

Chinese Communist Forces

*Hq XXV Army Group
CCF Korea
29 March 1951*



CCF

*A Collection of
Combat Experience*

IV CRITIQUE OF TACTICS EMPLOYED IN THE FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THE
ENEMY AT CHIPYONG-NI
(From EUSAK FIR No. 377)

This is the fourth of a series of six inclosures extracted from a captured enemy booklet entitled "A Collection of Combat Experience". The booklet was issued by Hq, XIX Army Group, 29 March 1951, and translated by ATIS, 25 June 1951.

The 117th CCF Division, 39th CCF Army, in cooperation with other CCF troops was assigned the mission of annihilating the main UN rear force stationed in the areas north of HOENGSONG (DS1049). The 115th and 116th Division, 39th CCF Army, were further commanded to cut off other enemy forces stationed at CHIPYONG-NI (CS8048) in order to prevent the enemy from escaping and to intercept enemy reinforcements.

On the morning of 2 February 1951, the CCF forces pushed forward to the line linking TANSONG-NI (CS8839), SINCHANG-RI (CS9145), SAKMURAN-NI (CS9450) and HANURAN-NI (CS9449). At this point they were temporarily stalemated by a part of the 3d LIEN TUI*, the US 2nd Division. On the same night, the 116th Division pushed west from SINCHANG-NI to TANSONG-NI and then continued in the direction of CHUAM-NI (CS8239), along highways and via mountainous areas to the south, to cut off the retreat of the enemy forces in the CHIPYONG-NI area so that they could not escape south to YOJU. It was also the mission of the 116th Division to prevent enemy reinforcements from reaching the YO River.

The main force of the 115th Division (343rd and 344th Regiments) pushed forward from SOKKONG-NI (CS8943) along railroads northward to MANGMI-RI (CS8144) and KUDUN (CS8443). The 345th Regiment as the reserve force of the army - (the two characters illegible) was thrown out in a security line extending northeast in the direction of MUNMAK.

At dawn on the 14th of February 1951, the 116th Division, pushing forward to CHUAM-NI, annihilated two companies of the US 23rd Regiment. The 115th Division also arrived at KUDUN without encountering any forces en route. On the same night the 115th Division commenced an enveloping maneuver, pushing forward toward the enemy forces in CHIPYONG-NI, and surrounded the area in cooperation with the 119th Division, 126th Division and a regiment belonging to the 125th Division. The US forces (French battalion, artillery battalion and a Tank TA TUI* amounting to more than six thousand in strength) were surrounded on a narrow strip of high ground one or two miles to the west of FONGMI SAN (CS8048) north of CHIPYONG-NI.

On the 15th of February 1951, the situation was at a standstill with no advances being made by either side. At dawn of the 16th, a command was received, ordering our forces to carry out an urgent interception operation. The following is a summary of the experiences and lessons derived from the battle and the various stages of its progress.

A. Progress of battle.

1. Attack: The attack commenced at 141700 February 1951; the attacking troops successively advanced in the direction of CHIPYONG-NI. At 142310 the 2nd Battalion, 343rd Regiment, encountered and immediately engaged the enemy at KANHYON (CS7946). On receiving this information, the Regiment immediately dispatched five companies to occupy the hilltop to the south of MASAN. The main force of the 3rd Battalion was dispatched to push on along MASAN. The five companies took only 40 minutes to occupy KANHYON. Nearly a hundred enemy were killed and five captured as the enemy were forced to the streets of KANHYON; however, due to the 3rd Battalion's loss of direction, timely contact with the 2nd Battalion was not established, preventing the latter from following up its victory.

When contact was established with the 3d Battalion, it was after 150300. At that time information was received from the interrogation of prisoners that the enemy forces were highly concentrated and had constructed strong field works, so it seemed impossible to achieve victory before daybreak. This information was reported to the Division, whereupon the regiment was ordered to defend MASAN and wait for the attack to be continued on the night of the 15th.

The first battalion of the 34th Regiment, 115th Division, arrived at its line of departure, from which two unsuccessful attacks had already been launched by the 356th Regiment, 119th Division, at 141900. The 1st Battalion started to attack at 142400, but our fire power was not adequately organized because of the enemy's superior fire power and the open terrain. For this reason we failed each of the three times we attacked, with our troops suffering heavy casualties.

On 140400 the 3d Battalion moved to the mountain areas on the east, on the command of the Regiment facing the enemy. At 142100 the 3d Battalion arrived at its line of departure. At that time the 377th Regiment had launched three attacks on a small hilltop 300 meters to the southeast of the railroad station, but was unsuccessful, losing more than half of its forces. The 3d Battalion was more successful. Starting to attack at 150100, it occupied the first hilltop within 40 minutes, taking the second and third hilltops in succession. It was 150430 February 1951 before any further progress into the enemy areas was made. The Regiment gave an order to cease attacking, reconstructed the field works immediately, and hold the occupied positions firmly in preparation for continuing the attack on the night of the 15th.

