

# WONJU TRUO CHINYONG

## AN EPIC OF REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM ACTION IN KOREA

By

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NO OBJECTION TO PUBLICATION ON GROUNDS OF  
MILITARY SECURITY

16 MAY 1951 12

### Foreword

OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

This is a story of the Infantry and its supporting ~~brothers-in-arms~~ in Korea. While it is a story of one Infantry regiment, its experiences have been shared by the many regiments that have fought on this rugged peninsula in actions as ferocious and desperate as any in the annals of history. It is the story of a team, a fighting team, for it is the team that wins or loses in battle. It is not a story of the exploits of Bill or Jim, but it recognizes with a deep sense of humility that were it not for these individual heroes there would be no team.

### I.

For the fourth time in two weeks the 23rd Regimental Combat Team had been ordered to commence that most difficult of all military operations, a withdrawal. Difficult not only because of the perfect coordination and split second timing required to break contact with the enemy and to move forty-five hundred men and six hundred vehicles safely over narrow, winding mountain roads, but more difficult to inspire confidence and understanding that the obvious reversal in the fortunes of battle was only momentary. The plan was being executed according to schedule. There was no confusion as the vehicles were driven from the solidly frozen rice paddies to take their place in the slow moving column.

Past the engineers standing by their prepared demolitions waiting for the signal to blow bridges and culverts, over the high pass guarded by the covering battalion of its sister regiment, the 38th Infantry, the head of the column moved over the hard-packed mid-January snow and on through the mountain defiles. First, the attached artillery battalion, the 37th, displacing to the rear to cover the retrograde movement. Then, the Infantry on foot on each side of the narrow road with their supporting weapons in vehicles moving down the center.

The leading battalion wore the Big Indian Head of the Second-to-None Division, and some few wore the 23rd Infantry crest. As they approached it was noticeable that there was something just a bit strange about the men. Outwardly, their uniforms and equipment were strictly GI, but they acted just a little differently and spoke a different language. This was the attached French Battalion - professional soldiers of the highest caliber, colorful, and excellent fighters. Next came the Third Battalion, then Heavy Mortar Company, Medical Company, Headquarters Company and Command Group. A short interval, then the Second Battalion and the attached Ranger Company in rear guard formation. As the rear point marched into the pass, it stopped to protect the engineers who prepared to blow the first of the bridges to prevent pursuit. But this proved unnecessary - there wasn't any enemy immediately capable of pursuing. For this was the second withdrawal from Wonju and the enemy was too busy licking his wounds to intervene.

The soldiers, heavily laden, dog tired, dirty, unshaven, and some limping with minor cases of frost bite, moved slowly up the steep grade. Jibes and curses passed up and down the company columns as unfortunates slid and

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fell on the icy road, or some weary driver passed too close to the foot-sloggers. This is the Infantry in all its unglamorous glory, and as good an Infantry as the United States has ever known. Some few were veterans of the desperate steaming days of August along the Naktong when they had gulped another salt tablet before climbing to the crest of the next ridge. Many still had vivid memories of the narrow escape from Kunu-ri when they were still unaccustomed to their shoe-pacs and heavy parkas, and didn't know just what to make of the new Chinese enemy's style of fighting. Some few had joined just prior to the ordeals of the past ten days. Hardened, combat-wise and proud - infinitely proud of their recent accomplishments. Morale - theirs was superb - the real, unadulterated morale. They were magnificent!

Only two weeks before they had battered their way up the tortuous mountain road from Hoengsong to Hongchon to destroy a North Korean division which had blocked the withdrawal route of elements of five South Korean (R.A.) divisions. For this they had been cited by the Korean government. Then, with other elements of the 2nd Division they had fallen back to defend Wonju. But because of open flanks, and enemy infiltration to the east which required diversion of the 9th Infantry Regiment and the First Battalion and Tank Company of the 23rd Regiment, a withdrawal to more defensible ground south of Wonju had been ordered after a brief but sharp battle in the ruined town on January 7th.

Then came the long expected order to hold, and with it the order to counter-attack towards Wonju. In three days of driving wet snow followed by three days of sub-zero weather with temperatures as low as -30°F, the Second Battalion and French Battalion of the 23rd Infantry Regiment and the Second Battalion of the 38th Regiment, fought their way desperately back toward Wonju, as the 9th Regiment sent Armored-Infantry patrols back up the road from Chechon. Positions were

finally established on the high ground just south of the town, and the Infantry in hand-to-hand bayonet fighting, with superb artillery and air support beat to a pulp the enemy that was opposing it, destroying completely at least two North Korean divisions. The ordeals of that battle in the terrible cold and against overwhelming odds were such as U.S. soldiers have seldom had to face, and they had truly earned the commendations of the Army Commander. From the action at Wonju the United Nations line held and stabilized, preparing the stage for the initiation of the offensive to follow shortly.

(Sketch Map I - General Map of the Front Lines)

Having accomplished the impossible, the Regiment was now withdrawing. But why? On the Second Division's east flank there had been a deep penetration through the rugged mountains east of Chechon. This enemy pocket had to be neutralized or destroyed. Until this was accomplished it was desirable to fall back about ten miles in the Wonju salient and straighten out the line from the IX Corps flank near Yoju. Tired men contemplated expectantly the meager comforts of Mokye-dong where the Regiment was to go in reserve, and where the kitchens waited with hot meals in the bivouac areas staked out by the advance quartering parties. Some few units might even find shelter from the cold in the dubious luxury of mud and straw shacks in abandoned villages. But, disappointment for some was then in the making.

A few miles down the road the Assistant Division Commander with map in hand waited for the Regimental Commander. Flagging him over to the side of the road, in his sympathetic and understanding way the general asked how things were going and offered a few words of encouragement. Then, pointing out on his map, he explained, "There's been a slight change in plans."

You are assigned responsibility for this sector to the west of the road and over to the Han River. You will hold it with two battalions, the other two will continue on to Division Reserve in accordance with original instructions.

## II.

In compliance with these orders the Third Battalion was diverted to the west of the road to occupy its new sector. The First Battalion which had now been released from its attachment to the 9th Infantry was already scrambling over a narrow trail along the north bank of the Han River to positions which would tie in with the flank of the IX Corps and extend eastward to the Third Battalion. Each battalion was responsible for about five miles of extremely rugged terrain absolutely devoid of lateral and access roads, and where little could be done in the way of defense except to establish platoon strong points on the mountain peaks and crests which dominated probable routes of enemy advance. The days that followed witnessed frantic efforts at road construction supplemented by Division engineers and participated in by all who were not engaged in combat patrols, improvement of defensive positions and training. Meanwhile, supply was a major problem but superhuman efforts resulted in the feeding of two hot meals a day and stocking of additional ammunition at forward positions. Defensive fires were registered and preparations were made to withstand an enemy onslaught - but, the enemy failed to materialize.

The French and Second Battalion had continued on to Division reserve positions near Hokyong-dong. Their rest was a short one. For after one night in bivouac the French were directed to initiate long range motorized patrols in front of the Division position. The Second Battalion at the same time

moved eastward to support the 9th Infantry in its efforts to reduce the threat to Chechon in conjunction with elements of the 7th Division then moving to the I Corps front.

As the situation east of Chechon was brought under control and the enemy failed to push his offensive, friendly patrolling gathered momentum. A company of the French was placed in an advanced patrol base at Munmang-ni and the remainder of the battalion, released to Regimental control, moved to positions on the right of the Third Battalion, as the 38th and 9th Infantry Regiments shifted to the east. From the advanced base the French searched out and dispersed a small enemy group near the little mountain village of Yultong. This was the only enemy contact for several days. French patrols cautiously made their way back almost into Konju. At the same time 9th Infantry tank-motorized columns driving against light resistance fought back along the rugged Chechon Road into the outskirts of Konju. The Second Battalion reverted to Regimental control on January 25th and moved forward to Munmang-ni, relieving the French company in its advanced position.

Patrolling to the west and north was complicated by adversities of the weather. An unseasonal thaw put a stop to the driving of light vehicles across the Han and Som rivers. Snow flurries and haze hindered aerial observation. Sand bagged fords were washed away as ice broke up. Nevertheless, patrols ranged out further and further and as they did, took more and more "calculated risks". Motorized patrols of reinforced platoon to company size often negotiated round trips of fifty to a hundred miles over narrow roads and trails through extremely rough country abundant with possible sites for enemy ambush. To accomplish the patrol missions in allocated time it was seldom possible to

proceed with desirable caution, and the mental process of "sweating out" their return became more and more nerve wracking.

The United Nations counter offensive commenced in the west on January 22nd. As the I Corps moved forward the IX Corps prepared to move abreast. To protect the flank of the IX Corps and to reconnoiter for the advance of the I Corps, patrol action was intensified. A particular requirement was the location of the Chinese Forty-Second Army. On the 28th of January a motorized patrol from the Third Battalion moving over a previously reconnoitered road was ambushed at Anchang-ni by an undetermined force. Company F from the Second Battalion's advanced base immediately moved out and rescued the beleaguered patrol and all but one of its vehicles. This was the first enemy contact in more than a week.

The same day a reinforced platoon from the First Battalion was sent on a particularly dangerous patrol to the "Twin Tunnels" between Sinchong and Chip-yong-ni -- twenty miles from the nearest friendly unit, and more than forty road miles from its base. Weakened bridges restricted the patrol to light transportation - jeeps and weapons carriers, and precluded the use of armor. A liaison plane covered the patrol. Chinese forces were believed to be in the vicinity and prepared to advance down the Han River valley between the IX and I Corps. To the surprise of higher headquarters the patrol which had conducted its mission with great skill and thoroughness returned late in the day with no enemy contact.

The First Battalion was ordered to repeat the performance the following day. It was recognized that a repetition would be extremely hazardous, so as a token of compensation a patrol from the adjacent corps was ordered to augment

the force. A thaw prevented the neighboring patrol from bringing its vehicles across the river, nevertheless the riflemen crossed on the thin ice and were transported in additional light vehicles provided by the 23rd Regiment.

