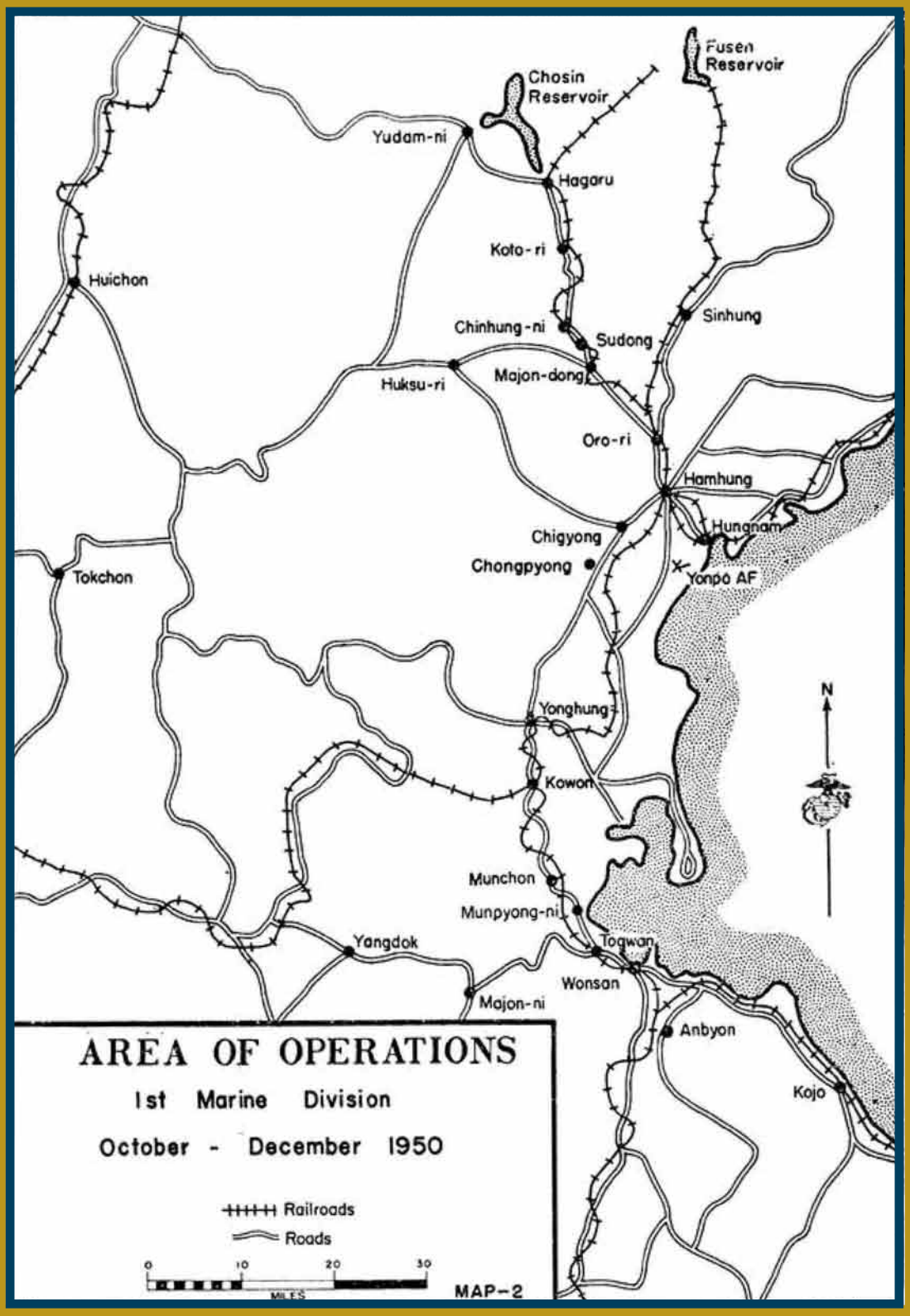
MARINE CORPS ENGINEER ASSOCIATION HISTORY - 2021



U.S. Marine Corps Historical Division CHOSIN MAP 02 (koreanwar.org/html/maps-marines.html)

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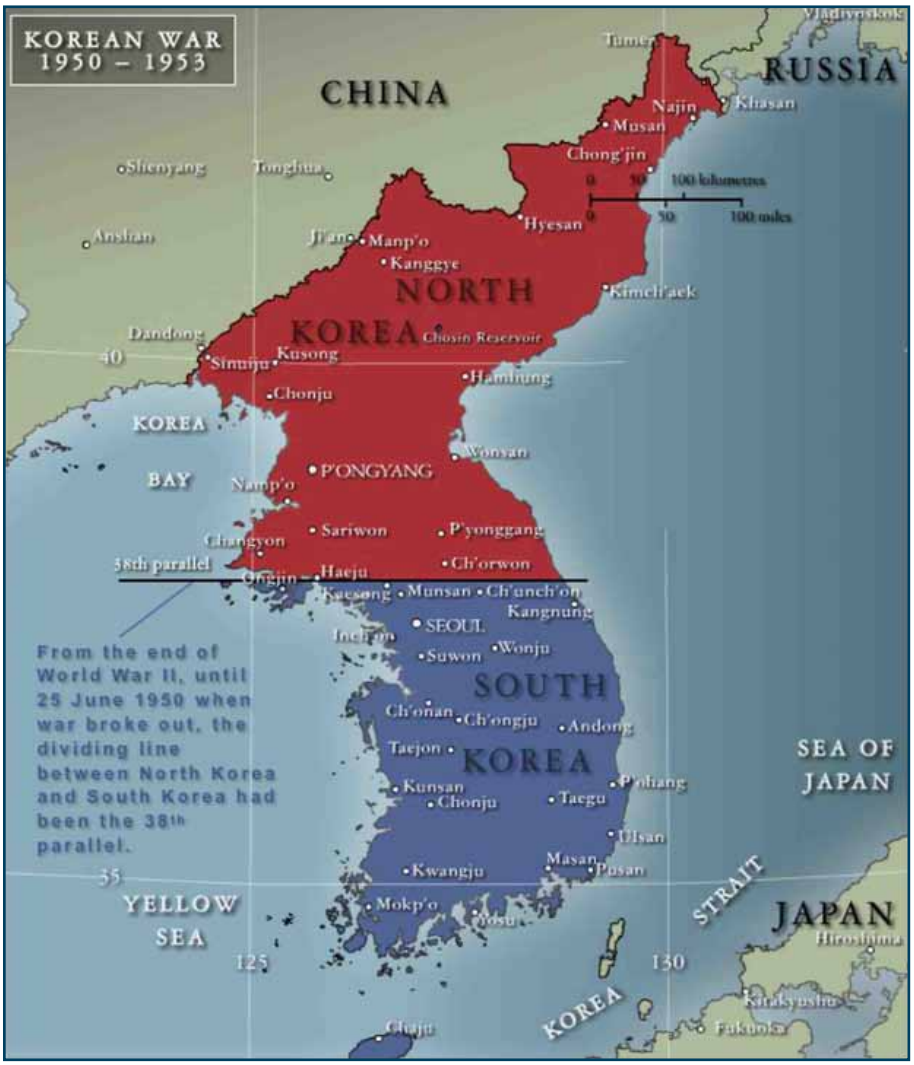
This publication is a supplement to the annual newsletter of the Marine Corps Engineer Association (MCEA), ***Engineers Up!*** It is published in accordance with MCEA's stated purpose to help provide an accurate historical record of the contributions of Marine Corps engineers. Only a limited number of copies are printed to minimize costs; however, ***Engineers Up!*** and this supplement are available to the general public on the MCEA website, www.marcorengasn.org. MCEA is a non-federal entity; therefore, according to regulation, neither the DoD or the U.S. Marine Corps, nor any of its components, endorse the MCEA or MCEA product, service or event.

MARINE CORPS ENGINEERS IN KOREA 1950

Written by MSgt Phil Martin, USMC (Ret.), MCEA Historian

Korea has one of the oldest cultures in Asia. During the 1st Millennium the Three Kingdoms were united by civil war to become the Korean nation. This small country was the place where the United States Marine Corps solidified its position as the world's finest fighting force. Like the flag raising on Iwo Jima during World War II ensuring that America would always have a Marine Corps, the skill and courage of Marine Corps Engineers in Korea ensured that the Marines would always have Engineers. This story of Marine Corps Engineer operations between September 1950 and December 1950 is worth telling and the focus of the article.

