranger Program, 19 July 1951 and updated version 3 August 1951, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

⁴⁶ Jenkins comments are recorded in Colonel John G. Hill to General Ogden, Memorandum, Subject: Ranger Program, 18 July 1951, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

trained by teams from OCPW's special forces, would accomplish strategic, or deep, penetration missions. Jenkins endorsed the idea of a Ranger Department formed under the aegis of the Infantry School to serve as a leader nursery for selected junior leaders. Graduates of the Ranger course would return to their parent outfits to act as instructors and role models.⁴⁷

General Collins, after months of listening to contradictory arguments, finally relented and approved Jenkins' proposal to deactivate the remaining Ranger companies. At the beginning of September G-3 issued orders to all commands with Rangers to deactivate them. The divisions reacted quickly and by the first part of December all of the remaining Rangers had furled their guidons for the last time. Publicity surrounding the Rangers' disbandment emphasized how the racial differences between Caucasians and Orientals had led to high friendly casualties during behind the lines missions. To down play talk of anti-elite bias or institutional favoritism towards airborne units, Collins had wisely deleted references stating "that small special mission units are not profitable . . . Airborne troops can perform all special missions that any special type unit can perform" from the original press release. Although all the details had to be worked out, the Army announced that a new Ranger Department would offer a Ranger course which would be opened to a greater number of soldiers throughout the force structure.⁴⁸

John Van Houten was not around to witness the dismantling of the last of his well-trained elite companies. Promoted on 30 July to brigadier general, Van Houten praised the

⁴⁷ Jenkins to Collins, Summary Sheet, Subject: Ranger Program, 27 August 1951, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

⁴⁸ Proposed Press Release, Subject: New Ranger Role, 30 August 1951, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives; "Fate of the Rangers," *Army, Navy, Air Force Journal* (1 September 1951), 11; "Pentagon Studies Fate of Rangers in Army Duty," *Army Times* (1 September 1951).

Rangers during a farewell parade in his honor on August 7th. Colonel Wilbur Wilson, a former paratrooper with the 82d Airborne Division who had worked in the Ranger Operations Section, assumed command in Van Houten's place. In the coming months, the new Commandant's task was to implement Department of the Army plans to establish a Ranger course to "raise the standards of the infantry."

PROJECT HI-STANDARD AND RANGER LEADER TRAINERS

Although efforts to save the Ranger companies failed, Van Houten and his staff were able to salvage Ranger training. Instead of producing elite units, the Ranger Training Command would serve as a nursery to produce individual Rangers with an elite character who would then be spread throughout the infantry. The reorientation in the Ranger concept began as early as spring 1951.

Part of the impetus for change came from Korea. Despite problems employing the companies, division commanders had noted the Rangers' aggressive style and tactical proficiency. These commanders recognized the need to bring the rest of the infantry up to the high standards and expertise that the Rangers possessed. Commanders were further impressed by the Rangers ability to train others in their specialist skills and instill high standards of performance. In the 3d Infantry Division, for example, teams from the 3d Ranger Company had taught South Korean units the fundamentals of patrolling, achieving good results. The 2d Ranger Company had trained all of the black replacements coming into the 7th Infantry Division in Ranger skills.⁴⁹ Division commanders, therefore,

⁴⁹ 3d Infantry Division Command Report, July 1951, Box 2911, RG 407, WNRC; Robert I. Channon, interview with author, 31 December 1991; 2d Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne), Morning Reports, 6-22 April 1951, copies in Ranger Collection, Korean War, MHI; James Queen, letter to author, 20 September 1991.

wanted a few Ranger qualified individuals of their own to train their units to perform Ranger-style missions.

The final role that the Rangers played during the Korean War, therefore, was as leader-trainers. This process began in March when General Collins asked the Ranger Training Center to study a proposal to attach Ranger personnel to rifle companies to enhance their reconnaissance and combat patrolling performance through example and instruction. Van Houten and his staff immediately rejected the proposal on three counts. First, the Center argued that the high morale and teamwork in the Ranger companies resulted from the type of men selected to perform behind the lines missions and their training. Ranger volunteers desired adventure and challenge. Second, the effect of the proposal would be to dissipate the combat strength of the Ranger companies, causing a drop in morale, cohesion, and combat effectiveness. Third, Van Houten warned that attached Rangers, because they were outsiders to their new unit, might attempt rash actions to justify their special status. The Ranger Training Center recommended that the Ranger companies serve as a demonstration force for the rest of its assigned division. Additionally, Van Houten suggested that the Army publicize the Rangers' successful combat missions as a way of setting standards and examples for other units.⁵⁰ The Army G-3 and Army Field Forces accepted Van Houten's suggestions, but the idea of spreading Ranger trained personnel throughout the combat divisions did not die.