All went well as on the preceding day until the liaison pilot observed suspicious signs and some movement in the objective area. He was unable to communicate with the patrol by radio. (It later developed that the officer accompanying the patrol with the counterpart radio had deviated from the main body of the patrol to explore a side road. He and his driver have not since been accounted for.) The patrol took all usual precautions, and leaving their vehicles short of the objective area at about one o'clock in the afternoon, proceeded on foot to the first of the tunnels. An enemy force, entrenched and skillfully camouflaged about a third of the way up Hill 453 (meters) allowed the patrol to pass up the road, then opened fire cutting off the patrol from its vehicles. Another enemy force appeared from the opposite side of the tunnel. The patrol leader with great presence of mind led his small group rapidly up the snow covered slope to the top of the hill over the first tunnel and deployed in a perimeter defense to make his last stand. Again using keen judgement he ~~directed his force to destroy the stranded vehicles by fire from their weapons so that the .50 caliber machine guns, other equipment and ammunition might not be captured by the enemy and used against them.~~ The enemy force was estimated by the air observer to be about two companies — possibly more.

Upon receiving the report from the liaison pilot, the Regimental Command first requested from Division, liaison planes to drop ammunition and medical supplies to the cut-off patrol, and air support to assist it. He next set

about organizing a rescue force. While there was no reasonable limit to the size force that he might have sent, there was a definite limit to the number of light vehicles that could negotiate the nearly demolished bridge at Munmang-ni to transport this force. By rounding up all available jeeps and wcapc carriers in the vicinity, F (Fox) Company, reinforced, hurriedly was sent on its second rescue mission within two days.

Meanwhile, the liaison plane remained over the cut-off patrol and directed several air strikes against the enemy besieging it.

The Fighting Foxes, who had earned this sobriquet in their battle in the Taegu "Bowling Alley", on this occasion fought one of the most brilliant small unit actions in the Korean campaign. Reaching the scene of action at dusk and skillfully employing their supporting mortars and recoilless cannon, they battled their way completely over the top of Hill 453 in the dark, routing the enemy entrenched there and those that were closing in on the desperately situated patrol. By midnight <sup>29</sup> they had reached the survivors of the patrol. Then, still in the dark they repeatedly climbed up and down the steep hill on which the patrol had made its stand to carry down the thirty-odd wounded and to assist the survivors in making their way to the transportation. The patrol's vehicles were beyond salvage. For his gallant leadership Capt. Tyrell, commanding F Company, was appropriately decorated. In addition, the grateful survivors presented him with a banner inscribed "When in peril, send for Tyrell".

The cut-off patrol had itself made a brilliant stand against overwhelming attempts to annihilate it and had made the enemy pay dearly for his ambush. Rescued and rescuers arrived at Munmang-ni at daylight on January 30th to find the Regiment on the move.

### III.

Concurrently with news of the ambushing of the patrol, orders were received to move two battalions forward to a line along the main road from Yoju to Munmang-ni to counter a possible attack down the Han valley. This movement, initiated at noon on the 29th of January, was to be completed by six P.M. of the 30th, and one battalion was to be across the Som river by dark of the 29th. The Third Battalion moved initially, the men floundering down from positions on the rough, snow-covered mountains, and carrying heavy loads of extra ammunition and supplies that had been stocked for defensive action. The French battalion followed. Extra transportation was not available and again the riflemen walked. Artillery commenced displacing forward. Late in the afternoon, <sup>29</sup> a ford, barely passable, was located across the Som river, and the Third Battalion crossed on schedule.

During the night <sup>29</sup> a change in orders was received: The Regiment with two of its battalions, reinforced by artillery was to move immediately to the "Two Tunnels" to find and destroy the enemy there and to occupy the high ground; one battalion was to defend the Yoju-Munmang-ni road; and the remaining battalion, the Second, was to remain under Division control at Munmang-ni. The Third and French battalions were directed to move by a combination of foot and motor columns to an assembly area at Chongam-ni. Advanced Regimental command group, Mortar, and Medical Companies, and attached "B" Battery, 82nd AAA, joined the column. The First Battalion moved its principal force to Korun-ni, and was followed by the 37th FA Battalion.

Except for the leading elements in advance guard formation, all units

moved over the same road, at the same time, and with little regard to the conventionalities of road space and march order, but with a minimum of confusion. This was due to the speed of movement required, the lack of transportation and inadequacy of turn-around space for shuttling the foot troops on the narrow, snow-covered, mountain road.

<sup>30</sup> The attack force assembled in a defensive perimeter late in the afternoon of January 30th, and without incident. The artillery went into position at Korun-ni to support the initial phases of the attack. The First Battalion took up defensive formations extending from the artillery position through the most critical passes along the mountain road back toward Munmang-ni. The leading platoon of the Regimental Tank Company moving by forced march from Chechon through Wonju, arrived at the assembly area at midnight and was a most welcome addition for participation in the action to follow. Division attached the 2nd Reconnaissance Company to assist in keeping the road free of enemy. Regimental Command Post (rear) was left at Munmang-ni in charge of the Executive Officer with the primary responsibility of pushing supplies and reinforcing units forward. Service Company remained near Yokye-dong and supply points. Orders for the attack were issued during the night. There was no incident during the darkness, and aerial reconnaissance during the day had revealed no activity in the objective area or its vicinity.

(Sketch II - Twin Tunnels Area)

<sup>31</sup> at first light, and after a hot breakfast, the approach march was begun. The French battalion in advance guard formation, with tanks, flack wagons and combat vehicles marched a few miles up the narrow, rough road, to a trail which led to the high ridges west of the objective. The Third Battalion moved

up a stream bed leading to the hills east of the target area. Then, with proper coordination between the two forces, each commenced the tiresome climbing and ridge-running that was so characteristic of the Korean campaigns. Characteristic, too, was the total absence of enemy both from ground and air observation. But our troops had learned — learned months ago — that the enemy seldom appeared in daylight in conventional formations and positions where he would be at the mercy of our artillery and air, but that unless he had a tremendous preponderance of force, he would pull back and remain hidden until darkness, or until we walked into a trap. We weren't walking into traps these days.

That was why there were no grumbles from the men when they were ordered to the painful task of climbing the slippery, snow-covered hills, rather than to march up the peaceful looking road. That was why many were willing to forego a can of rations that they might load themselves down with all the cartridges and grenades that they could possibly carry. That was why so thought was given to leaving behind coats and blankets though they knew it meant a bitter cold night — at least, it was insurance against survival if not against temporary misery. On this occasion all realized that it was inconceivable that they could poke their necks out twenty miles beyond friendly units into the area of the recent ambush without provoking a violent reaction. The enemy would materialize sooner or later — the hope of all was that he would be discovered in daylight.

All day <sup>31</sup> the slow advance continued, to occupy one hill, leave a force <sup>C JV</sup> to support the advance to the next, then bring up the tail and move the head further toward the objective. As expected, the progress of the French over

the far more difficult terrain to the west including the climb up Hill 453 (meters), was slower than that of the Third Battalion. It was too risky for each force to turn the Third to the west to the objective until Hill 453 was occupied by the French. Preparations for mutual support in event of surprise had to be maintained. The temptation to barge ahead was tremendous. The tanks and heavy weapons along the road were prepared to support in a flash, as was the artillery now displacing forward.

Meanwhile, to create a diversion and to screen the east flank of the attacking force, the Second Battalion had dispatched a motorized patrol from Munzang-ni up the road along the railroad track via Anchang-ni and Sokkong-ni. This mission was accomplished successfully and with negative enemy activity. Having made visual contact with the Third Battalion by mid-afternoon the Second Battalion patrol proceeded on its return to Munzang-ni.

Late in the afternoon the objective area was outflanked by both attacking battalions, and the order was given to converge. <sup>31</sup> No enemy! At five P.M. <sup>31</sup> preparations were made for the occupation and defense of the "Tunnels Area", prior to continuing the advance the following day to find and destroy the enemy.

The terrain was particularly inconvenient for a proper defense by such a small force -- about 1500 infantry. Hill 453 in the French sector dominated the entire position and had to be held by at least a company, although that unit would be isolated. North of Hill 453 to Hill 279 was a valley which could only be held by fire. The Third Battalion's ground was somewhat less broken up but the frontage necessary to accommodate the terrain was too great. There was no space off the road that was useable for artillery emplacements, and further, even in the over extended positions chosen, the circumference was

such that artillery placed within the perimeter, because of extreme short range, could not fire defensive fires. <sup>about 2 miles south of the main perimeter was assigned</sup> A separate perimeter and all vehicles not <sup>the artillery</sup> immediately required were parked there, using the drivers to augment close defense of the artillery position.

On previous occasions this artillery battalion had defended itself with great credit and without close infantry support and was not unduly concerned with this arrangement. <sup>from the canyon, and fire from</sup> Huzzle blasts, flack wagons and automatic weapons could take care of any enemy appearing on the nearby ridges, and flame throwers and grenades were ready at each dug in gun emplacement for any enemy that tried to over-run the position. The artillery fired in its defensive fires of the main perimeter; the heavy mortars ranged in to protect the artillery. Tank-flack wagon road blocks were established at each perimeter. Then, not too satisfied with the hasty defenses and over-extended position, the force settled down to a night of vigilance prior to a continuation of the attack.

At 4:30 in the morning (February 1st), the manure hit the fan. Heavy firing broke out at the road block on the northern extremity of the perimeter between the French 3rd Company and L Company. A few minutes later, the tank and the twin-40 millimeter flack wagon came limping back from the road block, both partially disabled by 2.46 inch bazookas that had also wounded some of the crew members. The tank commander reported that a long column of enemy had marched right up the road to the block, that they had been fired on by both of our armored vehicles inflicting heavy casualties, that the enemy had been deployed on each side of the road immediately on being fired upon and had attacked the armored vehicles with bazookas and grenades.