Korea, sometimes called The Land of the Morning Calm, was primarily a land of farmers. Its neighbor Japan had long considered this land as part of its domain, but Korea had successfully defended itself from foreign invasion. In 1882 the United States and Korea entered into an agreement of cooperation and trade for the benefit of both countries, ending centuries of Korean isolationism. In 1905 Japan invaded Korea for the third time, and the United States not wanting to go to war with Japan remained neutral allowing Japan to take control of the peninsula. Japanese rule was brutal, killing many Korean leaders, suppressing the Korean language and culture, and enslaving many ethnic Korean women as "Comfort Women" to the Japanese Army. The result was a guerrilla war, but the Japanese were too powerful, and the dissent was crushed.



Map from anzacportal.dva.gov.au

World War II ended in August 1945 with the dropping of the Atomic Bombs and Korea was ecstatic to be a free country. The former allies Russia and the United States divided Korea along the 38th parallel. North Korea was controlled by the Soviet Union while the south was administered by the United States. In 1948 the Russians installed an individual they hand-picked named Kim Il-sung to oversee the North (Peoples Democratic Republic of North Korea). The South (Republic of Korea) was led by Syngman Rhee, an autocratic leader, loyal to the United States. The divided Korea was never intended to be permanent and for five years a joint United States -Soviet Union Committee attempted to resolve the Korea problem.

These diplomatic issues occurred during the backdrop of reduced military budgets and reduction in the size of military forces. In March of 1950, the American intelligence community identified warning indicators that the Republic of Korea (ROK) was about to be invaded but this notion was discounted

by all levels of the US government. On June 28, 1950 the North Koreans had amassed a large amount of equipment on the border and began firing a massive artillery barrage. This was followed by ten divisions of well-trained and well-equipped infantry crossing the 38th Parallel. They were supported by excellent Russian tanks with North Korean crews.

In a few hours after the North's invasion, the United States went to the United Nations requesting authority to aid the South Koreans in stopping the North Korean advance. The vote was unanimous in favor of the United States, and the United Nations aiding the south, because the Soviet Union was not there that day. General Douglas MacArthur was chosen to lead this mission.

The North Koreans had sixteen hundred artillery pieces and some ninety thousand troops and in less than three days they captured the South Korean capital Seoul. Before long, the South Korean forces led by General Walton Walker were pushed into an area called the Pusan Perimeter. The area is roughly fifty by a hundred miles and pressed against the Sea of Japan. The North Korean rapid advance stretched their supply lines making them vulnerable. General MacArthur realizing the opportunity to cut off the North Korean supply line devised a plan to land American forces on the Western coast of Korea at the Port of Inchon.

After the end of World War II the United States disbanded most of its military. When the Korean War broke out the U.S. Military was under manned and equipped, suffering from one of the worst periods of readiness in its history. The few active duty Marines were collected into a Regiment and sent to help hold the Pusan perimeter. Then Marines from every school, base and even those in training were collected to form an additional Regiment for the Marine Division. Recruiting for eligible men to join the Marine Corps brought young patriots from all walks of life and many former Marines came back to the Corps. A few of the Marines never went to boot camp so they were trained in the Marine Corps way aboard ships as they headed for Korea.

On 15 September, American Marines and soldiers successfully landed at Inchon in one of the most difficult amphibious landings in the history of the world and captured the port. In order to get over the sea wall engineers fabricated ladders for the assault troops to climb out of the landing craft and establish the beach head. The spearhead of the invasion was some thirteen thousand Marines mostly from the 1st Marine Division. The next step was to get across the Han river and liberate Seoul, getting behind the North Koreans and cutting off supplies and an escape route for the North Korean Army; by doing this, General MacArthur felt this action would be over in a few weeks.

Senior U.S. commanders (VADM Struble, Gen MacArthur, MGen O.P. Smith) inspect the Inchon port area. Official U.S. Navy photo

The battle for Seoul lasted about three weeks and included engineers in this action. The Seventh Marines landed on September 20 and joined the First and Fifth Marines. The First Marine Division landing at Inchon in September cut the supply route of the North Koreans. The Marine Corps Engineers were employed to clear roads of explosive devices, erect Headquarters tents, and to provide lighting and electricity. The engineers also provided potable water points, built pontoon bridges, and provided security for the Headquarters section and, as needed, manned roadblocks. Once the North Korean forces withdrew back into North Korea, the engineers started to build mount out boxes for the trip home.

Going North

A resolution by the United Nations gave approval to unite the two Koreas under a democratic government. With the United Nations decision to push north of the 38th parallel General MacArthur split his forces with the 8th Army moving north with the X Corps attacking to the west of the Chosin Reservoir and the 1st Marine Division with a couple of Army task forces (with ROK forces attached) attacking east of the Chosin. Major General Oliver P. Smith was the commander of the 1st Marine Division and all Marine ground forces. While the United Nations forces were being loaded on ships for a landing at Wonson, North Korea, one engineering officer and eleven enlisted engineers were air-lifted to the new site to clean the beaches of mines and to construct ten LST ramps. On 19 October the X Corps embarked on Navy ships and on 26 October X Corps landed at Wonsan where engineers were working with shore party to destroy mines, conduct road reconnaissance and improve the bivouac area. When X corps arrived at Wonsan, they were greeted by members of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.

Marine combat engineers remove a land mine on a road. 1stMarDiv Historical Diary Photo

October saw the movement of X Corps from Inchon to Wonsan. The Marine Corps Engineers were busy repairing a grave site for the Battalion, extending and widening the Oy landing strip and conducting road reconnaissance from Wonsan to Kojo and from Wonsan to Hamhung. The Engineers were responsible for constructing an advance CP and a Division CP. The Battalion was also responsible for over 130 miles of road called the Main Supply Route (MSR).

The 1st Engineer Battalion of the 1st Marine Division was in a sector of the far East area during this period. At the opening of the period "D" Company was in Hamhung, "A" Company was moving to Hamhung and an advance CP was being established in the Hamhung area. The remainder of the Battalion was generally in the Wonsan area. During this period, the Battalion was moving from Wonsan to Hamhung-Hungnam area as truck, rail and ship facilities permitted. Equipment and personnel were employed in various places and at the extreme, dispersal measured about 130 airline miles from Hagaru-ri, in the North to Ko-sang in the South.

The Mapping and Survey Platoon attached 4 Marines to each "A", "B", "C", and "D", Companies. They assigned details with letter companies to conduct engineer reconnaissance with special attention to roads and railroads. Headquarters Company performed normal engineer missions as assigned, to aid and assist Engineer Letter Companies in the accomplishment of their tasks. Engineer Equipment Platoon was to provide personnel and equipment as required in the construction of the C-47 air strip at Hagaru-ri.

On 3 November wiring on the Division Hospital was begun in the Hamhung area and the road from MSR to the hospital was improved. The wiring of the Division Hospital was finished the next day. Road and bridge repair for the Hospital was started. The Battalion also repaired two bridges from the MSR in Hamhung to the Division CP and graded the Battalion fuel dump road in Hamhung.

The Marines received instructions to provide engineer assistance to move one company of tanks by road to vicinity of Soyong-ni. Third Platoon "A" Company improved and maintained the MSR to the Chosin Reservoir. An abandoned sawmill was put into operation cutting bridging material. Maintenance of bridges and culverts required considerable effort. "B" Company less 3rd platoon moved to Chinhung-ni and was assigned to maintain the MSR from Su-dong to Koto-ri.

The march north was to support the ROK 1st and 6th Infantry Divisions of ROK II Corps. This was backed by the Army 7th Infantry Division which came ashore at I-won on 29 October.

On the march from Hamhung to the Yalu River the United Nations units began to see Chinese soldiers. The surrounding terrain was a benefit to the Chinese as the MSR was narrow and hazardous. General Smith ordered the engineering teams to use their heavy equipment to widen the road as it wound through the hills. He also ordered engineer teams to build supply dumps along the way. He ordered the engineers to

lengthen and improve the existing airstrip at Koto-ri, so it would be suitable for the Air forces C-47s to land to deliver supplies and to take out the wounded.

A reconnaissance was conducted of the Oy strip in the Chosin Reservoir area to determine the scope of work for extending it into a C-47 strip. The Oy strip at the Division CP was completed. "B" Company began work on extending and widening the Oy strip at Koto-ri. The minimum length of the strip was to be 2500 feet and a minimum width of 55 feet. The Engineers continued work on the Division hospital. The Headquarters detail left for Chinhung-ni with the mission of coordinating engineer work and providing a headquarters for the engineers in that area.

On the18th of November, men and equipment began moving to the site of the proposed air strip in the vicinity of Hagaru-ri. Battalion engineers had to borrow two Army lowboy trailers and truck tractors to move TD-18 bulldozers to the unloading point at Su-dong. The Battalion was deployed over an area 110 airline miles long. "B" Company was assigned the improvement and maintenance of MSR from Chinhung-ni to the crest of the hill to be widened to accommodate two-lane traffic. The work continued on the Division hospital.