In mid-March the Ranger Training Center began to work on a course of instruction to improve the standards of the infantry through the intensive training of selected small-unit leaders. The stimulus of this action was General Mark Clark's visit to the Center on March

⁵⁰ Ranger Training Command, Staff Study 5 March 1951, Subject: Attachment of Small Groups of Ranger Personnel to Infantry Rifle Companies, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

15, 1951. Clark, commander of Army Field Forces, believed that the Rangers siphoned off too many good leaders from regular infantry units and that the airborne units were more effective. He admitted, however, that Ranger training had its merits and could help instill higher standards across infantry branch. In a letter to Ridgway, Clark remarked "as long as we have the Ranger school going, we should use it to give extra training to platoon leaders and gradually infiltrate men of that caliber into the infantry companies. We must build up the infantry companies to the caliber of the Rangers."⁵¹ Clark instructed Van Houten to develop and prepare to implement a plan to improve the quality of the infantry to Ranger standards. Van Houten transmitted the Rangers' plan to Clark with specific proposals on 9 April.

Van Houten's reply addressed Clark's directive as one of quality versus quantity. The Ranger Commandant believed that the quality of American infantry divisions, as expressed by high effectiveness on the battlefield, was the key to combatting America's enemies in wartime. The Ranger Command study presented five courses of action to produce higher quality infantry for Clark's consideration. The first option called for the Ranger Command to establish a short course to train teams of volunteer officers and NCOs from infantry divisions. After graduation these men would return to their parent units and form a cadre to train select groups within the division. A second plan called for divisional volunteers to undergo the complete Ranger training cycle as was currently conducted. After successful completion, these men would then return to their original companies and regiments. They could then instruct their own units in Ranger techniques, as well as serve as positive role models. Incorporating some Ranger training into basic training, which

⁵¹ Clark to Ridgway, 19 March 1951, Matthew B. Ridgway Papers, MHI.

would insure a better quality infantry replacement, was a third option. The Rangers were, however, skeptical of this "bottom-up" approach. Fourth, the study suggested the creation of a 'graduate school' for infantry battalions. This option, which was expensive in terms of time, manpower, and resources, would improve the quality of whole units before deploying to combat. Lastly, the Ranger Training Command could set-up an indoctrination course for a division's infantry officers. This course of action would require the officers' absence for a period of time, but would raise the officer corps' standards across the board. Because of the time sensitivity of Clark's request and the desire to implement a program before the Korean War ended, Van Houten recommended courses of action four and five.⁵²

In late April 1951 the G-3, Army Field Forces informed the Ranger Training Command that General Clark favored course of action two: the training of volunteers who would return to their original units. The Ranger Training Command was to implement this program beginning in July. Clark also wanted airborne training included as part of the curriculum. The commander of Army Field Forces hoped that these Ranger trained individuals would raise the standards of their parent units through small unit instruction and leadership by example.⁵³

Van Houten's staff developed a plan labelled "Project Hi-Standard" to comply with Clark's guidance. Because there was a "direct relation between the state of training of the parent unit and the time requirement for training of individuals from those units," the Ranger staff formulated three programs of instruction which would last either six, eight, or

⁵² Van Houten to Clark, 9 April 1951, Subject: Raising Infantry Standards, *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, National Archives.

⁵³ Ranger Training Command, Staff Study, Subject: Project Hi-Standards, 16 August 1951. Copy in Infantry School Library, document number UD 503.A2 (2/16/51) du.

ten weeks.⁵⁴ These plans allowed the Rangers to tailor a particular course to the needs of individual units. Each of the courses emphasized five major areas: rugged physical conditioning; rigid morale building training; rigorous tactical field training; practical application of leadership techniques; and airborne training. Ranger Training Command designed the programs to cover "the present void between the Academic Service Schools and actual combat." For that reason, students would spend the maximum amount of time performing under realistic combat conditions. A major goal of Project Hi-Standard was to give each trainee a "sense of accomplishment" from having completed an extremely tough course, known for its "ruggedness, meticulous standards, and practicability." The Command, therefore, recommended ruthless "elimination procedures" for those who failed to meet standards.⁵⁵

During the spring and early summer, Colonel Van Houten's staff refined Project Hi-Standard. Before a formal program could be implemented, Army Field Forces on July 13th ordered the Infantry Center to prepare plans to deactivate the Ranger Training Command and establish a Ranger Department to conduct a Ranger training course. A "turf battle" soon ensued between the Infantry School and the Ranger Training Command over the nature and scope of the proposed Ranger course. Infantry School representatives wanted Ranger training to become part of the overall infantry curriculum and have an existing committee absorb responsibility for its conduct. The Infantry School viewed this requirement simply as another academic program. The Rangers resisted this idea, wanting

⁵⁴ Ranger Training Command, Staff Study, Subject: Training Program for Hi-Standards Project, 4 May 1951; GNKER-1-353 General, same subject, 12 July 1951. Copies in Infantry School Library, document number UD 503.A2 (2/16/51) du.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

to retain their Hi-Standard program to prepare leaders for combat through practical applications conducted in a stressful, field environment. In August the Infantry Center convened a committee, called the Learnard Board after its president Colonel Henry G. Learnard, to study the problem and make recommendations. The seven man board consisted representatives from the Ranger Training Command and the Infantry School.⁵⁶