By now the firing had shifted to the east of the road against L Company's

position. Illuminating shells from mortars and illuminating grenades threw an eerie light into the morning darkness as artillery and mortar forward observers called in defensive fires. Barrages came down with a crash and just where they were wanted. The impact stunned the attackers and made them change their bold assault tactics. There was a lull as the enemy pulled back to reorganize. Flares continued to light up the scene and small arms kept on crackling as harrassing artillery and mortar shells forced the enemy infantry to seek better cover.

Meanwhile Regimental Advanced Command group consisting of the Regimental Commander, S-2 (Intelligence), and S-3 (Operations) was trying to analyze the situation and dope out the enemy's intentions. It was unusual for the enemy to attack two hours before daylight. The consensus was that he had sufficient force to continue the attack during the day, that he had had to gather an attacking force in a hurry during the night and that he was desperate to deny to us a vital area. This analysis was substantiated at the end of the day when two prisoners were taken and an enemy attack order was recovered from a dead officer. We were being attacked by the Chinese 125th Division of the 42nd Army, approximate strength of 8,000, which had been concentrating for offensive action in the Chipyeong area. During the day we were to be hit by the 373rd Chinese Regiment on the west side of the perimeter, the 374th on the east and elements of the 375th on the north. The 374th Regiment and divisional units were located at Sanggosong two miles north of our position and had advanced South along the ridge leading into L Company. The other regiments had come from Hajin, across the Hukchon River west of Chipyeong, with the 373rd moving cross country to attack us from the high ground south and west of our position, and the 375th, the first to engage us, marching

down the road from Chipyong.

At six in the morning <sup>1st</sup> the enemy renewed his attack, this time principally against the French company on the dominating Hill 453. For several hours the

Chinese continued to attack on a narrow front down the ridge leading from Hill

543 to Hill 453. Artillery and mortar defensive fires rose to a crescendo

and took a terrific toll of this enemy force. Despite his casualties, wave

after wave of fanatical Chinese continued to surge on during the next three

hours to <sup>attempt to</sup> seize the dominating ground. The gallant French 1st Company was

finally engaged in hand to hand fighting and suffered heavy casualties.

Ammunition was running low and had there been carriers available for resupply

they would have required at least two hours to make the top of the Hill.

With their position becoming almost untenable, the desperate French counter

attacked with the bayonet. The Chinese, with victory almost within their

grasp — a victory which had they attained would have jeopardized our entire

position — pulled back. While fighting continued throughout the day at this

point, it did not again become a serious threat.

Meanwhile daylight <sup>1st</sup> had come and portended bad weather for air support.

An early morning haze had become a heavy black overcast with low visibility.

Shortly after daylight <sup>1st</sup> an armored patrol of the 2nd Reconnaissance Company

working north from Korun-ni reported an enemy force had cut the road between

the artillery position and the First Battalion, and that the patrol was engaged

with the enemy. The Commander, First Battalion was directed to send a company

forward to open the road, and to be prepared to move the rest of the battalion

forward on order. Company B started up the road almost immediately. It dis-

persed the enemy along the road with little difficulty, but reported enemy

The ground recognized the key to our entire position.

along the ridges east of the artillery position. While B Company was needed desperately at the main battle position, the defense of the Artillery was a more pressing requirement. Company B dug in around the artillery where an enemy attack developed early in the <sup>1st</sup> morning. Artillery and infantry supporting weapons blasted this enemy force off the ridges. Strangely, the enemy did not again attempt to over-run our artillery which was usually priority one in Red tactics. However, as the threat was always present, Company B was ordered to remain with the artillery and under command of the Artillery Battalion Commander.

The enemy commenced his mortar fire shortly after daylight but while we suffered some casualties from this weapon during the day, it never attained serious proportions as it developed later that the enemy had not had time to bring up more than a few rounds of ammo for each mortar. Throughout the day's battle it appeared that the enemy had full confidence in his ability to exterminate us with his overwhelming mass and small arms and automatic weapons, a division against two understrength battalions. With our inability to employ air, and our rapidly diminishing ammunition as a result of the tremendous fire required to stop his human sea attacks, he almost succeeded. We prayed for a break in the weather and we screamed to Rear CP to expedite ammo re-supply. Supply points were still at Chechon and though all vehicles available had gone for supplies the distance was great and the roads nearly impossible.

The enemy having failed to dislodge us from Hill 453, concentrated his attack at our weak point in the valley north of 453 and between the French 1st and 2nd Companies. Time and again throughout the day his leading waves reached the little group of destroyed houses within our perimeter. The nucleus of defenders from the French Heavy Weapons Company continued to beat him back

\* He died in my arms while I was talking to him - a very fine and brave legionnaire - Capt Le Maître) I but in the process their <sup>commander</sup> was killed and they suffered heavily.

Fortunately, the remainder of the Regimental Tank Company with nine more tanks, raising our total to fourteen, arrived during the morning. A platoon was placed in the hot spot valley and a break through was prevented.

Meanwhile the enemy had redeveloped his attack against the Third Battalion on the east. Continuing to press hard against L Company, he concentrated the bulk of his strength against I Company. While he could attack L Company and the left of I Company from superior ground, for some foolhardy reason he preferred to push his rain attacks throughout the day straight up the steep ridge into I Company's center. Company I, similarly to the French on Hill 453, repulsed wave after wave, stacking up dead like cordwood in the front of their position and the steep slopes leading to it. Company K came in for its share of action, too, receiving during the day the bulk of the enemy's mortar fire.

Just before noon the <sup>1st</sup> Division Commander, now fully appreciative of our situation, released the remainder of the First Battalion and the Second Battalion to Regimental control. He also confirmed priority of air support and arrangements for aerial resupply, providing the weather cleared sufficiently. The First Battalion gathered in its far-flung outposts and hit the road with all possible speed about two in the afternoon, but due to shortage of <sup>1st</sup> transportation was relegated to marching on foot. The Second Battalion and Headquarters Company <sup>were to</sup> ~~move~~ move out by shuttling as soon as possible but could not be expected to reach the scene until night-fall. However, one reinforced company, E, was to be sent up <sup>1st</sup> immediately. There had been no further incidents along the road. The 9th Infantry Regiment was ordered to hold Wonju and to relieve our Second and First Battalions on the Yoju-Munmang-ni road and to be prepared to counter attack for our relief, if necessary.

Toward noon the attack against the French and Third Battalions intensified. The French 3rd Company was driven from its position leaving L Company's left flank exposed. The enemy gaining possession of this ridge directed a murderous machine gun fire into the interior of our position hitting our aid station, command post and vehicles. The French tried repeatedly to regain the height but were driven back with heavy losses. The entire perimeter was furiously engaged. Neither reinforcements nor a shift of forces was possible to aid the hard pressed French. Every driver, clerk, cook and <sup>mechanic</sup> ~~machines~~ had long been committed to the battle.

A final effort was made to restore the position. A twin-40 flack wagon, the sweetest weapon possible for vacuum cleaning a ridge, and two tanks were put into position. All available mortars and artillery were directed to concentrate on the hill. After the enemy had been given ten minutes of this treatment the French, with bayonets fixed, started on the run up the hill, screaming like mad men. Again the enemy, with victory just within his grasp, turned and ran. The French and the mortar fire pursued. When the French regained the hill there were hundreds of dead enemy piled up to testify to the accuracy of the tremendous concentration of fire placed against them.

At two in the afternoon the French Second Company was being pushed from its position by enemy who had massed on the high ground dominating it. Company I on the other side was taking terrific punishment. One platoon had only twelve men left and they had been fighting with grenades and bayonets for what seemed an eternity trying desperately to hang on to the razor backed ridge. Enemy had gotten on the high ground between I and L Companies and were again pouring fire into the center of the perimeter. The Third Battalion Commander had skillfully shifted K and L Companies as much as he dared to contract his

over extended position and to support hard pressed I Company. Furious firing continued on Hill 453. Ammunition was running low and our casualties were piling up. At three o'clock it looked like we were going to cave in in the center of both battalions. We had already designated an inner perimeter over the east tunnel to which we would fall back and defend if necessary, although it would have been a last stand — nothing more. The crisis had arrived! Then, just like a Hollywood battle, the sun broke through!

Fighter aircraft, waiting on nearby strips, were soon over our position. Through the first hole in the clouds came a flight of four Marine Corsairs, loaded for the kill. They were directed to the enemy attacking I Company by our Tactical Air Control Party, now in its element for the first time that day. Four times the flight circled the target, so closely engaged were friendly and enemy forces that they had to be certain of the situation, then climbing for the dive they came in. They didn't waste one round! First, 500 pound bombs, daisy cutters, right into the middle of the closely packed Chinese who went up in pieces; next, back to work with rockets — "gook-goosers", our Infantry facetiously called them, then, with the .50 calibers against the now disintegrating enemy. What beautiful air support! The next flight coming in before the Marines had barely started, was laid on the Chinese in front of the center of the French position. This mass of Commies on the bare ridge went down like prairie grass in a wind storm. The pressure was immediately relaxed on the defenders as the enemy tried to rally or to dig in. Flight after flight came in up to a total of twenty-four and what was left of the enemy began to "bug out".

He didn't have a chance of getting away, though. Tanks dashed up the road to cut him off as he tried to escape. Quad-50's\* — the "meat choppers"

\* (M-16 AAA vehicles with four .50 caliber machine guns)

of the entire 23rd Infantry Regiment with the attached French Battalion, less B Company with the 37th Field Artillery Battalion, plus B Battery, 82nd AAA and the 2nd Reconnaissance Company. Although units were at approximately 75 percent strength and the Tank Company and Ack-Ack Battery had only about 60 percent of their fighting vehicles, it was a force well able to take care of itself provided ammunition held out. The Division Commander, in full sympathy with this major problem, directed an all out logistic effort to move our supply point to Yoju although this put a terrific burden on Division's service units. He also reiterated his directive to the 9th Infantry Regiment to maintain our supply road free of enemy and to be prepared to counter attack to us if necessary.