The next day three "A" CompanyTD-18's were moved to the air strip at Hagaru-ri using borrowed Army truck tractors and trailers. Work was begun on conversion of the schoolhouse to a hospital for ambulatory patients. Work was also continued on the Division hospital at Hamhung. Work commenced on the C-47 airstrip at Hagaru-ri.

On 20 November work was completed on the conversion of the school for ambulatory patients. "A" Company began setting up a sawmill north of Hagaru-ri. The work continued on the C-47 airstrip which was 5% complete. Bulldozers from the 11th Marines were also working on the strip. The work on the Wonsan airfield was exceeding the capabilities of the repair detail. The Division hospital improvements continued. The MSR to Hagaru-ri was widened at places by blasting. The Oy strip at Hagaru-ri was completed on the 20th.

The MSR was widened and improved so the tanks, artillery, larger trucks, and weaponry could make it to Hagaru-ri. The airstrip took longer than anyone thought. The ground was frozen to a depth of eighteen inches, and it was hard to work even with combat engineers using explosives to loosen the topsoil. The bitter cold made it rough on the engineers as they had to make special buckets to dig out the soil but even then jack hammers had to be used to take the soil out of the buckets. The Marines were doing what the Army refused to do. The Marines worked twenty-four hours a day trying to complete the airstrip.

On November 29 the work on the air strip was halted at 2400 because of enemy action. Elements of the Chinese Army (CCF) had entered the war and were attacking UN forces. The engineer personnel had to perform infantry missions in defense of the airfield and suffered many casualties. The work was continued during the night. The next night saw the work on the air strip stopped at 2200 because of enemy mortar and automatic weapons fire and freezing mud in scrapers. Work continued through the day under enemy mortar and small arms fire. The airstrip was 40% complete at 1800 on the 30th.

The Chinese kept attacking and the injured Infantry Marines were pulled off the front lines creating a need for more Marines to fill the gap. With no extra Marines to fill the gap, office personnel, cooks, truck drivers and engineers were used to fill the vacant spaces. The engineers constructing the runway were left to finish their job. Small units of Chinese would attack the engineers building the airstrip and the Marine Corps engineers would fight off the threat and go right back to work on the airstrip.

The Chinese also carried out another attack on East Hill which ended up in a second costly stalemate. The Western Hill up to the military crest was held by the following units from right to left: 1st Lieutenant Ermine L. Meeker's, 1st Platoon of Baker Company Engineers; 1st and 3rd Platoons of Captain Carl L. Sitter's George Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines; and 1st Lieutenant Ernest P. Skelt's 3rd Platoon of Abel Company Engineers. To the left of Skelt, near the foot of the hill, were 1st Lieutenant Nicolas A. Canzona's 1st Platoon of Abel Engineers: two tanks of the A/T Company2nd Battalion, 7 Marines, and elements of Lieutenant Colonel Charles L. Bank's 1st Service Battalion. The action began shortly before midnight with one of those comedy situations which develop on the grimmest occasions. The sign or password was "Abraham" and the countersign was "Lincoln". But two Company "A" Engineers on a listening post did not pause for the customary exchange. Having been jumped by what their startled eyes took to be a Chinese regiment, they

sprinted down hill yelling, “Abraham Lincoln! Abraham Lincoln!” as they slid into Skelt’s lines with the enemy close behind. His Engineers had no time for a laugh. Within a few seconds they were mixing it in a wild melee with Communists who seemed literally to drop in from above. Meanwhile George Company was hard hit by well-aimed mortar fire which threatened to wipe out Lieutenant Hopkin’s 1st Platoon. The ensuing double headed CCF attack bent back the left flank of George Company with both the 1st and 3rd Platoons giving ground. The left of Skelt’s Platoon was pushed down to the foot of the hill by superior enemy numbers after exactly half of his 28 men were killed or wounded. Here the fight continued with Bank’s service troops lending a hand until the Chinese were exterminated.

At 0800, the battalion commander ordered George Company to retake East Hill while the attached British Commandos remained in reserve. Sitter’s* plan called for his 1st and 2nd platoons, led by Lieutenants Fredrick W. Hopkins and John W. Jaeger respectively, to pass through Maj Reginald R. Myer’s composite group, then make a sharp left turn and attack on either side of the ridge. 1stLt Carl E. Dennis’ 3rd platoon and two platoons of Abel Company Engineers were to follow in reserve. Slow progress caused the George Company commander to modify the plan by giving his 3rd platoon and the two engineer platoons the mission of enveloping the CCF right flank. Dennis led the attack, with Skelt’s and Canzona’s engineer platoons following. Neither of the attacks was successful. . .Meanwhile Dennis’ platoon and the engineers were directed to withdraw to the foot of the hilll, so that the Corsairs could work the CCF positions over with rockets and bombs.

General Smith was told the runway was a thousand feet shorter than what he needed, and it would take a few more days. General Smith decided to have a C-47 try to land on the strip and was elated when the airplane landed. Three more C-47s landed that afternoon.

Going South

The day the word was passed to retrograde (withdraw) General Smith was asked if he was retreating and he told the reporter he was attacking in another direction.

On the way South, the advancing column of the United Nations X Corps found the Funchilin Pass had the bridge blown by the Chinese to box in the retreating forces. This had been a worry of General Smith as he and his troops were advancing to the Frozen Chosin. Now that he was faced with this dilemma, he called upon his Engineers to fix the bridge. It was decided four M-2 portable Treadway spans were needed. Each span was made of eighteen feet of steel each weighing more than two thousand pounds. Unfortunately, no bridge spans were close by.

Funchilin Pass Artwork from WarfareHistoryNetwork.com

Up at Koto-ri, one of the units waiting to be evacuated was the U.S. Army’s Fifty- Eighth Engineer Treadway Bridge company. They had four of the Broadway trucks needed to load and transport the sections to the gap. Out of the four trucks only one was operating. The first girder to be airlifted was dropped using a twenty- four-foot parachute. The parachute was not big enough and the girder plunged twenty feet deep so new forty-eight-foot parachutes were ordered from Japan. They arrived the next day and the first girder landed in Chinese held territory. The other four were dropped and landed accurately. The Army and Marine

Corps Engineers were able to assemble the girders and the United Nations troops were able to avoid the trap set by the Chinese. After the United Nations troops had evaded the trap set by the Chinese the bridge was blown again to deprive the Chinese from using the Funchilin bridge.

Marines arriving at Hungnam

Engineer personnel were stationed at critical points along the road down the mountain to assist in the movement of the Division. "B" Company was preparing to move on 10 December to a site selected so as to be in position to provide engineer assistance to all of the Division in the defense sector. The 1st Marine Division reached the port of Hungnam on 11 December and prepared embark aboard ships for evacuation to the south.

*Editor's Note: Kudos to MSgt Phil Martin for digging into the historical records in order to provide additional information on the day-to-day engineer company level operations not normally covered in articles about the evacuation from the Chosin Reservoir. *Captain Carl L. Sitter was awarded the Medal of Honor for his conspicuous gallantry against enemy forces on November 29 and 30, 1950. Many other Marines also received awards for valor.*

Official USMC Photo

MARINE WING ENGINEER SQUADRON-IN THE BEGINNING

Circa 1971, a study of Marine Corps Engineer and Motor Transport Organizations in the Fleet Marine Force was undertaken by the Mid-Range Branch of the Plans and Studies Division of the Development Center at Quantico, Va. I was selected to lead that study.

We began by examining the existing structure/organizations. It became very obvious that the wing did not have an internal engineer organization. That led to the next question, what engineer assets were available and where were they organizationally located?

The next area of concern was what mission/responsibility was assigned to these assets?

Let me go through some of the findings (I am limiting this paper to the "air wing" and engineer since that is your interest)

What engineer assets were available and where were they located within the air wing? We found more Engineer personnel by MOS than there were in the division combat engineer battalion. They were in each air group MABS (Marine Air Base Squadron). As you can guess, the
mission was the support of air base operations.

The next area of concern was the organizational structure of the "AIR WING". There is little similarity between the three wings of the Marine Corps, other than they are Marines and they have airplanes! Each Air Group within each wing has a different set of aircraft and different assets to carry out its mission. It became evident that although there was no identical structure such as you found in the Division. There was similarity in mission to support the Ground Force as an integral part of the Fleet Marine Force. This then is where we started.

Looking at the division engineer battalion, it was obvious that the triangular structure was at the core of the organization: three regiments, three battalions, three companies. The question was: Could this structure be adapted to satisfy the Engineer requirements of the wing?

The first and obvious question was how real was the claim that there was no such thing as a similarity between the wings. It turned out it was not true, and they are basically structured to support the Ground force as the mission requires.

Having established this base, we proceeded to put together an organization that would provide for the combat engineer needs of the deployed elements of the wing, thus creating the ENGINEER SQUADRON.