The Learnard Board, after analyzing requirements from Army Field Forces and listening to testimony from various officers at the Infantry School, submitted its results in a report at the end of August. The Board recommended the establishment of an eight week, fifty-six hour a week course stressing "the imagination, initiative, practical resourcefulness and stamina of infantry small unit leaders." Tough prerequisites would ensure some quality control and reduce the number of soldiers eliminated for training deficiencies. The course would continue to emphasize the subjects previously taught to the Ranger companies: patrolling; physical conditioning; demolitions; small arms qualification; fieldcraft; mountain and amphibious techniques; battle indoctrination; adjustment of indirect fire; and military discipline. Airborne training would be dropped from the curriculum. The Board further indicated that training should point toward combat "and develop leadership through practical field application . . . using the patrol as a vehicle for instruction." The committee recommended that graduates of the demanding course receive an appropriate badge or shoulder patch.⁵⁷ In early September Learnard flew to Fort Monroe to brief

⁵⁶ Ranger Training Command, Staff Study, Subject: Project Hi-Standards, 16 August 1951. Henry Learnard had served as a regimental commander in the 1st Infantry Division during World War II and had formed an ad-hoc Ranger platoon for special missions. He had neither Ranger or airborne experience. At the time of the study he was Director of the Staff Division at the Infantry School. Ralph Puckett, letter to author, 30 November 1991.

⁵⁷ Henry G. Learnard, Report of Board of Officers and Staff Study, Subject: Ranger Training, The Infantry School, 31 August 1951, Copy in Infantry School Library, document number UD 503.I3 (8/31/51) du.

Army Field Forces. After further refinements to the Infantry School's plans, Learnard, accompanied by Major General William B. Bradford and Colonel Robert Spragins of Army Field Forces flew to Washington to get approval for the revised Ranger concept.

The G-3 section, Department of the Army synthesized the Learnard Board's results, its own staff studies, and those of Army Field Forces into a workable program. As briefed to General Jenkins and later Collins, the new Ranger concept would encompass a six to eight week long course emphasizing "hands-on" small unit leadership under simulated, but realistic combat conditions. Jenkins planned to establish quotas for the new program with an ultimate goal of providing each infantry division with 150 qualified graduates. The G-3 eased some of age and physical prerequisites to open the course to more small unit leaders. One class in four would consist solely of officers, while a separate five day "Ranger Orientation Course" would familiarize generals and field grade officers with Ranger capabilities, training, and operations. The principal objective of this concept was to produce superior quality leaders who would raise the standards of their own units through instruction and example. Graduates would also be capable of planning and conducting Ranger-type operations. The five day orientation would educate senior officers about the benefits of Ranger training and acquaint them with the tenets of Ranger doctrine.

Collins, after considering a number of other proposals, accepted G-3's final recommendations. He authorized Jenkins to deactivate the Ranger Training Command and replace it with a Ranger Department under the Infantry School's supervision. The Chief approved the program's new focus on improving leadership skills while still teaching the fundamentals of Ranger operations. He also authorized the CIA to recruit some volunteers from the inactivated companies and enroll 20 students in each course. In a news release, Collins defended the new direction of the Ranger program, stating:

the decision to incorporate Ranger training within combat units of standard divisions is an innovation designed to build each man to the top of his capabilities as an individual soldier. Experience has shown that the effectiveness of a soldier increases in direct proportion to the degree of his confidence in his equipment, his leadership, and most important, in his own ability. Ranger training is designed to develop this confidence. . . Rangers in the division will stimulate the entire unit to higher performance and the individual to greater development.⁵⁸

The remaining Rangers on active duty after the Chief's announcement now became "leader-trainers" for the rest of the Army.

On 3 October 1951, the Department of the Army took measures to implement its new Ranger concept. In a message to all major commands, the Adjutant General instructed all infantry units to begin developing the capability to carry out "Ranger-type missions." The message defined Ranger operations as "those overt operations in enemy territory, the duration of which does not exceed 48 hours." Ranger missions included offensive reconnaissance, harrassment of enemy lines of communication, and disruption of enemy operations. To assist commanders in developing this capability, a new Ranger Department would formally conduct Ranger training for qualified volunteers. The Army would provide enough quotas to train one officer per company and a noncommissioned officer per platoon. The new course was to begin in late October.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Department of Defense, Office of Public Information, Release LI 5-6700, "Rangers to Join All Combat Units; Department Set Up For Training," copy in "Ranger Battalion File," document no. HRC 314.7, CMH.

⁵⁹ William E. Bergin, Adjutant General to MACOMS, Memorandum, Subject: Ranger Training, 3 October, HRC 314.7, Ranger Battalion File, CMH.