With these arrangements we had adequate force and flexibility to continue on our mission, now to be: <sup>dominant</sup> ~~control~~ the road center of Chipyeong and occupy the high ground in the vicinity so as to protect the right flank of the IX Corps and establish the western anchor of a I Corps line of departure for the offensive". The I Corps plans called for the U. S. 2nd and 7th Divisions with the 187th Air Borne Regimental Combat Team to occupy a wide frontage on the approximate line Chipyeong, Hoengsong, Pongnim-ni. Two South Korean divisions, supported by U. S. artillery and armored units, would then make the initial advance through this line toward Hengchon. The 38th Infantry Regiment at this time was in the process of establishing itself at Hoengsong.

After another quiet <sup>3-3</sup> night, unexpected but welcome, the 23rd Regimental Combat Team continued the advance to Chipyeong, only five miles up the road through the low pass where the Chinese had initiated their attack. Again moving cautiously and extended well to the flanks, the French Battalion combed the ridges on the west of the road, the First Battalion on the east. Enemy

groups were observed on Hill 506 to the east but these were dispersed with air strikes during the day. Chipyeong was occupied without a fight. The entire stretch of road and the hills along it were littered with bodies of Chinese testifying to the efficacy of our artillery and mortar fire and the air strikes of two days before.

The terrain around Chipyeong was admirable for defense by a force of our size. Here we could dig in our main position on low hills which would facilitate defensive fires, resupply and construction of obstacles. Enemy seizing the higher ground around our position would not be able to direct effective small arms fire against us but would be vulnerable to our supporting fires.

We did not propose to sit in our main battle position and wait for him to attack, however. At dawn each day, elements of our force occupied the high ground about a thousand yards in front of the position on the north, west, and south. At dusk, and when they could not be observed, they withdrew, leaving the forward positions heavily mined and booby trapped and with trip flares set. (These tactics were later to pay off in a big way) Far-ranging combat patrols screened these positions and the enemy was never aware of our true dispositions.

For eight days, except for diversions and combat patrols, we had the opportunity to improve our position. The road to our supply base was not harassed and we hauled forward ammunition, rations, barbed wire, mines, and supplies of all types in preparation for a siege. Had we moved from this position without a fight it would have taken days to shuttle our stocks to another location. As it developed, we weren't to have enough.

Company B of the Second Engineers came forward to join us and constructed a liaison plane air strip ~~as well as~~ <sup>and</sup> helped with the preparations of positions.

as they were affectionately called — were rushed to vantage points to mow down the frustrated Chinese. Air spotting planes followed the fighters in, and the artillery with eyes for the first time that day caught the enemy behind concealing hills and tore him to pieces. The defenders, both GI's and French, screaming "ban-zai" and "clobber the bastards" (or the French equivalent) came out of their holes to cut down the stragglers and to expedite the few survivors over the next ridge.

That was the end of the Chinese 125th Division. Some remnants were trapped in the valley between Hill 453 and the French Second Company. These were hunted down and killed by six in the evening. There was a great feeling of weariness in the gallant garrison and a tremendous feeling of relief. But there could be no let down. There was plenty of work to be done in the remaining hour of daylight and the early hours of the night.

First, there was an air drop — rather two drops. Two liaison planes flew over the French company on Hill 453 while the fighter aircraft were working and dropped ammunition and rations. Though the French were still engaged at close quarters with the enemy, the bulk of the supplies landed in their small perimeter on the crest of the mountain and were recovered. Then, as the fighters left the area, fourteen "flying boxcars" (C-119's) dropped supplies of all types to the garrison in a drop-zone on the west of the road. Recovery parties worked frantically to gather in the supplies before dark. Resupply vehicles began to roll in over the road and added to the supply officers' work. Carrying parties started up the hills. Wounded were loaded into ambulances for the long haul back to Yoju.

The First Battalion, less B Company at the artillery position, trudged rearly in about an hour before dark. It was assigned responsibility for the

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northern part of the perimeter, with C Company on the left of the road, and A on the right, thus permitting the French and Third Battalions to shift to the south to contract their positions. E Company arrived at dark. One platoon was retained as Regimental Reserve — the rest of the Company was placed in the valley between the French 1st and 2nd Companies. Together with the Tank Platoon still there, we could breathe easier over the vulnerability of this approach to our position.

It was anticipated that the enemy would make a further all out effort to dislodge us during the night. <sup>1-2</sup> The reinforced garrison prepared as best it could to withstand the onslaught. The remainder of the Second Battalion arrived at the artillery position at <sup>1st</sup> midnight and was directed to remain there to defend the artillery and to be prepared for other missions on order.

Again, the unpredictable enemy failed to continue his attack or to maintain contact. At daylight <sup>3/2</sup> there was no sign of the enemy. Combat patrols ranging out a few miles were unable to locate any enemy groups, and aerial observers reported no activity near our positions. Thirteen hundred enemy bodies were counted in or near the perimeter. Total enemy casualties based on artillery and air observers, and prisoner of war interrogations was estimated at 3600. The Chinese 125th Division could be eliminated as an effective unit. Our own casualties amounted to 225. The French and Third Battalions which had entered the combat at about 80 percent strength were now reduced to less than 70 percent — and more fighting was to follow.

#### IV.

The Second Battalion was brought forward from the artillery position on February 2nd to augment the Twin Tunnels defenses. The garrison now consisted

Battery B, 503rd Medium Artillery was attached to the Combat Team. While we lost the Reconnaissance Company to 9th Infantry, we gained the 1st Ranger Company — a highly trained, commando type unit. Barbed wire was strung, mines laid, positions and alternate positions were constructed for heavy weapons, and communication wires were tripled over various routes. Even our VHF voice radio to Division CP, twenty-some miles away, was working beautifully.

A battalion of the 24th Division had moved into position on our side of the Han River about eight miles to the southwest. Patrols from the British Commonwealth Brigade now at Yoju contacted us daily. The friendly units to our east were progressing satisfactory. Our garrison numbered over five thousand and though we knew that the Chinese were milling around to the north and west of us preparing counter measures against the success of our advance toward Seoul in the far west, we had never felt so confident and strong. <sup>For the first time in the Korean War</sup> We had reserves! B Company first, then the Ranger Company, and finally the Engineer Company if needed, were available to reinforce a hard pressed unit or to plug a gap.

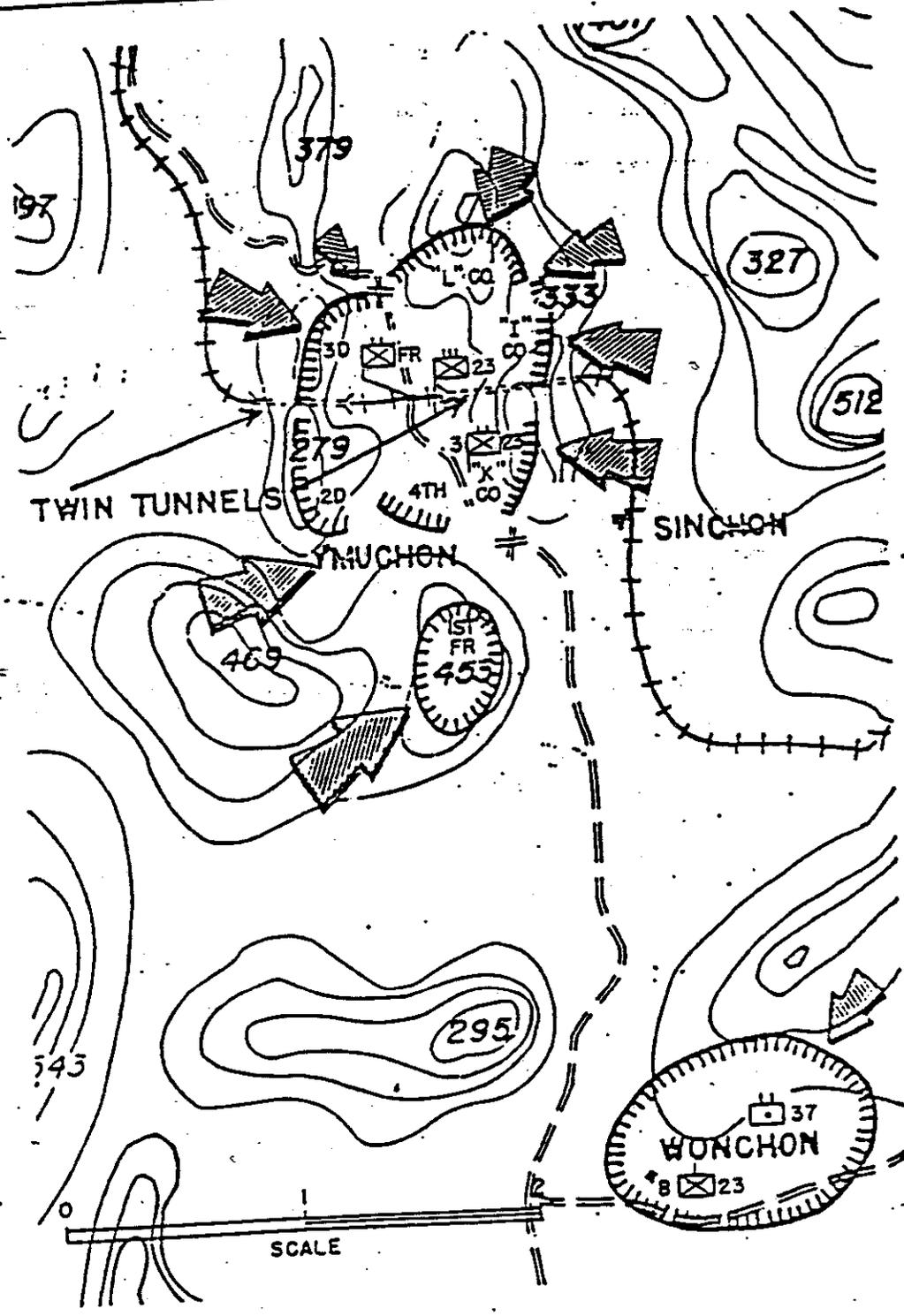
Before the main battle there were some misty side actions. Hill 506, and the valley of Sangosong which it covered, still sheltered in abandoned gold mines the remnants of the 125th Division who held on tenaciously to this, their former concentration area. The First Battalion initiated the attempts to clean off the big ridge. Trudging through knee-deep snow and sometimes having to crawl on hands and knees, a company sized patrol was pinned down near the crest and had to be extricated under air cover. Next, the Second Battalion took a crack at it, this time by way of the narrow, tortuous road that led eastward from our position toward the destroyed town of Sangosong where the road petered out. Running into fire from the surrounding

hills the Battalion was ordered to withdraw before darkness. The Third Battalion was then ordered on an extended operation to clean out the area, and the Second Battalion to cover the Third's defensive positions during its absence.