I took the completed study to Headquarters FMF PAC and FMF LANT to brief the commanding Generals and get the necessary feedback. I did, however, ask CG FMF PAC if he would allow a troop test in the First Wing and Division. (Keep in mind this was a study of both Engineer and Motor Transport of the FMF.)

I mention this follow up on your question because it will give you an insight as to why the situation was the way it was. As a side note, Gen. Wilson was CG of PAC. His response to my request was that he troop-test it. It was memorable, to say the least, but he agreed to testing in Japan. On the other coast, a total rejection. What a difference! Why.. because we were stripping the Wing Commander of his assets to meet fleet augmentation requirements. He would need to draw those personnel from organizations throughout the Wing, or other words, from aviation units. This is an absolute truth and accounts for much of the problem, such as we found in SHU FLY. Another story that you would find very interesting, another day!

The results of this study were incorporated into the major study that I was to lead of the entire combat service support structure of the Marine Corps. This study was approved by the Commandant and that structure, including the Engineer Squadron, was put in place in the late 1970's.

It is interesting to note that this rework of the CSS was the first since the FMF was formed in the early 1930's. A forty-year gap. It was done. That was almost fifty years ago! I'll say no more about that.

I hope this gives you an answer to your question.

Colonel Jim Harp, Jan. 2021

We very much thank Colonel Harp for his informative reply to our request for assistance. While not a MCEA member, he was the "go to" Marine when we asked others about how the Wing Engineer Squadrons began.

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My knowledge of the Marine Wing Engineer Squadron (MWES) and its formation within the Marine Corps Air Wings' is based somewhat on my having been assigned to MABS-17 before the

startup of Marine Corps operations in the RVN. And although I was initially assigned to MABS-17 in Iwakuni, I believe that my situation is/was somewhat typical of most "if not all engineering personnel serving in a USMC Air Wing and was a primary consideration when an Engineer Support Study for Requirements in the Mid-Range (out five years) with a 10% reduction in personnel and the equipment necessary to carry out the engineer requirements was put together in 1971. This was in the Study and Requirements Division at Quantico with LtCol Jim J. Harp (retired COL.) as the project officer in charge and lasted about 2--3 years.

My first tour of duty was with the Airwing in Iwakuni. I was one of three Lt. 1302s assigned to MABS-17 and I "never" saw the Utility section. I was the junior 2nd Lt. assigned to MABS-17 and I was assigned to a position of literally the "additional duty officer" that included Embarkation officer, ABC (atomic, biological and chemical warfare officer later the NBC warfare), the voting officer, Officer in charge of administering general military subjects' testing (GMST), voting officer, and the "MAG-17 slot machine officer" which took about a half of the day, as well as, a Special Court Defense Officer/Counselor. On the afternoon of Friday, April the sixth, 1962 I was administering a General Military Subjects' Test in the late afternoon, and an office clerk interrupted the testing and told me to report to the CO, I did so and was told that "I was going to that Vietnam Place" (a direct quote) and I needed to pack my gear, draw a pistol from the armory and be at the airstrip at 5:30 A.M. the next morning... I boarded on a huge USAF cargo plane that opened up in front and was loaded with TAFDS equipment and a few enlisted personnel that I assumed were associated with the TAFDS and landed at Kadena AFB. I was assigned to Task Unit 79.3.5, code-named "SHUFLY" and I still had not met any engineer associated personnel and was bordered on a C130 on April 8 in Okinawa and landed in SOC TRANG, RVN in the Mekong Delta on an abandoned WW ll Japanese and later a French airstrip/base. I was on the first C130 and the first Engineer Officer1302 to land in Vietnam and we had one week to erect/strongback tents establish an electric power system, and water purification system prior to the arrival of the USMC Helicopter Squadron HMM 362, on April the 15th. In spite of the hodgepodge of personnel from the various units, these Marines did an excellent job of preparing for HMM 362's arrival. A few months later, I was assigned as the USMC liaison officer between our unit and an ARMY helicopter CO. and assigned to Danang, RVN along with a few TAFDS personnel including a Gunny Charlie Beasley for the relocation/transition between HMM 362 (HM34s') and the Army's Helicopter Co. (HM-21s'). I have offered this personal account of my assignments to give more credence to the formation of the MWES' for the training and working together.

LtCol. Terry Harris-Inman
Gulf Breeze, Florida

HISTORY OF WING ENGINEER SQUADRON 17

Wing Engineer Squadron 17 was activated on 1 August 1974, in Iwakuni, Japan in conjunction with a 10-year test conducted by the Marine Corps Development and Education Command to centralize the management of Engineer assets within the Marine Aircraft Wings. In November 1974, the Squadron inherited the Launch and Recovery mission from Marine Aircraft Groups 12 and 15. In addition, the Squadron also assumed Crash Crew and Tactical Airfield Fuel Dispensing System (TAFDS) responsibilities for the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.

Wing Engineer Squadron 17 provided TAFDS support, utilities and hygiene support, and equipment and engineer construction support for the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and attached units throughout the western Pacific. The Squadron participated in numerous operations involving units from the U.S. Armed Forces as well as our Far Eastern allies. These operations include: Operation RICHOCHET at camp Fuji, Japan (1975): Operation KANGAROO II in Australia (1976): FORTRESS LIGHTNING in the Philippines (1977) and the annual MAG EX/TEAM SPIRIT exercises held in the Republic of Korea (75-86).

Little is known of the first couple of years but the years from January of 1976 on was an advance into a whirlwind of activities. One of the more noted events was the Wing Headquarters relocation

to Camp Zukeran, Okinawa. This move involved (1) one officer and (24) enlisted Marines. Their primary task was renovation of six two story barracks of Army vintage. Each building had squad bay billet spaces, office spaces, and dining facilities. (90) Ninety percent of the interior of the buildings required painting, repair or replacement of plumbing fixtures, electrical wiring, outlets and electrical fixtures. Construction of numerous partitions for office spaces was also completed. As the work was nearing completion, additional WES – 17 Marines were needed to help complete other jobs associated with the move. The peak strength reached (2) officers and (55) fifty-five enlisted Marines.

Once the renovation of the barracks was nearing completion, work was begun on the maintenance and office spaces for motor transport, storage and communications maintenance facilities. This facility needed considerable rehabbing and construction of a triple Butler building with renovation of internal wiring and lighting of a 14,000 square foot building.

With the Butler buildings under construction, the WES- 17 Marines turned their attention to the renovation of the quarters for the Commanding General, Assistant Wing Commander and the Chief of Staff which consisted of painting and general maintenance. The Wing Headquarters required 86,000 square feet of painting and minor repairs to the electrical and plumbing systems were made.

WES-17 Marines continued to support the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and the 3rd Marine Amphibious Force with assets and personnel from utility, construction, material handling, aircraft refueling, earth moving, crash crew and expeditionary airfield projects. Engineer assistance was also devoted to the support of MCAS, Iwakuni, Japan and Camp Butler, Okinawa Public Works Departments.

7 July 1976, a detachment of nine (9) Marines returned from Kwang Ju, Korea having provided TAFDS and mobile electric power support for VMFA-115 and VMFP-3 flight operations. During the course of this 14- day deployment WES-17 Marines installed a 40,000- gallon TAFDS site, dispensed 203,546 gallons of JP-4 in support of VMFA-115 flight operations, dispensed 39,899 gallons of JP-4 in support of VMFP-3 flight operations and provided 48 hours of mobile electric power to the VMFA-115 communications site.

9 July 1976, Engineer Unit Three returned to MCAS, Iwakuni after a period of 23 days at Camp Zukeran, Okinawa. This five- man detachment was provided with the task of installing decorative paneling in the office of the Wing Supply Officer and the partial paneling of the upper deck passageway of building #2.

Elements of WES 17 were attached to the MWSG-17 detachment, of PROVMAG-10, deployed to Pohang, Korea in support of MABLEX 1-76. The WES-17 Launch/Recovery section provided a nine (9) man detachment from 16 August to 16 September 1976 to aid WCSS-17 in an inventory/condition check of their SATS airfield equipment. Three (3) total airfields consisting of approximately 2,000 packages were inventoried and visually inspected for serviceability. Packages were appropriately marked, and parts request forms were prepared to complete each package.

WES-17 provided both personnel and equipment to support Operation Kangaroo II from 10 Sept – 15 Nov 1976. WES-17 Marines actively supported and participated in the first Annual MWSG-17 Track and Field meet. Squadron personnel entered and did well in several events and provided equipment support for the digging of the mud pit for the Tug- of- war event. TAFDS inventory assistance was provided to WCSS-17, Okinawa, Japan.

The varied support requirements of WES-17 provided valuable MOS training and experience to all MOS skills in the Squadron. Of particular note was Exercise TEAM SPIRIT. This exercise offered the majority of this Squadron's young troops their first opportunity to perform their skills in a field environment. They also had an opportunity to learn the real experience of the process of embarkation and retrograde utilizing air, ship, rail and convoy.