THE RANGER SCHOOL: THE ARMY'S NEW LEADER NURSERY

The Infantry School established the Ranger Department on 10 October 1951 with Colonel Henry Learnard as its first director. The director began to reorganize the structure of the Ranger Training Command to meet Army Field Force's guidance. Many of the members of the former Ranger Training Command decided to continue service with the Ranger Department. Former members of the Ranger companies -- such as Ralph Puckett, John Paul Vann, Charles Bunn, and Richard Starcher, to name just a few -- received assignments to the school. Acting in concert with his talented staff, Learnard instituted the revised Ranger curriculum.

Admission to the eight week Ranger course for company grade officers combined the Learnard Board's desires and Army Field Forces' final plan. Applicants had to meet several tough prerequisites before acceptance into training. Officers had to have credit for the Associate Company Officer course, be a graduate of Officer Candidate School, or an equivalent program. The course was open to enlisted men in grade E-4 and above who possessed an AGCT score of 90 or above. Enlisted men also had to be graduates of the Light and Heavy Weapons Infantry Leaders Course, I & R & Operations Chief Course, or their equivalent. Each candidate had to be a volunteer under the age of thirty, score at least 225 points on the Army Physical Fitness Test, be able to swim, qualify as a sharpshooter or above with his assigned weapon, and not be undergoing disciplinary actions. Each soldier had to be a member of a rifle or reconnaissance unit.⁶⁰ With these prerequisites, the Ranger Department assumed that high quality ingredients were necessary to produce a high quality product.

⁶⁰ The Infantry School, *Program of Instruction For Ranger Course* (7-OE-15), 15 November 1951, copy in The Robert Black Collection, unsorted documents, MHI, 1-2.

To assist candidates to graduate, the Ranger Department paired each candidate with a buddy. The Ranger Department treated all Ranger students as equals during training; therefore, no attempt was made to segregate buddy teams by rank or experience. The Ranger buddy team would stay together throughout training. The idea was to force each buddy team to help one another through difficult times, which would hopefully further increase both men's chances of graduating. After administrative processing and meeting the other member of their buddy team, Rangers started training at Harmony Church.

The Ranger Course consisted of three phases, each devoted to developing leadership skills and training candidates in specialist skills. Ranger trainees spent the first three weeks at Fort Benning reviewing basic infantry skills. The goal of this phase was to equalize the skill levels between the ranks. Rangers studied map reading, first aid, weapons, demolitions, adjustment of indirect fire, communications, survival techniques -- including the characteristics of and ways to avoid poisonous reptiles -- small-unit leadership and management skills, and instructional techniques. Physical conditioning occurred in some form every day. Hand to hand combat, bayonet training, obstacle courses, conditioning drills, cross country runs, and road marches hardened the Rangers physically and mentally. During the Benning phase Rangers conducted river crossing exercises and small unit patrols. At the end of the third week each Ranger took another physical training test; failure to achieve the requisite score was grounds for expulsion. Eligible Rangers also competed for the Expert Infantryman's Badge. After successful completion of all tasks during the first twenty-one days of the course, the Rangers moved on to the next stage of training.⁶¹

⁶¹ For a description of the various components of Ranger training see: Ibid, 3-36; Hanson Baldwin, "Our New Shock Troops -- The Rangers," *New York Times Magazine* (April 27, 1952), 8; Lieutenants Jim Minter and Paul Price, "Rangers Ready!" *Army Information Digest* (Jan 53), 13-20.

The Rangers traveled to Eglin Air Force Base in northwestern Florida for jungle and swamp training. For eleven days the candidates conducted four to fifty man patrols in the thickly wooded, swampy terrain along the muddy Yellow River. The trainees, besides wading through waist-deep swamps on foot patrols ranging in distance from five to fifty miles, utilized rubber boats for movement. Leadership positions rotated constantly during patrols. Experienced Ranger instructors intensely evaluated each patrol member, who served in at least two leadership situations. The capstone of the Florida phase was a forty-eight hour amphibious raid. For this problem the Rangers boarded a Navy ship, which sailed into the Gulf of Mexico. At a designated time during the night each patrol moved from ship to shore in rubber boats. Once ashore and having camouflaged their boats, the Rangers then had to infiltrate through twelve miles of simulated enemy defenses to accomplish a raid. Once the mission was complete, the patrol had to exfiltrate back to their boat assembly area and wait for a rendezvous with the mother ship.