The Third Battalion encountered every adversity of climate and terrain. Snow began to fall, air support was denied and artillery observation hindered. The enemy would not abandon his positions on Hill 506 and B Company was dispatched to reinforce the Third Battalion by neutralizing Hill 506. Tanks and flack wagons were sent up the narrow road to provide direct fire support. The Third encountered more and more difficult terrain — saw-toothed ridges, one after the other, each harboring a nest of fanatic defenders with automatic weapons. There was not even a trail for supply and evacuation. Wounded had to be carried out by parties of four men sometimes requiring as much as eight hours to make the journey. An air drop for resupply was laid on, but miscarried due to closed in weather.

Meanwhile, the First Battalion, 9th Infantry had been dispatched northward on a road six miles to the east on the same mission and was encountering stubborn opposition. A junction of the two forces was finally made. At this time the operation, though not completely successful, was called off due to more serious events.

<sup>To</sup>~~On~~ the west, enemy activity was intensified on Hill 583, and the neighboring battalion of the 24th Division in its position on the Han was being harrassed. Company sized combat patrols from the French Battalion attempting to clean out this difficult piece of ground ran into increasing strength and after meeting with no success in a two day's effort, more stringent measures



TWIN TUNNELS BATTLE  
 JAN 31 - FEB 1, 1951

LEGEND:

-  PERIMETER DEFENSE
-  ROAD BLOCKS
-  ENEMY ATTACKS

had to be undertaken. The Second Battalion was ordered to sweep the area. Plans were made and the operation was laid on for February 12th. Fortunately, Division called it off at the last moment, and the Second Battalion as well as the Third were back in their holes when the roof fell in...

(Sketch Map III - Front lines about Feb 12th)

Other patrols to the north and west had been dispatched daily. The Reconnaissance Company, then the Rangers had entered Hajin each day, but were unable to progress further due to strong enemy held positions north and west of that town. The First Battalion, charged with patrolling to the north and north-east, ranged further and further, always with enemy contact but never of a serious nature.

Except for three days of snow the weather held fairly well. While air support was not available except under emergency conditions due to priority for support of the advance in the West toward Seoul, the artillery had a field day. Air spotters were up during daylight hours and did their usual marvelous work in finding enemy targets skillfully camouflaged and concealed behind the rugged hills across the Hukchon River, as well as to direct accurate fire in support of our patrols and the Third Battalion's fight to the east. The 155 mm. battery enabled us to reach far out to interdict and harrass enemy movement on the main road running north toward Hengchon and west in the direction of Seoul. Enemy assembly areas were located. Each night battalion TOT's\* crashed down in the hope of catching the Chinese at their one hot meal per day.

\*TOT's - Time-on-target. Artillery fire so directed that projectiles, though fired from various ranges would hit the target simultaneously.

In our advanced and isolated position we were definitely a thorn in the enemy's side. Desperately he was trying to re-dispose his forces so as to delay our advance in the west and to counter the now apparent offensive of our I Corps. It wouldn't be long now — and we were set, even to having fresh chicken and steaks in our rations.

As enemy activity increased in the area it became more urgent that prisoners be captured from whom enemy strengths and intentions might be learned. Except for a few feeble oldsters there were no refugees left in the area who might provide reliable information. Try as they might patrols had been unable to retrieve any but dead Chinese. A daring operation was planned for the Ranger Company for the night of February 11th. The Company was to move through Hajin after dark, circle the Chinese positions there, strike the enemy position on Hill 523 from the rear in a hit-and-run raid and bring in prisoners. Artillery fire was to be boxed to cover the raiders. Arrangements were timed to a split second. Enemy positions in Hajin were "cased", but, there was apparently a shift after darkness. The Rangers ran head on into an enemy battalion. A fierce fight began early in the night, and the Rangers having expended all their ammunition were forced to withdraw. While their casualties were light, they returned empty-handed so far as prisoners were concerned.

At noon the next day the air observer reported a large column of enemy with pack artillery and animal pack trains moving across our front from west to east and just out of light artillery range. The medium artillery battery took the column under fire with excellent results. Despite heavy casualties

the enemy column continued to move over the mountain trails during the rest of the day. It was estimated to number at least a division. Our fighter aircraft did not reach the scene until late in the day but before darkness two flights hit the enemy and inflicted heavy casualties. Patrol activity was intensified by the First Battalion during the afternoon and finally two Chinese prisoners were brought in. While not too intelligent nor too well informed, they were able to identify elements of five Chinese divisions in the general vicinity.

That night, February 12th, there was a continuation of the day's movement by the enemy. He even used flares despite our artillery harassment and night bombing by radar controlled B-26's. There was a light probing attack against C Company and against the Third Battalion, but the enemy was driven off without difficulty.

The enemy continued his forced march and during the night struck the Republic of Korea division <sup>to our east</sup> which was now advancing in attack formation from a position between Chipyong and Hoengsong. Striking with great force, his attack against the ROK's was successful and the ROK's were forced to withdraw in some confusion, exposing part of the 38th Infantry Regiment at Hoengsong and the 2nd Division's artillery and armored support forces that were advancing with the ROK's. By morning of the 13th these units were fighting for survival against several Chinese divisions.

Bypassing our position initially, elements of the enemy continued to the south, then swung west and early in the day, February 13th, attacked part of the Third Battalion, 9th Infantry and the 2nd Reconnaissance Company at Nonchon, cutting our main supply road to Korun-ni. The western road through

His initial welcome to the Second Battalion cost him heavily. Company G had constructed a series of "fougasses" in front of their position. Fifty-gallon drums were emplaced in the earth as mortars, and pointed toward the natural avenues of approach. Several grenades were placed in the bottom and the drum was filled about one-third of the way with oil and gasoline. As the leading waves of Chinese stormed down the hill the defenders pulled wires exploding the grenades and spraying the enemy with a bath of fire. This was beautiful — but only a one-time weapon.

By midnight, the entire perimeter was engaged in the fight. The enemy was making all-out attacks apparently by battalion and company sized units with no over-all coordination. He was still looking for a weak point and couldn't find it. Our defensive fires were terrific. Taking a heavy toll, they were preventing the Chinese from closing with us, but again our plentiful stock of ammunition was beginning to dwindle. Heavy Mortar Company was ordered to conserve ~~all types of~~ ammunition.

At three in the morning, February 14th, the enemy was trying to break through down the road between the French and Second Battalions, and under the railway trestle between the Second and Third Battalions. Here he ran into our road blocks composed of tanks and flack-wagons. He tried desperately to eliminate these vehicles with high explosive charges tied to the end of long poles and with grenades, but while two were damaged the terrific volume of fire they put out forced him to abandon his effort.

At five-thirty in the morning the pressure began to relax on all parts of the position. The French were still lightly engaged to their front and the Third Battalion was having a desperate struggle with the Chinese at the road block. At daylight the Chinese in front of the French position were

getting set for another assault. The French coming out of their fox holes charged down the slopes with bayonets, broke up the attack before it could be formed, grabbed fourteen surprised Chinese by the back of their collars and dragged them in as prisoners. These prisoners, including an officer, confirmed that we were being attacked by elements of five Chinese divisions with a total force of about 30,000.

At seven-thirty the enemy broke off his attack on all sectors and withdrew behind the mountains to the west and east. We had had a rough night but had not really been in grave danger at any point. No reserves had been committed and we had not suffered too many casualties. Our principal difficulty in our cut-off position was, again, ammunition replenishment and evacuation of about 200 wounded.

Other units had not fared so well. Division reported that the situation at Hoengsong was desperate and that Nonju was endangered. The Third Battalion, 9th Infantry and the Reconnaissance Company south of us were hard pressed. Division then gave the encouraging news that an armored column of the 5th Cavalry Regiment was making its way toward us up the west road via Koksuri, and that a battalion of the British Commonwealth Brigade was fighting its way up the east road, our main supply road. We were told to hang on. (There wasn't much choice. While we could have formed a marching perimeter and attempted to fight our way out, it would have been a difficult, if not costly operation.)

During the day we were given only three air strikes — all that could be spared from the more critical situation to the east of us. These we directed against the enemy to our south, now firmly dug in at our old positions at the

Koksu-ri was threatened but not yet cut.

During the day increasing enemy movement toward our perimeter from the north, east, and west drove in our patrols, some of whom became pinned down by enemy fire and had to be extricated by artillery fire and air support. Forty fighter sorties were diverted to profitable targets in our vicinity despite the more critical situation than confronting other units of the Division near Hoengsong and Nonju. When the fighters weren't in the air, artillery was fired by the aerial observers at enemy groups now approaching boldly under cover of the intervening hills. Enemy casualties were heavy, but as darkness closed in he again lit his way with flares to assembly positions for the attack.