The squadron participated in operations exercise CHECK ALAGATOR, mount out drill, on 23 and 24 August 1977, and Operation FORTRESS LIGHTENING which was conducted from 27 September through 27 October 1977 at Memburao, Philippines. A total of four (4) Officers and sixty-five (65) enlisted Marines were deployed from WES-17 in support of PROV MAG. Elements of WES-17 participated in Exercise TEAM SPIRIT 78 from 11 February to 21 March, and supported two 1,000 man camps at Yechon and Pohang air bases, Korea. These Marines constructed 20 field heads, 20 benches, 60 mess tables and six strong back tents. Utilities personnel provided potable water, mobile electric power, and electrical wiring.

TAFDS personnel provided bulk fuel support at both airfields.

On 9 March 1978, Captain R.K. Potter was directed to form the Engineer Section of the Squadron. This action called for a major reorganization within the construction, engineer equipment, and motor transport sections. Upon completion of the reorganization the Engineer section was formed and an Engineer Support Unit consisting of all Engineer equipment and motor transport items. These actions completed the reorganization of WES-17 to conform with CSS concepts.

From the period of 30 June 1978 to April 1979, WES-17 continued to support the Wing units at Iwakuni with mobile electric power, MT, TAFDS and general engineering support. Support was provided to the forward deployed Wing aircraft in Korea at Kwang Ju and for the MAB exercise in Pohang, S. Korea. The advanced party arrived at Pohang to establish the camps and tents were erected, generator power installed, mess halls set up, communications established, and an aircraft fuel contract was negotiated with a local vendor. A complete encampment was ready to support the MAB.

Upon regrouping from the Team Spirit in early April, planning began immediately for the relocation of WES 17 to Okinawa. Preliminary planning during this period included the staffing of DET "C", MWSG-17, which would continue to provide engineer support for MCAS Iwakuni when MWSG relocated to Okinawa. All equipment was scheduled and run through quarterly preventative maintenance during April, and equipment and personnel were designated and assigned to DET "C" upon its activation on 15 April. On 30 April, Det "C" became responsible for engineer support aboard the Iwakuni Air Station.

During early May, WES-17 readied both gear and personnel for embarkation. All equipment in the maintenance cycle was brought back on 6 April and was staged at the WES-17 engineer lot. A small number of pieces of engineer equipment, and approximately half of the bulk cargo went on the first trip of the LKA USS St. Louis to Okinawa on 18 May 1979. All of the WES-17 personnel were checked out of the Air Station by 20 May, and the garrison property except for the barracks were turned over to the Air Station on 20 May.

The St. Louis returned on 28 May, and all WES-17 cargo and equipment was loaded on the 29th and 30th. Personnel went aboard the afternoon of the 30th, and the ship sailed for Okinawa the next morning. Docking was affected on the 2nd of June and shuttling of equipment and personnel to Camp Foster was completed the next afternoon. All in all, some 131 personnel and 467 end items were relocated to Okinawa.

The complexion of WES-17 changed in just a few months. This resulted from a CMC directed reorganization of MWSG-17. The second echelon maintenance capability from H&GMS-17 was transferred to WES-17 on 18 July 1979. With the addition of the maintenance personnel, the unit's strength increased by approximately 50%, and the overall equipment readiness percentage began an upward move.

On 24 September 1979, several on- going projects reached simultaneous completion. One of these projects provided needed upgrading of the TAFDS Section facilities: The fuel berms were reconstructed with new lights and wiring; the buildings were repaired, and concrete slabs were poured for equipment parking. Two other projects were in support of Marine Corps Air Station, Iwakuni. One was the construction of four bicycle racks, the other involved earthwork to remove and existing tee at the golf course and construct a flagstone patio in its place.

The Station Dining Facility closed its galley on 17 Oct 1979 for necessary renovations. WES-17 provided two strongback tent frames, five field refrigeration units, an ice flake machine and wiring so expedient messing support could continue.

On 30 November 1979 two elements of WES-17 departed Okinawa. The first consisted of 58 personnel and assorted equipment assigned to MWSG-17 Detachment D. The WES-17 elements of the detachment were tasked with providing TAFDS, construction, and utilities support for 1stMAW units participating in MAGEX-80 at various locations throughout the ROK. The second group consisted of 19 personnel assigned to participate in the rehabilitation of facilities destroyed by fire at Camp Fuji, Japan.

From the period of 26 November 1979 to 24 February 1980, engineer elements of Detachment "D", MWSG-17 provided engineer, utilities, and TAFDS support to MAG -10. During MAGEX-80 in Korea, this detachment provided construction of 37 strongback tents, head facilities, generator sheds and various small construction projects. Utilities and TAFDS performed their functional rolls as required.

Utility Operations and Engineer Operations sections of WES-17 provided outstanding support

to III MAF for the MAPHIBLEX CPX 81-1 at Futenma MCAS Okinawa, Japan. This Detachment was tasked with construction of a double apron, six and three space entanglement and tasked with providing utilities support. The assigned personnel accomplished their mission in a highly professional manner.

On 15 December, the project involving the repair and replacement of a wooden bridge at Futenma was undertaken. An M-6 bridge was installed by 9th Engineers, so that the road could remain open until the completion of the bridge.

Marines from the construction section of WES-17 erected a non-standard bridge at Marine Corps Air Station, Futenma. The bridge was 32' long by 16' wide and was constructed with steel stringers. The bridge was completed 29 April 1981 and presented to the Air Station Commander, Colonel Jon R. Roberson, Commanding Officer of Marine wing Support Group-17, Colonel Moreau and the Commanding Officer of Wing Engineer Squadron-17, Lieutenant Colonel D.B. Littell.

VTOL project 1-81 an engineer training exercise conducted by WES-17, supported by MWHS-1 EAF and WTS-17, all units of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, was started on 1 October 1981. The main objective of this training exercise was to construct a VTOL Pad in the NTA for support of AV-8A Harrier A/C operations. The overall planning, earth work, construction and retrograde was completed 13 November 1981. WES-17 provided the personnel to erect the base camp, survey the site, conduct earth work/tree clearing ops, install the AM2 matting and paint the pad.

On the night of 20 July 1982, a UH1N helicopter from Marine Aircraft Group-36 was required to make an emergency landing in a cane field in the vicinity of Gushikawa, Okinawa. Members of the Squadron responded in a professional and efficient manor, making a prompt and safe recovery of the aircraft while minimizing any further damage to civilian property or the downed helicopter. The Squadron was commended for the expeditious and safe return of the helicopter by the Commanding Officer, Marine Aircraft Group-36.

WES-17 supported Exercise Valiant Blitz with detachments of construction, utilities and engineer equipment support on La Shima island. A water purification site was established in the Northern Training area of Okinawa. Helicopter Expedient Refueling System (HERS) sites were established at NTA and at Ie Shima island to refuel aircraft. WES-17 constructed an AV-8 pad at Ie Shima Island. WES-17 advance party departed for Yechon, Korea in support of MAG-15.

Throughout this period, WES-17 provided routine minor construction, heavy equipment and utilities support for 1st MAW operations on Okinawa. MAG-36 flight operations were supported by WES-17 TAFDS sites at Camp Schwab and MCAS (H) Futenma. The 1st MAW liaison at Kadena AFB, and 1st MAW organizations at MCAS (H) Futenma, were provided with both personnel and equipment for material handling. A horizontal construction project at Camp Lester, calling for the development of reclaimed land as athletic fields, was undertaken. During Exercises TEAM SPIRIT 84, JA/AAT 84-2, and FREEDOM BANNOR 84, WES-17 supported 1st MAW Operations in the Republic of Korea with construction, TAFDS, utilities, material handling, and expeditionary airfield assets. During Exercise TEAM SPIRIT 84, the WES-17 Expeditionary Airfield Section supported seventy- five aircraft arrested landings. Nineteen of these were in Pohang, and fifty-six were in Yechon.

MAG- 36 flight operations were supported by WES-17 TAFDS sites at Camp Schwab and MCAS (H) Futenma. The TAFDS site at Futenma was closed and removed in November with the opening of the Base Hydrant facility. The WES-17 Utilities, Heavy Equipment and TAFDS sections participated in Operation BEACHCREST in September on Ie Shima (also known as La Shima). A horizontal construction project at Camp Lester, calling for the development of reclaimed lands as athletic fields, was completed. WES-17 TAFDS and Utilities sections were in support of Operation VALIANT BLITZ 84 conducted in Muchuk, Korea. As part of the 1st MAW, WES-17 provided static and operational displays to demonstrate squadron missions and capabilities for visiting officers. The same demonstration was also conducted for Japanese Exchange Officers visiting 1st MAW. A site survey of VTOL 1-6 located on La Shima was conducted to recertify the field under present specifications. VTOL 1-5 located at Northern Training Area (NTA) required renovation in order to meet the specifications for annual recertification.