From the swamps of Florida the Rangers moved to the Blue Ridge Mountains of northern Georgia. At the Dahlonega Ranger Camp candidates practiced mountain climbing techniques. Mastery of rappelling and the construction rope bridges were necessary prerequisites in order for patrols to move through some portions of the mountains. Patrols in the rugged Chattahoochee National Forest forced candidates to climb steep ridges of over 4500 feet in elevation in pitch darkness. Leadership positions rotated continuously throughout a series of patrols lasting from eight to seventy-two hours. An important part of training in the mountain phase was "courage testing." Rangers confronted a series of prepared hazards designed to prey on fear of heights, fire, or deep water. One such test was a 120' night rappell down the rocky face of Yohnah Mountain. Instructors evaluated each trainee's reactions to these unexpected situations. The Rangers' final task was a seventy-two hour patrol to destroy the Blue Ridge Dam on the Ocoee River. Each patrol

had to conduct rapid forced marches with limited rations, cross several mountain streams, and avoid ambushes with aggressor forces before encountering their objective. The Rangers that successfully passed all phases of the training moved back to Fort Benning for graduation. Those that failed a task might be recycled into the following class to try again or sent back to their units.

As it had with the Ranger companies, the course acted as a rites of passage which granted membership into the elite "brotherhood" to those who could endure its trials and tribulations. The final graduation ceremony was replete with symbolism. The "pinning of the Ranger Tab" signified the Ranger's new status as an elite soldier. Graduates emerged with a new found confidence in themselves and in their leadership abilities, especially in stressful situations. Graduates returned to their parent organizations with improved leadership skills and the knowledge to instruct their units in the fundamentals of Ranger-style missions.

Those senior officers who visited the Ranger Department in late 1951 and early 1952 were impressed by the effectiveness of the course. In a letter to Ridgway, Mark Clark described the exuberance and "cocky attitude" of Rangers who had overcome the hazards and obstacles of the course. Colonel John T. Corley of Army Field Forces inspected training in April 1952 and thought it would go a great way towards improving the standards of the infantry. Major General Claude Ferenbaugh, who had employed the 2d Ranger Company during his command of the 7th Infantry Division, was very impressed with the quality of the graduates. He later told other commanders that they should want Ranger graduates in their commands.⁶² Although the Ranger Department experienced some problems in the 1950's recruiting enough volunteers, Ranger training produced the

⁶² Clark to Ridgway, 18 March 1952, Matthew B. Ridgway Papers, MHI; Hogan, "The Evolution of the Concept of the U.S. Army's Rangers ," 314-315.

kind of leader that the Army desired. Just how effective Ranger graduates would perform in combat would be decided in the upcoming conflict in Vietnam.⁶³

The US Army reoriented its Ranger concept during the last half of 1951. Instead of training special units for behind the lines missions, the Army opted to instruct individuals in Ranger techniques. The Army hoped that Ranger training would instill an "elite character" in its graduates who, in turn, would return to their units and imbue their subordinates with the same attributes. The evolution of the Rangers from raiders to leader trainers in 1951 marked a crucial turning point in Ranger history. Suspicious of elite units but hoping to raise the standards of the whole infantry branch, the Army, nonetheless was willing to accept elite individuals within the force structure as long as they were spread throughout the entire organization. Based on his intense training, fighting prowess, and aggressive leadership, the Army Ranger came to symbolize the epitome of the American fighting man.

⁶³ On the problems that the Ranger Department encountered during the 1950's see Hogan, "The Evolution of the Concept of the U.S. Army's Rangers ," 313-357; Anthony B. Herbert with James Wooten, *Soldier* (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1973), 69-75.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSIONS

United States Army Ranger forces, renowned for their operations in World War II, but abolished in the force reductions that followed, were recreated to meet the demands of the Korean War. Impressed by the ability of small North Korean infiltration units to create havoc out of proportion to their size, the Army's high command decided to form their own warrior elite for special missions and short range penetrations of the enemy's rear. The Ranger concept, however, quickly underwent a transformation during the war. The Korean War Ranger units, in their performance as light infantry specialists, an organizational laboratory, and leader-trainers, established the foundations for the US Army's current "ranger" concepts.

FROM RAIDERS TO LEADER-TRAINERS

Although military utility was the primary rationale for their activation, the Rangers' immediate political usefulness and romantic image did not go unnoticed. The crash program to create the Airborne Ranger program in late summer 1950 was an outward signal of American determination to fight against the North Koreans. With the Army Chief of Staff as their patron the Ranger program had instant legitimacy -- at least in the short term -- which enabled the Army to organize its specialist units quickly and efficiently. The companies' romantic image of "America's finest" assisted in recruiting and gave the civilian population a psychological boost that some action against the enemy was possible. The publicity and propaganda associated with the Ranger program also worked to the Army's advantage in more subtle ways. Collins could use Ranger exploits in combat to draw away

some of the scathing criticisms leveled at the Army's performance during the opening months of the war. The Rangers would once again demonstrate American martial prowess. It was imperative, therefore, that every measure be taken to insure the Rangers' success.

In their selection of personnel and during their initial training period, American Ranger units enjoyed privileged access to military resources. The Army only accepted volunteers with higher physical and mental standards to fill these units. Ranger leaders believed that only high quality soldiers would be able to withstand the physical and mental pressures of their rigorous training and combat missions behind enemy lines. The Rangers' training program prepared them to accomplish assigned missions within their physical and technological capabilities. Strenuous physical conditioning, individual mastery of soldier skills, and small unit tactical excellence characterized Ranger training. The standards that Ranger training sought exceeded those of regular infantry units. The shared hardships and dangerous training bonded the Rangers together and molded them into cohesive units.