(Sketch Map IV - Chipyeong Battle)

At eight in the evening Chinese bugles and whistles began to blow at the northwest and southwest of the perimeter. Our troops were not to be lured into shooting at noises in the dark. They waited -- then the Chinese assault waves <sup>bungled</sup> ~~ran~~ into the trip flares; anti-personnel mines ("jumping Johnnies"), and booby-traps <sup>in the dummy positions in</sup> in front of C Company. With the resultant confusion in enemy ranks, down came the artillery and mortar barrages and the terrified enemy recoiled. (After ten days of shooting, there wasn't a piece of critical terrain outside our lines that hadn't been pinpointed and designated with a concentration number for just such an occasion. The coordination between artillery and heavy mortars for defensive fires was perfect.) Despite his initial clobbering the fanatical enemy came back for more. Not a small arms was fired until he hit the barbed wire in front of the <sup>main</sup> position. Then, in the light of 155 mm. illuminating shells, the machine guns cut loose. At the same time "meat choppers" (U-16's) and tanks near the road between the French and First Battalions

contributed their heavy volume of automatic fire. For a while the Chinese had a belly full of that part of our lines and resorted to other tricks.

Heavy mortars, 120 mm. Russian jobs, which the Chinese had emplaced behind Hills 345 and 248 began to <sup>lob their shells</sup> fall inaccurately into the center of our position. Unfortunately, early in the night one of the rounds hit a flack wagon starting a fire, another started a fire near the First Battalion Command Post. While our own flares and illuminating shells were carefully placed so as not to silhouette our defenses, the glow of the fires in the night haze now enabled the Chinese to adjust their mortar fire. More shells began to fall with increasing accuracy and frequently near our vulnerable installations — Command post, artillery and mortar positions, supply dumps and aid stations. Officers and men whose duties required their continued functioning in these activities, and who thus could not seek cover, suffered heavily. (The popular theory that the role of the staff and administrators in infantry combat is a relatively safe one was certainly not true throughout the Korean fighting.) The enemy's mortars were augmented by pack howitzers which gave their dull pitched warning seconds before the projectiles came in, and by high velocity Russian 76's which blew a shrill derisive whistle after the shell exploded. We hadn't received such a concentration of heavy weapons fire since the Naktong!

With the encouragement of his supporting fires the enemy now began to probe at our defenses in the French and Second Battalion sectors. He established himself on ridge 248 overlooking the French but was unable to negotiate the grazing bands of machine gun fire that the French were able to concentrate in front of their barbed wire. From Hill 397 he had a natural approach into the Second Battalion. This was to become our most critical point.

Twin Tunnels. Our artillery fired during the day as much ammunition as we dared expend at the Chinese lurking behind the hills waiting for nightfall to resume their efforts at our annihilation. Some enemy mortar fire was received but the weapons were located and destroyed by our aerial observer who had a keen eye for "gooks".

Twenty-four flying box cars came over and dropped us ammo and other supplies. This was truly a God-Send, but unfortunately no heavy mortar ammunition or illuminating shells were included and the rifle cartridges were not packed in clips, serious handicaps for night fighting.

Because of the unexpectedly, heavy <sup>enemy</sup> mortar and artillery fire of the preceding night all hands that could be spared from improving their positions on the hills were set to protecting interior installations. The frozen ground made it difficult to dig in, but fortunately there was an abundance of railroad ties and bags of rice in the vicinity to use for revetments, and stations, CP's, fire direction centers, and supply dumps were protected as well as possible, but without overhead cover.

Ammunition was distributed, weapons cleaned and readied, routes reconnoitered by the reserve commanders so as to be able to lead their units to any point in the darkness, wires spliced, armored vehicles serviced, trip flares and mines reset, and numerous other tasks were accomplished during the day's lull. Patrols were sent out as far as necessary to provide early warning of any daylight attack. Good, hot meals were served and the garrison, with fine spirit, determination, and confidence, waited for the next move.

This time, the Chinese had a plan. First, there was a heavy concentration of mortar and artillery fire which rained down on our position just at dark.

This preparation lasted an hour and at seven o'clock the weird bugle calls rang out to the south. The enemy went to work again on the two roads leading into our position on each flank of the Second Battalion. Here the enemy concentrated his force. In column of companies he came down Hill 397 against G Company. Time after time, he was driven back, as G Company held this initial attack. Concurrently, he advanced on the Third Battalion, from the steep slopes of Ridge 506 where he had hidden during the day. The Third Battalion, too, contained the attack.

By this time we had expended nearly all of our precious stock of illuminating shells. Frantic calls over the radio finally brought "Firefly", a wonderful guy who flies over your position in a <sup>C-47</sup> ~~plane~~ and changes night into day by dropping large flares which last about fifteen minutes. Firefly and his reliefs stayed with us all night and helped save our skins as much as any other gadget of the grim business of night fighting.

At one-thirty in the morning of the 15th, the attack had spread to the First Battalion and intensified in front of the Third. Company I's position was penetrated, but the Battalion Commander declined reinforcements and by shifting a platoon of L Company, restored the position.

At three-fifteen G Company, which had been hardest hit all night long and had taken heavy casualties could no longer hold its position. The magnificent men of this Company had fought till they had expended every grenade and every round of ammunition, then they had fought with bayonets and knives and rifle butts, even with their fists, as the enemy crawled into their fox holes. The survivors straggled down the hill. The Ranger Company and a spare platoon of F Company were rushed to the position. The loss of this hill had rendered the

armored vehicles at the road block vulnerable, and they had to withdraw slightly forcing the adjacent left of the French position to pull back with them. Time and again the hard fighting Rangers, F Company's platoon, and the remnants of G Company, supported by the tanks and flack wagons, made it to the top of the hill only to be driven back by the now solidly entrenched enemy. This courageous effort against overwhelming numbers continued until daylight without success, but also without the enemy being allowed to continue his penetration.

Meanwhile, enemy had infiltrated along the road during the confusion at G Company, and had entered the artillery perimeter. Part of B Battery, 503rd Medium Artillery was forced to abandon its guns and to fall back into the 37th FA's position. The Artillery Commander rallied them and collecting all available men made repeated attempts to drive the Chinese from the position, but it was untenable so long as G Company's hill was in enemy hands.

Mortar and artillery continued to fall into our position. The First Battalion's defenses were being threatened and we were hard pressed on all sides. By daylight only 90 rounds of 81 mm. mortar ammunition and 140 rounds of 4.2 inch mortar ammunition remained of the stocks we had accumulated. At eight in the morning it was decided to commit the Regimental Reserve, B Company, to assist in restoring the G Company position. Despite B Company's <sup>but unfortunately piecemeal</sup> determined efforts the position was repeatedly retaken but could not be held.

While the desperate battle continued at this one point during the morning and early afternoon, the enemy was driven from the other positions he had gained during the night. Artillery using direct fire, recoilless weapons, tanks

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and twin-forty's blasted him off the bare ridges. Fighter planes coming in late in the morning when the haze had cleared, worked over the enemy methodically. He couldn't take this terrific punishment and withdrew from all points except Hill 397. Here the most stubborn, fanatical unit in the Chinese Army must have been pitted against us and was determined to die to the last man. They disdained cover and fired with their rifles and machine guns at the attacking fighter planes.

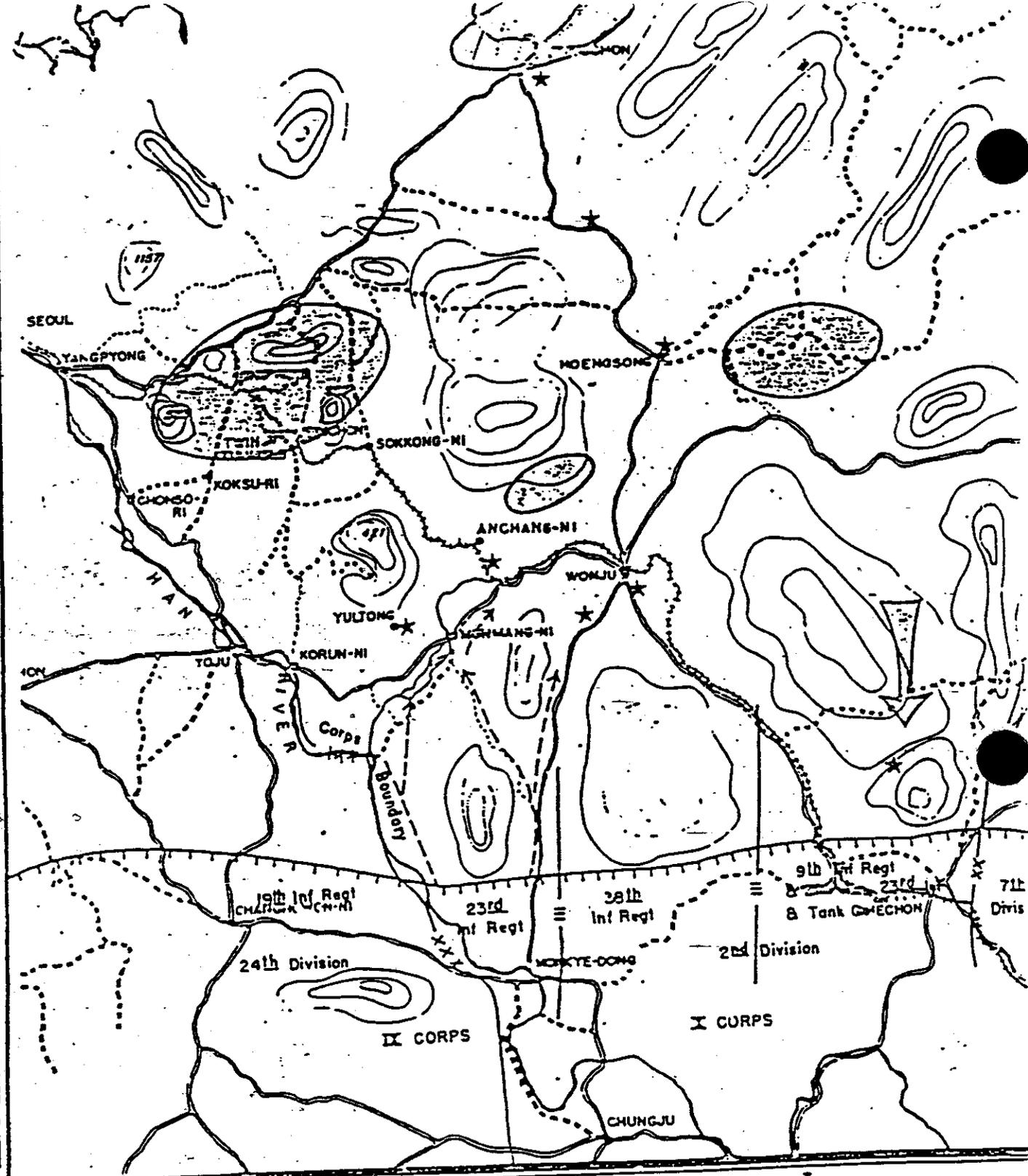
Air resupply commenced at the same time as the air support and 30 "box cars" dropped their loads. While the drops were going on helicopters and liaison planes flew in to our little air strip to carry away the more seriously wounded. Enemy mortars and small arms fire from Hill 397 inflicted many casualties among the supply recovery parties that were rushing the dropped ammo to waiting artillery and mortar pieces, and hindered the efforts of the medics to evacuate the wounded. The air support that day was great - 131 sorties - more than had ever been flown in Korea for a unit our size.