TEAM SPIRIT- 85 was supported in February and March with 6 Officers and 110 enlisted personnel. In conjunction with TEAM SPIRIT-85 a major excavation project was undertaken at Yechon, Korea. 36,600 cubic yards of earth were moved, resulting in a large, flat, compacted

area, complete with drainage system to be used as a base camp area for future TEAM SPIRIT exercises. In May, the Squadron stood an Inspector General Inspection. The Squadron received an outstanding rating in administration of the PFT, above average in Buildings and Grounds drill and Training Management and average in administration, Clothing and Equipment and Engineer Equipment. The arrival of a new Commanding Officer in June culminated the major events for this reporting period by providing the Squadron with new ideals and goals to be achieved in the next reporting period.

The reworking and recertification of VTOL 1-6 at Le Shima Island, and VTOL 1-7/LZ 14 at the Northern Training Area were completed. BEAR HUNT-85 was supported in November and December with 1 Officer and 32 Enlisted personnel. In November, 7 Officers and 103 Enlisted attended the week- long Field Skills Course held at Northern Training Area. Additionally, 1 Officer and 22 Enlisted conducted MOS training by setting up a base camp in support of the Field Skills training.

TEAM SPIRIT 86 was supported from January through April with 9 Officers and 119 Enlisted personnel. Individual training continued to focus on NBC defense, physical fitness, weapons requalification and MOS skills.

The Squadron was deactivated 15 June 1986. Marine Wing Support Squadron 172 (MWSS-172) was activated on 16 June 1986 at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, Okinawa, Japan immediately upon the deactivation of Wing Transportation Squadron 17, Wing Engineer Squadron 17, and Marine Air Base Squadron 36. MWSS 171 was formed from Det C at Iwakuni. This followed the Corps wide reorganization of having a composite Marine Wing Support Squadron (2 fixed wing and 2 rotary) per Marine Aircraft Wing. With minor changes, this would stay the peacetime reorganization and concept of operations until this year when CMC directed the force redesign that eliminates the MWSGs. To ensure that aviation ground support will be provided, each of the four Marine Wing Support Squadrons will fall directly under Marine Aircraft Groups 11, 13, 16 and 39 respectively.

CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF COMMANDING OFFICERS

MAJ W.B. NYE	1 AUG 1974 - 11AUG 1974
LTCOL L.R. ABRAHAM	13 AUG 1974 - 5 JUN 1975
MAJ W.B. NYE	6 JUN 1975 – 20 JUL 1975
MAJ D.A. WELLMA	21 JUL 1975 – 7 AUG 1975
MAJ J.T. MARSHALL	8 AUG 1975- 31 DEC 1975
MAJ J.R. MORGAN	1 JAN 1976 -30 JUN 1976
LTCOL D.E. BAKER	1 JUL 1976 – 1 SEP 1976
LTCOL C.L. MANWARRING	2 SEP 1976 – 31 DEC 1976
LTCOL H.R. PALMATEER	1 JAN 1977 - 28 JUL 1977
LTCOL E.M. CONDRA III	27 JUL 1977- 7 MAR 1978
MAJ B.L. SHAPIRO	8 MAR 78 – 29 JUN 1978
LTCOL W.A. RENNER	29 JUN 1978- 8 JUN 1979
CAPT M.D. BOYD	9 JUN 1979 - 17 JUL 1979
LTCOL J.C. HILL	18 JUL 1979 - 30 JUN 1980
CAPT G.F. LOR	1 JUL 1980- 28 AUG 1980
LTCOL D.B. LITTELL	29 AUG 1980 – 5 JUN 1981
MAJ C.J. MALONEY	1 JUL 1981 - 16 JUL 1981
LTCOL J.B. GOODY	17 JUL 1981 - 30 JUN 1982
LTCOL B.L. WILLIAMS	1 JUL 1982 -6 JUL 1983
LTCOL G.H. WALLS	7 JUL 1983 - 30 MAY 1984
MAJ J.L. GRAHAM	31 MAY 84 - 12 JUL 1984
LTCOL J.H. ROBERTUS	13 JUL 84 – 31 DEC 1984
LTCOL R.F. HOLIHAN	1 JAN 1985 - 15 JUN 1986

LINEAGE OF
WING ENGINEER SQUADRON 17
1974-1986
ACTIVATED 1 AUGUST 1974 AT IWAKUNI, JAPAN, AS WING ENGINEER SQUADRON 17, MARINE WING SUPPORT GROUP 17, 1ST MARINE AIRCRAFT WING, FLEET MARINE FORCE
RELOCATED DURING JUNE 1979 TO OKINAWA, JAPAN
PARTICIPATED IN NUMEROUS TRAINING EXERCISES DURING THE LATE 1970s AND INTO THE 1980s
DEACTIVATED 15 JUNE 1986
HONORS AWARDED
WING ENGINEER SQUADRON 17
NATIONAL DEFENSE SERVICE STREAMER

The great majority of the above information was derived from the Command Chronologies for WES 17. While not all of them were available, the 19 that Phil Martin obtained from the USMC University, were extremely helpful in providing the details. All of the Command Chronologies and other related documents can be viewed and downloaded from our **Marine Corps Engineer Association website**.
https://marcorengasn.org/download/command-chronology-maw/

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BRIGADIER GENERAL GEORGE H. WALLS, JR.

George H. Walls, Jr. graduated from West Chester State College in 1964 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Education. Commissioned as a second lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps in 1965, he served on active duty for over twenty-eight years until retiring at the rank of Brigadier General in 1993. During his military career, he commanded units at every rank and served in staff assignments in the United States and overseas. He last commanded the 8,000-person Second Force Service Support Group, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

Following retirement from active duty he was the Special Assistant to the Chancellor at North Carolina Central University from 1993 through 2000. From 2001 through 2004, he was the Chief Deputy Auditor for the State of North Carolina.

In 1975, he earned a Master of Arts degree in Education from North Carolina Central University. His other educational achievements include completion of the U. S. Marine Corps Command and Staff College in 1976 and The National War College in 1983. He is a National Association of Corporate Directors Board Leadership Fellow. Honors include an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters, Virginia Union University; the NAACP's Roy Wilkins Meritorious Service Award; and the Humanitarian Service Award from the Chapel of the Four Chaplains. In 2014, Black Enterprise Magazine named him one of its top 100 corporate directors. His military decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Navy Commendation Medal with Combat V, Navy Achievement Medal and various unit awards.

He formerly served as a director/trustee on the boards of Lincoln Electric Company, PNC Financial Services, Thomas Industries, the Marine Corps University Foundation and the West Chester University Foundation. Memberships include the Marine Corps Association, the Montford Point Marine Association and the Marine Corps League.

He and his wife, Portia have been married for forty-three years. They have three sons and three grandchildren.

ACTIVE-DUTY ASSIGNMENTS
*37TH OCC, QUANTICO, VA FEBRUARY-MAY 1965
*BOC, TBS, CLASS 5-65 QUANTICO, VA MAY-NOVEMBER 1965
*BEOC CAMP LEJEUNE NOVEMBER 1965-JANUARY 1966
*PLATOON LEADER, 3RD PLATOON, ALPHA COMPANY, 3RD CEB, 3RD MARDIV

(DANANG RVN TAOR) MARCH-SEPTEMBER 1966
*S-3A, 3RD CEB SEPTEMBER 1966-MARCH 1967 (DANANG/DONG HA TAOR)
*PLATOON LEADER/XO, ENGINEER EQUIPMENT COMPANY, 2D CEB, 2D MARDIV CLNC APRIL-JUNE 1967
*OIC, DEMO RANGE, CEIC, MCES, CLNC APRIL-DECEMBER 1967
*OSO/ASST. DIRECTOR FOR PERSONNEL PROCUREMENT,4TH MCD DECEMBER1967-NOVEMBER 1970
*CO, MARDET, USS FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT (CVA-42) DECEMBER 1970-AUGUST 1972
*MOI, NROTCU, NC CENTRAL UNIVERSITY AUGUST 1972-JULY 1975
*USMC COMMAND & STAFF COLLEGE AUGUST 1975-JUNE 1976
*DIRECTOR OF INSTRUCTION, MCES JULY 1976- JANUARY 1978
*CO, EEIC, MCES JANUARY 1978- FEBRUARY1979
*DIRECTOR OF INSTRUCTION, MCES FEBRUARY1979-JULY 1980
*MARINE LIAISON USAES, FORT BELVOIR, VA JULY 1980-JULY 1982
*DUINS, NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE JULY 1982-JUNE 1983
*CO, WES-17 1ST MAW JULY 1983-JUNE 1984
*MARINE AIDE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY (M&RA) JUNE 1984-JUNE 1987
*HEAD, ENGR/MT/GENERAL SUPPLY BRANCH, HQMC JUNE 1987-FEBRUARY 1988
*PROGRAM MANAGER, ENGINEER SYSTEMS, MCRDAC FEBRUARY 1988-JULY 1989
*CO/PNS, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA JULY 1989-JUNE 1991
*CG, 2D FSSG, CLNC JUNE 1991-JULY 1993
*RELAD OCTOBER 1, 1993

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COLONEL WILLIAM ARTHUR RENNER

Colonel William Arthur Renner entered the Marine Corps Reserve in Brooklyn, New York at the age of 17. He underwent recruit training during the summer of 1953. He was released from active duty and returned home to serve in VMFJ 132, USMCR at Floyd Bennet Airfield, Brooklyn, New York. Shortly thereafter he attended St. Lawrence University in Canton, New York and enrolled in the Platoon Leader Class at Quantico, Virginia. Upon graduation in 1958, he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant and spent nine months at Marine Corps Officers' Basic School in Quantico, Virginia.