Once trained and deployed, the Rangers fulfilled their original purpose as elite light infantry specialists. Able to conduct night operations on a routine basis, the companies conducted infiltrations, ambushes, raids, and other hit and run type missions of short duration. The successful raids at Changgo-ri and Changmal demonstrate how effectively the Rangers could perform these type of operations. Because these missions required increased cross-country mobility, tables of organization authorized only light-weight, man-portable weapons with an absolute minimum of vehicles. Carrying their equipment on their backs, the Rangers did not have the ability to operate for sustained periods without major logistical augmentation. The Rangers, however, relied on a distinctive tactical style which emphasized self-reliance, adaptability to terrain and weather conditions, and flexible maneuver. The Rangers were expert at night operations. These qualities were especially

important when divisions ordered the Rangers to act as shock troops. When performing in such a capacity the Rangers maneuvered aggressively and employed close combat techniques to destroy enemy positions. The 1st Rangers' assaults at Chipyeong-ni and the 3d Rangers actions at Bloody Nose Ridge are notable in this regard. When utilized in a proper tactical manner, this combination of quality troops, lightweight armaments, arduous training, and tactical style made the Rangers a lethal combat force. Few divisions doubted the Rangers' capabilities as "hit and run" specialists or hard-nosed fighters.

But the companies' reputation as a sort-of "super-infantry" also caused many commanders to assign the Rangers more conventional style missions. As the combat situation changed and Eighth Army counterattacked, the Rangers often found themselves operating as part of a combined arms task force. Although this was not a typical mission for elite units, task force commanders attempted to utilize the Rangers' unique capabilities by having them patrol in rugged terrain at night, clear villages of hostile elements, and spearhead assaults against fortified positions in support of combined arms operations. Commanders, when specific intelligence or targets were lacking, often employed the Rangers for anti-guerrilla operations and rear area security missions. These were important economy of force measures which sustained the Rangers' combat skills while keeping them close at hand when behind-the-lines missions arose. Where possible, conventional commanders attempted to utilize the Rangers according to their organization and training in combat. The same was true during training periods for the Rangers that went to peacetime divisions.

The Ranger companies, as experimental organizations, also served as a "laboratory". The Army planned to use the results of the companies' actual combat employment to test tentative tactical doctrine and find the appropriate organizational structure for operations behind enemy lines. Various other agencies involved with special

operations and partisan forces were also interested in the Rangers' methods of employment and operations.

The Ranger laboratory quickly exposed many organizational and doctrinal faults with the program. The most common complaints centered over the Rangers' inability to administer or sustain themselves. Major General William Kean, commanding general of the 25th Infantry Division, commented that the Eighth Army Ranger Company "as organized under TO/ &E 7-87, even with augmentation, is dependent upon another unit for support when not engaged in combat" and requested that the Army provide "sufficient personnel and equipment to perform necessary administration . . . to make it self sufficient."¹ Paul Freeman's acid description of the 1st Rangers as "a complete parasite" reinforced Kean's comments.² Inappropriate communications equipment were also an item of concern. The Rangers themselves complained about these deficiencies. In its desire for a mobile, hard-hitting organization, Army force planners had not based the Rangers' T/O&E on day-to-day realities either in peace or war-time.

The Army exacerbated these problems by failing to create a single headquarters to command Ranger units. Colonel McGee and staffers at the Ranger Training Center had recognized almost from the start of their respective programs that the company concept would lead to command and control problems. Both had recommended the establishment of Ranger battalions and an appropriate controlling headquarters at corps or higher levels. A higher headquarters would have enabled the Rangers to regulate the type of missions they

¹ Major General Ogden to Adjutant General, 21 February 1951, Subject: Ranger Companies, Tab A : "Operations of Ranger Companies In FECOM," *G-3 Ranger Records*, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Branch, National Archives.

² Interview General Paul S. Freeman with Colonel James Ellis, Transcripts from Oral History Interview, Side 1, Tape 1, Interview 1, Session 2, April 16, 1974, The Paul L. Freeman Papers, MHI, 2.

received, provided a single center to train replacements to Ranger standards, and insured the logistical sustainment of their units. The Rangers' small size and organizational deficiencies had a detrimental impact on the doctrinal tests of their combat capabilities.