Finally, in mid-afternoon B Company <sup>in-coordinated attack with tank support</sup> ~~had~~ again fought their way up to G Company's position, this time to stay. At four-thirty, the die-hard enemy on Hill 397 was faltering. Firing could be heard to their rear. Company B's men from their vantage point began to wave and cheer. The lead tanks of the 5th Cavalry came into view around the bend.

Again, a Hollywood finish! Again, the enemy was pursued with artillery and fighters till he dragged himself into the mountains to the north. Again, there was work to be done - nineteen C-119's were to drop their loads during the night, a novel experience for us, and preparations had to be made. Again, to get set to repulse a vicious night attack. And, again, the enemy didn't

come back, that night, or the next night, or the next. Thus ended the battle of Chipyeong-ni!

Two days later the 23rd RCT pulled itself together and marched on to resume the offensive, to repeat Wonju and the "Twin Tunnels" and Chipyeong, again and again, the scene a little different, but the pattern always the same. This was the Infantry, dirty, tired, dragging Infantry and its brothers of the supporting arms. Not too tired to hold their heads up, not too tired to joke and cuss, not too tired to remember sadly the 630 buddies who had been carried to the rear during the past two weeks and to weigh their own chances. This was a proud and cocky Infantry — proud to the point of haughtiness. Morale, what's that? What was the score? Well, that gook division at Hongchon, two more at Wonju, the Chinese 125th at the "Twin Tunnels", and now the "old man" says at least three of those at Chipyeong won't fight again. Seven divisions knocked off in six weeks. Say, what are we worrying about? Let's get this thing over with. Let's go, you foot sloggers!



**LEGEND**

- ROADS
- RAILROADS
- RIVERS
- UNIMPROVED ROADS
- TRAILS



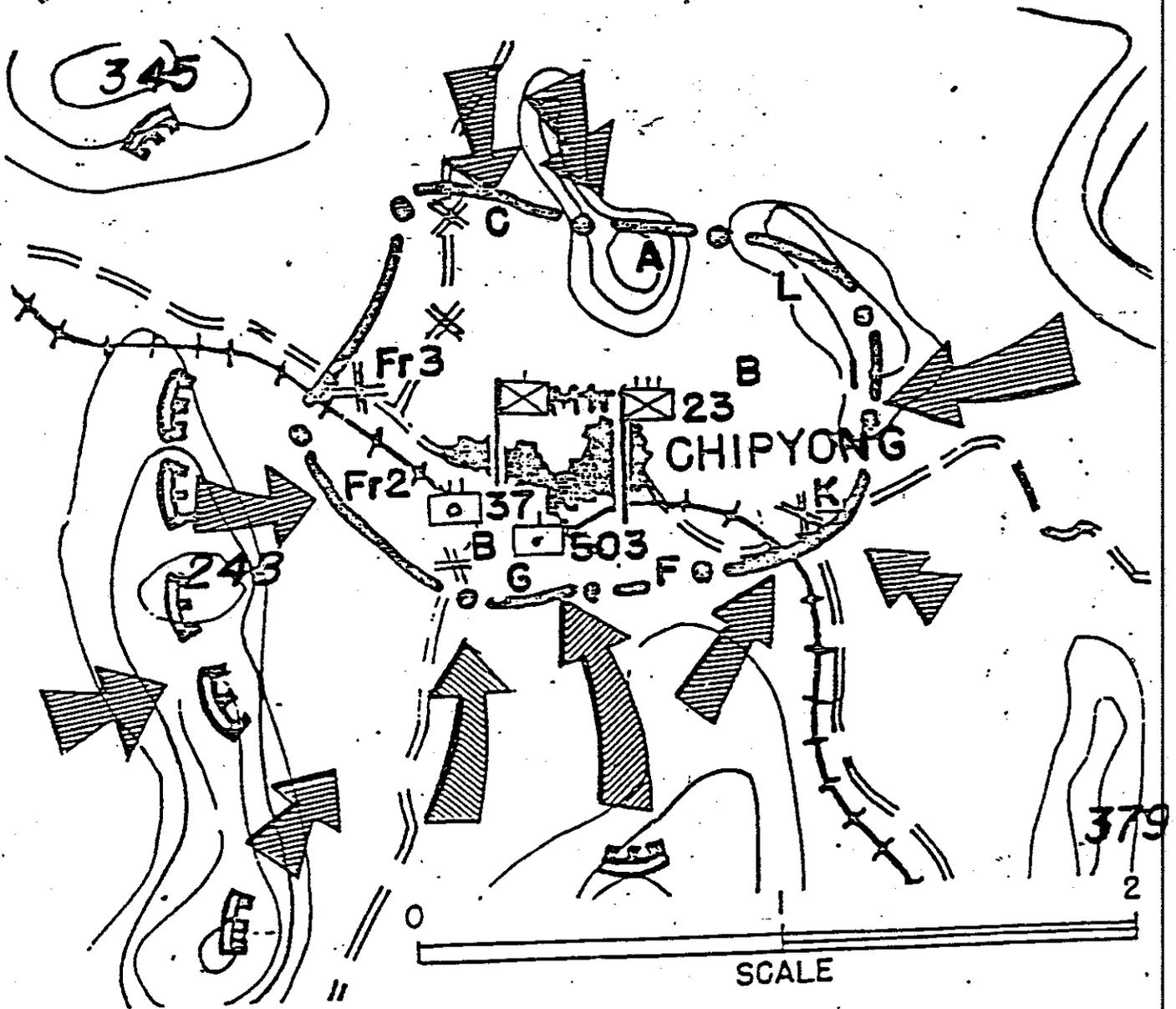
- GENERAL SITUATION - JAN 15, 1951**
- ★ BATTLES FOUGHT IN JANUARY
  - ENEMY CONCENTRATIONS
  - PATROL ROUTES
  - UN LINES