The first assignment Colonel Renner, then Lieutenant Renner, had was to serve as Utilities Officer at the Marine Corps Air Base in Beaufort, South Carolina. He was then assigned to two years of sea duty as Combat Cargo Officer aboard the USS ACHERNAR and the USS MONROVIA from January 1962 until January 1964. During this time, he participated in the landings in CUBA and evacuation of dependents from the Panama Canal Zone.

Upon completing this tour of duty, Colonel Renner spent nine months at the Army Engineer Officers' Career Course at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. After graduation in September 1964, he was assigned to duty with the 1st Engineer Battalion at Camp Pendleton, California where he was Commanding Officer of Company "C". In June 1965, his company was attached to the 7th Marine Regiment and sent to Vietnam. It was there that Colonel Renner earned his first Bronze Star with Combat "V".

After his tour of duty in Vietnam, he was assigned the duties of Inspector-Instructor of Company "B", 4th Engineer Battalion, United States Marine Corps Reserve, Roanoke, Virginia.

In May of 1970, Colonel Renner returned to Vietnam and was assigned as the Executive Officer of the 3rd Military Police Battalion, Force Logistics Command. Upon deactivation of the Battalion, he completed his tour in the Logistics Section, Force Logistics Command. He returned to Quantico in June 1971 and attended the Command and Staff College. Upon graduation, he was assigned duties as the Commanding Officer of Marine Barracks, Naples, Italy where he remained until July 1975. His next assignment was at Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps as Joint Action Officer in the Joint Matters Branch, Installations and Logistics Department where he served for two years.

From August 1977 to June 1978, he attended the U.S. Army War College, in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Following that he served as the Commanding Officer of Wing Engineer Squadron

17, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, Iwakuni, Japan from June 1978 to June 1979. In July 1979, he assumed the duties of Assistant Chief of Staff G-4, HQ Fleet Marine Forces, Atlantic, Norfolk, Virginia where he served until June 1983. He was Chief of Staff, HQ Fleet Marine Force, Europe, London, England from July 1983 to July 1986. Colonel Renner assumed the duties of Executive Assistant to the Deputy Chief of Staff for Installations and Logistics, Headquarters, Marine Corps in July 1986 and retired from that position after thirty years of service on 30 June 1988.

He holds the Legion of Merit with gold star, Bronze Star with Combat V with gold star, Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, Presidential Unit Citation, Navy Unit Commendation, Meritorious Unit Citation, Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with 4 stars, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon with 3 stars, RVN MUC Gallantry Cross Color with Palm and Frame. RVN MUC Civil Actions with Palm and Frame, RVN Campaign Medal with Device.

Colonel Renner is married to the former Marlys Manning of Garden City, New York. The couple has three children: a son, William Arthur, Jr., and two daughters, Debbie and Lisa and eight grandchildren.

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LIEUTENANT COLONEL DAVID B. LITTELL

LtCol David B. Littell, is a native of Sussex County, New Jersey and a graduate of Clarkson College of Technology. LtCol Littell received his Bachelor of Science degree in 1965 and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps. LtCol Littell, received his commission through the Platoon Leaders Class Program. LtCol Littell received his master's degree from George Washington University through participation in the Advance Degree Program. LtCol Littell's professional service schools include The Basic School (1965); The Combat Engineer Officer Course (1966); Amphibious Warfare School (1970); Professional Military Comptrollers Course (1976); and Armed Forces Staff College (1980).

A chronological list of billets LtCol Littell, has filled since his commissioning are as Platoon Commander, 8th Engineer Battalion; an Assistant S-3, Platoon Commander, and Company Executive Officer with the 11th Engineer Battalion; a Company Executive Officer with the 3rd Shore Party Battalion; Staff Officer in the Force Engineer Office at FMFLant; Company Commander, Company A, 3d Engineer Battalion; A Recorder for an E8/E9 Promotion Board at HQMC; Maintenance Officer for MCRD San Diego; Deputy Comptroller for MCRD, San Diego; and as the Facilities Engineer for Camp H.M. Smith, Hawaii.

LtCol Littell's personal decorations include The Navy Commendation Medal; The Purple Heart; The Combat Action Ribbon and The Presidential Unit Citation.

Upon transfer from Wing Engineer Squadron-17, LtCol Littell reported to Headquarters, United States European Command, Stuttgart, Germany for duty with the Plans Division.

LtCol Littell is married to the former Myrna S.L. Miranda of Pasay, Metropolitan Manila, Republic of the Philippines.

Reprinted from the June 1981 WES-17 Change of Command program.

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COLONEL MICHAEL BOYD

Mike Boyd entered the Marine Corps through the Platoon Leaders' Course in 1972. He was commissioned in July 1974 after graduating with a BS in Aeronautical Engineering Technology from Western Michigan University. His first duty station was 29 Palms, where he was a platoon Commander and Company XO in A Company, 7th ESB. The company built the EAF, which stands to this day. Transferring to WES 17 in 1978, he held Platoon, Section, and Squadron Command as a 1stLt and Captain, deploying twice to the republic of Korea. He deployed twice to the Western Pacific with the 31st Marine Amphibious Unit as the S-4, spent two years as the 1st MAW G-4 Operations Officer, standing up the MWSS's in Westpac, and transitioned to the CENTCOM J-4 STRATMOB office, deploying several times to the Mideast. In 1990, he attended Marine Corps Command and Staff College, graduating distinguished.

He next served as the 24th MEU S-4, notably providing support to assist the Kurds in Operation Provide Comfort in Northern Iraq. Promoted to LtCol, he served two years as the Commander, First LSB, and then as the Commander, Camp Fuji, after which he returned to Washington, DC, where he was

the Inspector for the Inspector General Marine Corps. In 2001, he formed the Engineer and EOD Advocacy office at HQMC, retiring in 2004 as a Colonel and then continuing in the Deputy Advocate for the next 14 years, retiring from Marine Corps service in December 2017.
He earned the Legion of Merit, 2nd Award, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Navy Meritorious Service Medal, 4th Award, and Navy Commendation Medal as well as the Civilian Meritorious Achievement Medal.

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As a Captain, I served in WES 17 in '78 as the Wing Utilities Officer. CO was LtCol Renner and XO was Major Kiriakopoulos. It was later in that tour that the USMC moved the MWSG 17 HQs and WES 17 to Okinawa. 16 April 1979, they created a Det "C", WES 17 as the unit that stayed in Iwakuni to operate the airfield and support the aviation detachments that worked from there. I was the Det XO. During the subsequent deactivation of the Wing Engineer Squadrons, Det C became MWSS 171. The concept was that each Wing would have four Marine Wing Support Squadrons, two to support fixed wing and two to support rotary wing; all of them task organized from the original four squadrons: Headquarters and Ground Maintenance; Marine Air Base Squadron; Wing Transportation Squadron, and Marine Engineer Squadron. We went from functional areas being consolidated in one unit to how they would be deployed i.e., decentralized to support the Marine Air Groups.

Col Ken Frantz; Acting CO, WES 17, 1978

A young Capt, Ken Frantz and Lt. Mike Boyd, engineer officers in WES 17

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I served in WES-17 in 1976-77 as a Captain. I was the Operations Officer. CO was Lt Col Palmateer, an aviator, and XO was Major Rex Moody, an engineer.
My major memory is that I served as OIC of the MWSG-17 Detachment that was responsible for the Base Camp and the provision of engineer, motor transport, fuel, crash and fire rescue and EAF services during the construction of the K-58 airbase at Yechon, South Korea. I think we were there for about 6 weeks during the winter months. Brrr-it was cold. The major effort was the installation of Fresnel Lens and landing gear that had to be certified by the FAA. My Ops Chief was MSgt Butts. My first real experience eating Kimchi and drinking who knows what made in South Korea. USAF flew majority of equipment and troops in and MWSG-17 had a C-117 (DC-3) that flew weekly logistics flights. Pilot was LtCol Tom McDonald with a variety of different co-pilots. He flew in lead elements (me, Ops Chief and some others), provided weekly mail run and repair parts resupply, and flew out last element (me, OPS Chief and some others). We made a number of advance trips by C-117 to do reconnaissance, usually staying at the USAF Base in Taegu, South Korea.