Doctrinal ambiguity was another problem that detracted from the most effective use of the Ranger companies. The Ranger Training Center at Fort Benning produced a tentative tactical doctrine to guide commanders in the training and employment of their Ranger companies. Based on General Collins' desire for a short range penetration unit, the Center distributed a manual titled *Ranger Company (Tentative)* which reminded commanders that such units were "organized and equipped for rapid movement and brief and decisive engagements -- not for sustained combat".³ Clearly, the Ranger Training Center saw the Rangers as raiders and trained them as such. Later rationales given for disbanding the companies confused this intent with the desire for strategic or long penetration of the enemy's rear and the conduct of guerrilla operations. By spring 1951 Collins himself seemed to have forgotten his original intent when he asserted that he had formed the Rangers to conduct "guerrilla warfare."⁴ The ambiguity led to disagreements over proper Ranger missions and methods of employment.

Despite the Ranger Training Center's attempts to articulate a Ranger doctrine, the employment of the companies varied from division to division. All the divisions complained of difficulty finding appropriate targets in the enemy's immediate rear. When targets were not available, division commanders generally tried to utilize them according to their capabilities. The most controversial use of the Rangers, however, was as shock

³ Ranger Training Center, *Ranger Company (Tentative)*, document no. UD 503.A2 (Ft Benning: Ranger Training Center, 28 March 1951), 1.

⁴ Paddock, *U. S. Army Special Warfare Its Origins*, 119.

troops. The 1st and 8th Ranger Company commanders repeatedly objected to this usage of their unit, claiming that they were not trained for attacking or defending like ordinary infantry because they were "hit and run" specialists. Unfortunately, doctrine and the training that the companies received at Fort Benning was not necessarily consistent with this argument. Although Ranger doctrine emphasized raiding and infiltration roles, each company had received instruction and practiced company-level assaults on fortified positions and village fighting at the Ranger Training Center. In fact, the culmination of Ranger training was "a daylight company attack on a fortified position with overhead artillery and supporting aircraft." T/O&E 7-87 also listed "repelling enemy assault by fire, close combat or counterattack" and "seizing and holding terrain" as Ranger capabilities.⁵ But the Rangers lacked the organization and manpower to consolidate its gains for more than a short period. Absence of solid intelligence and inadequate support decreased the Rangers' chances of accomplishing their mission without incurring unacceptably high levels of risks. Nevertheless, commanders seemed to ignore these latter points, focusing instead on the Rangers' mission statements. Given conflicting definitions over appropriate roles and the nature of Ranger training, most divisional commanders relied on their own judgment as to the best way to employ their elite companies.⁶

The deficiencies in the Ranger program also underlined the Army's love-hate relationship with military elites. The Rangers were cohesive, high performing units that could achieve excellent results on most any task. The Rangers self-identification as the

⁵ Van Houten, "The Rangers Are Back," 38; Department of the Army, *Table of Organization and Equipment No. 7-87*, 17 October 1950, Section I.

⁶ For a representative sample of how some division commanders planned to employ their Rangers see: Office, Chief of Army Field Forces, "Notes on Combat in Korea," 16 April 1951, unpublished manuscript, copy at Infantry School Library, Fort Benning, GA, Document Number DS 917.1.A61 (4/16/51) du.

Army's premier fighting force was apparent in their cocky attitude and open contempt for "legs." The distinctive Ranger tab on their uniform added visual proof of their membership in a corps d'elite. The Rangers, despite the rhetoric that accompanied their elite status, were a potent force multiplier.

Nevertheless, most conventional commanders were suspicious and unimpressed with the companies. Many were out-right hostile. Some, like Colonel Paul Freeman and Lieutenant Colonel James Edwards, disillusioned by their experiences with the 1st Ranger Company at Chipyeong-ni, thought the Rangers were "prima donnas" who did not pull their weight in combat. Major General Reuben Jenkins, who as the Army's G-3 had a large say in the continuation of the program, agreed with the prima donna assessment and thought the Army had misplaced its trust in such "special commando type units."⁷ The airborne establishment also loathed the Rangers because they perceived them as a threat to their own organizations. The Rangers would have to overcome strong institutional anti-elite bias and competing enemies to survive in the Army force structure.

In the end, Colonel Van Houten and other high ranking supporters could not sustain the Ranger company concept. The Rangers competed with the airborne for manpower. The airborne's reputation as the Army's most elite unit was also at stake. Similar to Marine Corps Raider units in WWII, the Rangers, despite their paratrooper ranking, could not gain legitimacy as an elite within the airborne establishment.⁸ Too many senior commanders considered the Rangers to be a duplication of effort and waste of

⁷ Freeman Interview, 4; Colonel James W. Edwards, "The Siege of Chipyeong-ni," Folder, Accounts of the Siege of Chipyeong-ni, Box: Korean Manuscripts, Diaries, and Documents, 1950-51, The Paul L. Freeman Papers, MHI; Colonel John Hill, Memorandum for General Ogden, Subject: Ranger Program, 18 July 1951, G-3 Ranger Records, Box 380, RG 319, Modern Military Records Branch, NA.

⁸ On the Marine Raider experience see Charles L. Updegraph, Jr., *U.S. Marine Corps Special Units of World War II* (Washington D. C. : Headquarters, USMC, 1972).

valuable resources. In the short term, the airborne won the competition as the Army's premier elite.