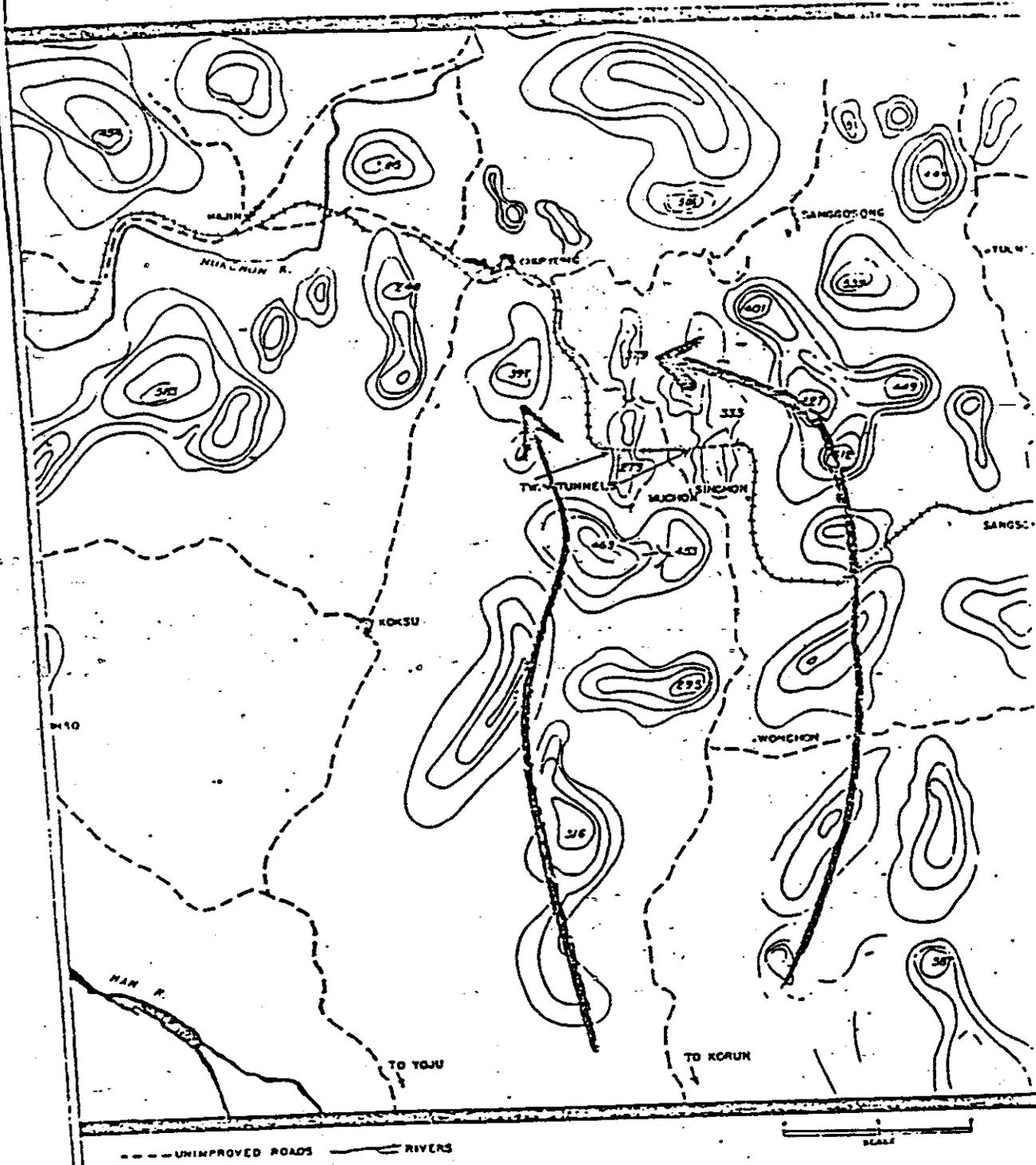
# BATTLE OF CHIPYONG-NI

FEB. 12-16 1951

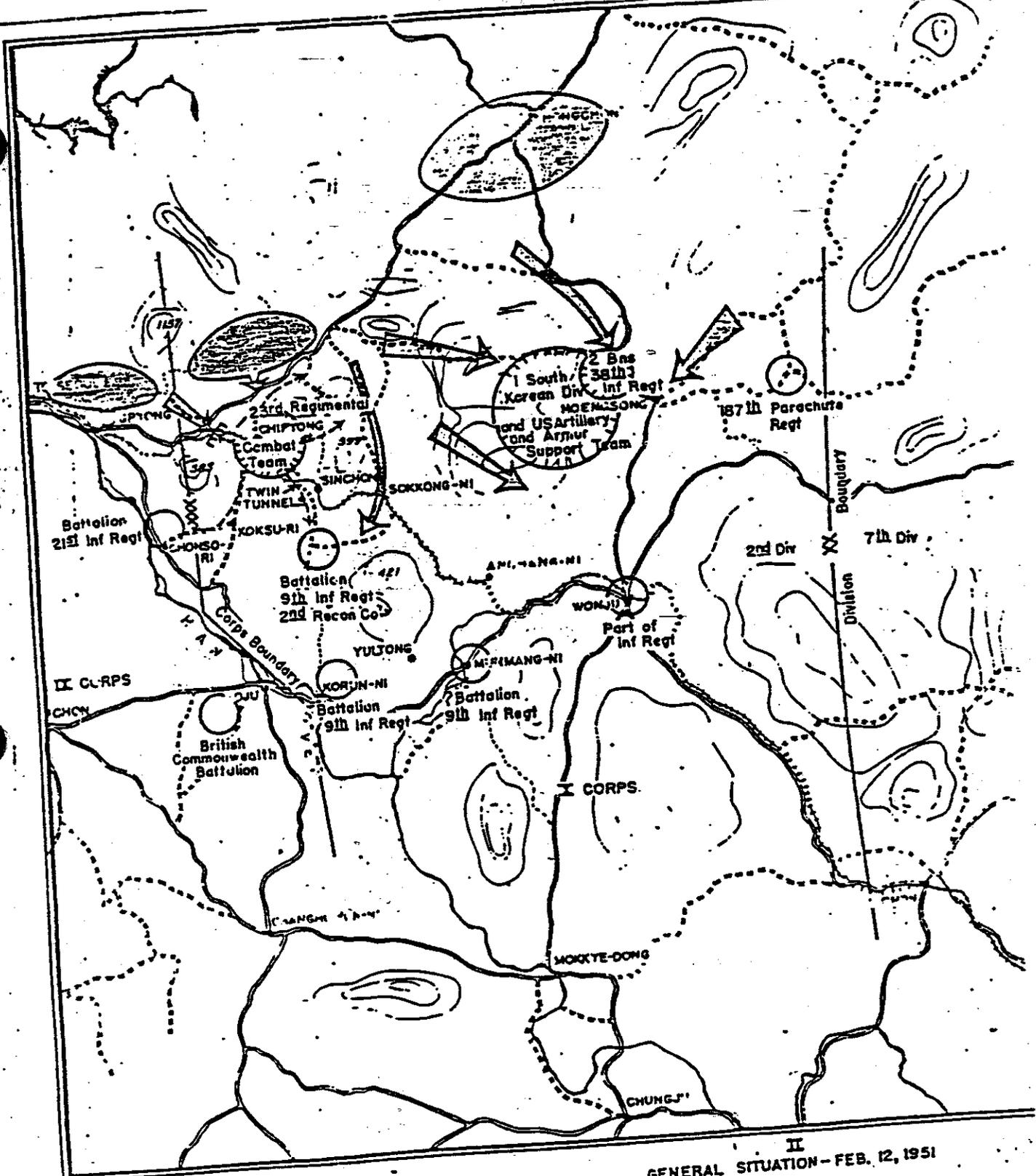
## LEGEND

-  DAYLIGHT POSITIONS
-  ROAD BLOCKS
-  ENEMY ATTACKS



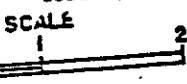


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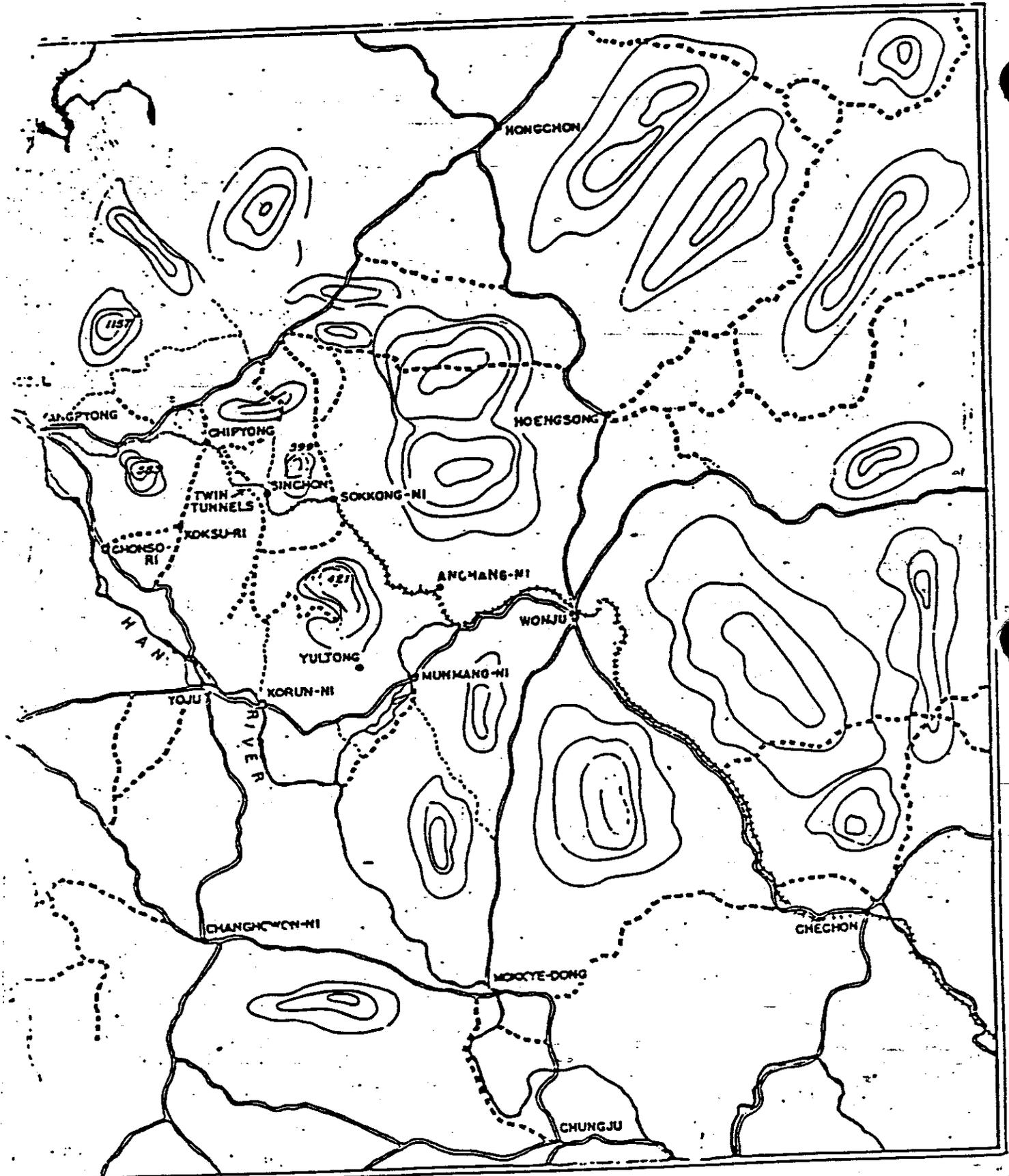
**LEGEND**

- ROADS
- RAILROADS
- RIVERS
- UNIMPROVED ROADS
- TRAILS



**II GENERAL SITUATION - FEB. 12, 1951**

- ENEMY CONCENTRATIONS
- ENEMY ATTACKS
- FRIENDLY PATROL ROUTES



LEGEND

——— ROADS  
 ——— RAILROADS  
 ~~~~~ RIVERS

..... UNIMPROVED ROADS  
 ..... TRAILS