Thanks for giving me the opportunity to rehash this memory, I looked for pictures, sure I have some, but couldn't locate any.
Col. Hank Rudge

The actual C-117D aircraft Col Rudge mentions in his comments above.

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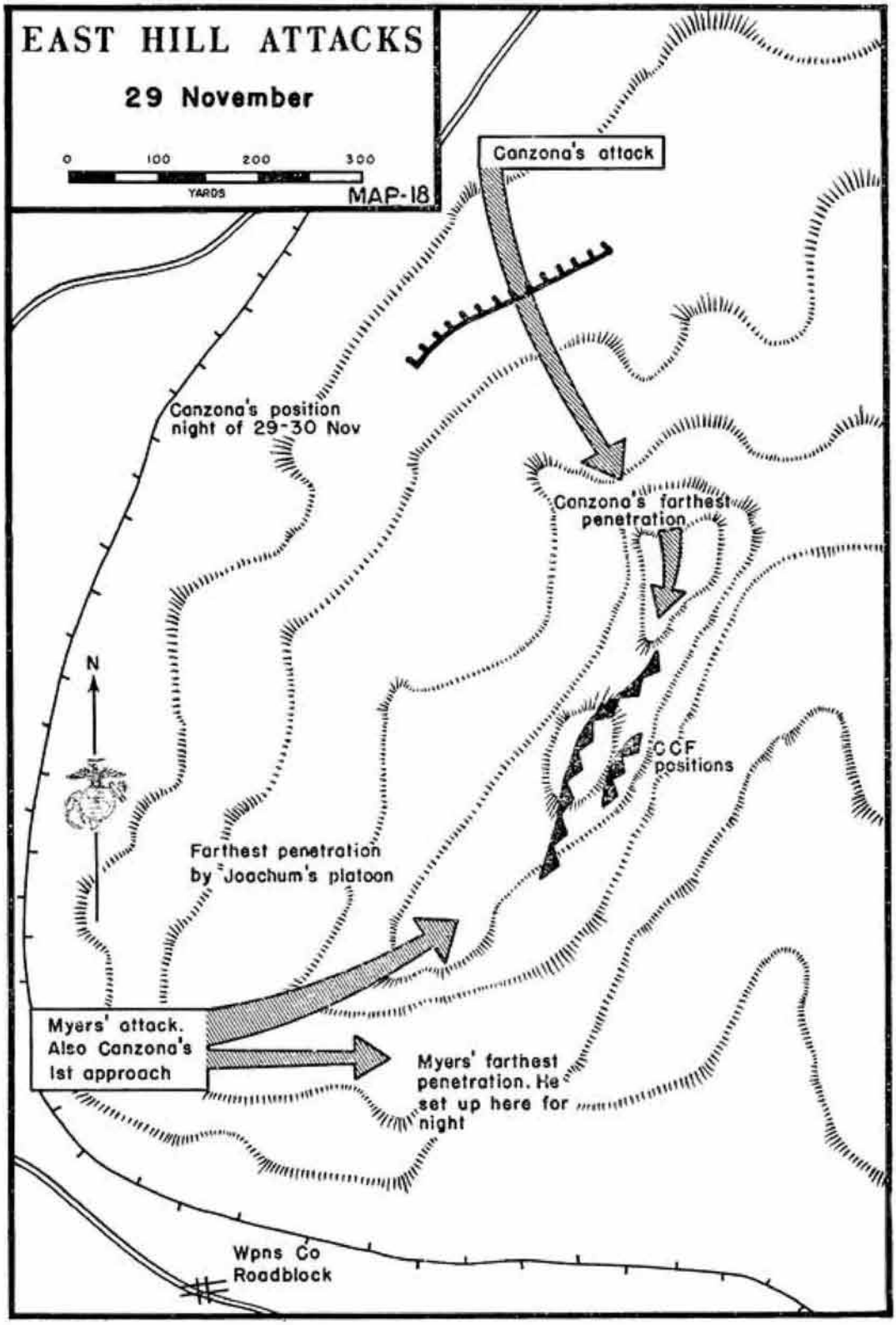
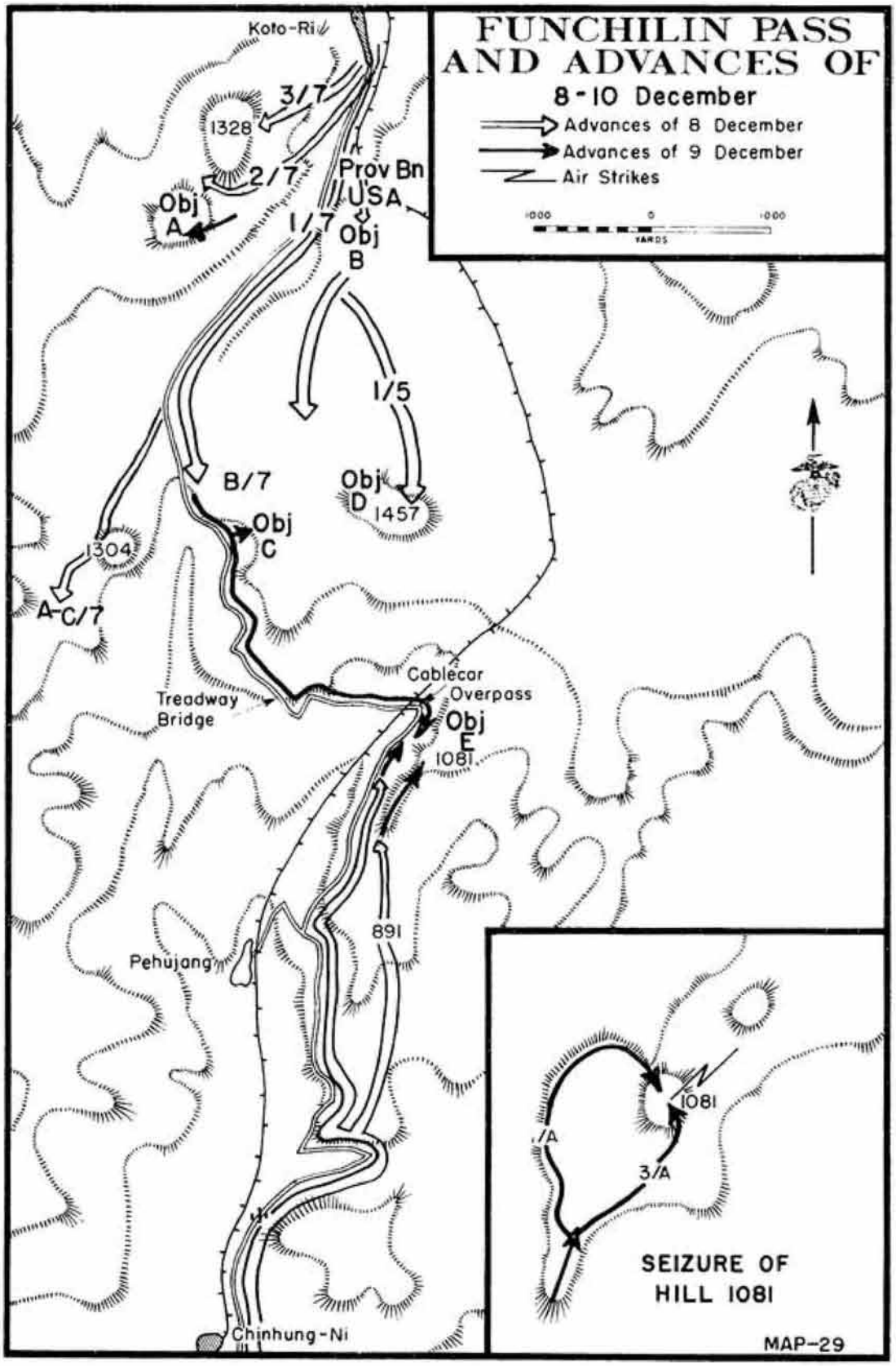
Our sincere appreciation to all who provided input to this article! Semper Fidelis!!



U.S. Marine Corps Historical Division CHOSIN MAP 18 (koreanwar.org/html/maps-marines.html



U.S. Marine Corps Historical Division CHOSIN MAP 29 (koreanwar.org/html/maps-marines.html