Thus, despite initial laudatory reports on the Ranger "experiment," the Army high command ultimately judged it to be a failure. The strongest arguments against the Rangers were that they robbed conventional units of their most motivated and aggressive soldiers, that they were too small a unit to entrust with deep penetration missions, and that language and racial differences made them extremely vulnerable to detection when operating in the enemy's rear. The Chief of Staff, after examining a number of proposals, reluctantly ordered the companies disbanded beginning on 1 August 1951. Yet, because they admired the elite companies' tactical proficiency and aggressiveness, division commanders desired the services of Rangers to train their organic units for special missions.

The final role that the Rangers played during the Korean War was as leader-trainers. Senior Army leaders recognized that the Rangers trained their members to higher standards of technical and tactical proficiency. The nature of Ranger operations demanded that members exercise a greater degree of initiative and leadership. It made sense, therefore, to use the Rangers as leader-trainers to improve the quality of the whole infantry branch. The success of the 2d Rangers' training of black replacements for the 7th Infantry Division, and the results achieved by 3d Rangers' indoctrination program of the ROK units reinforced these notions. The redesignation of the Ranger Training Command as the Ranger Department within the Infantry School in September 1951 and the establishment of a Ranger course to train qualified individuals were logical extensions of this idea.

Thus, in less than a year the U. S. Army's Rangers had evolved from raiders to leader-trainers. The Army decided, somewhat prematurely, that it did not need elite units. Instead of concentrating some of its best leaders into a few small companies, the Army decided to spread the wealth. It, therefore, opted to train individual leaders to elite

standards to improve the quality of the whole. By retaining high entrance standards and providing the most rugged, realistic training in the Army, the Ranger program henceforth would produce leaders with an elite "character" who could train their assigned units to "elite standards."

The Rangers of the Korean War trained hard, fought bravely, and achieved modest results in combat. The companies in Korea garnered many individual and unit-level combat awards for heroism and performance under fire. The Ranger companies that did not reach combat as units still set high standards and provided role models for their peace-time divisions to emulate. Throughout their existence the Rangers captivated the American public with stories of their martial prowess. The legacies that these Rangers left for the future Army, however, far surpassed any results they attained in actual combat.

The Ranger concept never completely died in the Army. The Ranger Department successfully trained and graduated hundreds of top-notch junior leaders who led small-units through the terrors of jungle warfare in Vietnam. Many later credited their Ranger training as the source of their tactical expertise -- and for saving their lives on more than one occasion. The Army also returned to the Ranger unit concept. On 1 January 1969, the Army reorganized the 75th Infantry Regiment under the Combat Arms Regimental System. Fifteen Ranger companies formed under this reorganization. Thirteen of these companies served in Vietnam performing as a long-range reconnaissance patrols. The companies inactivated on August 15, 1972 as the Army withdrew from Vietnam. Two years later the Rangers would be back in the force structure, this time in greater strength.⁹

In 1974 Army Chief of Staff Creighton Abrams authorized the formation of two Ranger battalions. The Chief established the new focus of the program stating that "The

⁹ For an overview of the Rangers in Vietnam see Michael Lee Lanning, *Inside the LRRPS Rangers in Vietnam* (New York: Ivy Books, 1988).

Ranger Battalion is to be an elite, light and the most proficient Infantry Battalion in the World; a battalion that can do things with its hands and weapons better than anyone." Referring to the perceived reputation of some elites, Abrams flatly warned force planners that the battalion "would contain no 'Hoodlums' or 'Brigands' " or "it would be disbanded." "Wherever the battalion goes" the Chief wanted it to "be apparent that it is the best."¹⁰ Two battalions formed that year. Members of those battalions would distinguish themselves in a combat jump during OPERATION URGENT FURY in Grenada in 1983.¹¹

The Rangers would finally achieve their long sought after goal of unity of command in 1984 with the activation of the 75th Ranger Regiment and the addition of a third Ranger Battalion. The regimental headquarters, working directly for the U.S. Army's Special Operations Command, now provides planning, training, and command and control for all Ranger operations. This system was in effect when the Rangers once again made a parachute assault under fire in Panama as part of OPERATION JUST CAUSE in 1989-90.¹² As their predecessors did in Korea, today's elite Rangers continue to "Lead the Way".

¹⁰ Creighton Abrams, quoted in Headquarters, 2d Ranger Battalion, "An Overview, Rangers Lead the Way," unpublished manuscript in author's possession, 9.

¹¹ For a description of the Rangers role in URGENT FURY see Daniel P. Bolger, *Americans at War 1975-1986 An Era of Violent Peace* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1988), 261-358.

¹² 2d Ranger Battalion, "An Overview, Rangers Lead the Way," 9; for a good account of the Rangers' role in JUST CAUSE see Thomas Donnelly, Margaret Roth, Caleb Baker, *Operation Just Cause The Storming of Panama* (New York: Lexington Books, 1991).

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