2. ~~Defenses:~~ On the 15th, the 34th Regiment dispatched its 2nd Battalion to hold the three peaks of MASAN. The 4th and 5th Companies of the 1st Battalion held fast, and the 6th Company was held in reserve. Several enemy counterattacks launched after our troops ceased to attack, were repulsed. After daybreak, our troops, because of the surrounding terrain and overconcentration, suffered heavy casualties from enemy air and artillery attacks. However, because of our timely troop adjustments, and the determination of the 1st Battalion, which had beaten back sixteen enemy counterattacks while collecting ammunition (TN Sic), the enemy failed to take our positions.

At 1600 more than 20 enemy tanks coming to reinforce CHIPYONG-NI from the direction of KOKSU-RI, surprised us; by being almost at the door of the Regimental CP before they were discovered, seriously threatening the flanks and rear of the 2d Battalion. The Regiment immediately ordered the displacement of the 2d Battalion to the positions occupied by the 3d Battalion. The tanks coming up to charge our rear and flanks were subjected to cross fire between our 1st and 2d Battalions laying in ambush, which completely annihilated a company of enemy infantry coming up on the tanks. Twenty others, from the battalion commander down, were captured. We also destroyed four tanks and one motor vehicle.

The 3d Battalion of the 34th Regiment, after occupying three hilltops situated south-east of the railway station, was prevented by daybreak from making any further exploitation of its success and ordered its 9th Company to hold the occupied positions. The company in turn ordered one of its platoons to hold the positions, with one heavy machine gun, while the main force of the company took cover at the base of the hill. The enemy launched four counterattacks with small units (platoons) between 0800 hours and 1300 hours, supported by mortar fire. Each of these attacks failing, the enemy again attacked after 1300 hours with air support strafing, bombing and dropping gasoline cans (TN Sic). With the positions in flames, the troops still remained firm, beating back another two enemy counterattacks. At 1500 hours, enemy tanks arrived; the company, after suffering heavy losses, was unable to cope with this new situation. The

entire battalion moved to concentrate at positions surrounding SINDAE (CS 8146) below MANGGI-SAN (CS8046).

On the 15th, the 115th Division intended to continue the attack at night, but received orders from the 39th USF Army in the afternoon, ordering it to continue the attack on the night of the 16th, in cooperation with the 40th Army, and to make other troop adjustments. Further orders were given to the 117th Division to take over the defense of the areas surrounding CHUAN-RI (CS6359) and the 116th Division to advance to the south of KOKSU-RI (CS7742) to intercept enemy reinforcements coming from the south. The entire 42nd Army was distributed around IHO-RI, north of MUMMAK to intercept enemy reinforcements coming from WONGJU.

The 115th Division made the following adjustments:

The 343d Regiment was ordered to KWANGYANG (CS7945) and areas to the south. The 344th Regiment was to assume command of SINDAE, MANGGI-SAN (CS8046) and the areas south of MANGGI-SAN, with its main force remaining at SOKPUL (CS8045). The 345th Regiment was ordered to MUCHON (CS9243) and mountain areas to the east with the Division CP remaining at KULUN.

The various regiments distributed their forces as follows: The 343d Regiment ordered one platoon of its 1st Battalion to MASAN (CS7947); the main positions of the Regiment were the ones then occupied by its 1st and 3d Battalions. The 344th Regiment dispatched the 1st Company of its 1st Battalion to hold the enemy, its 2nd Battalion to the mountain areas west of CHOWANG-RI (CS8345), the 3d Battalion to SINDAE (CS8146), with its main force remaining at MANGGI-SAN, and the regimental CP at SOKPUL.

3. Disengagement: At 160330 February 1951, the 115th Division received a coded order from (is illegible) ordering immediate displacement. However, due to confused condition of the troops, having fought for 24 hours without rest, the many casualties, and obscurity of the situation, it was not possible to carry out the displacements immediately upon receiving the order. However, considering the coming day-break, and fearing envelopment by the enemy if and when the other friendly units withdrew, it was decided to order the various regiments to carry out the displacement.

The 343d Regiment proceeded to KOSONG (CS8548), the 344th Regiment to MAEYOL-LI (CS8744), the 345th Regiment to HAP-SONG (CS849), and the Division CP to CHOHYEN (CS3944). The various units arrived at their respective positions at 1100 hours on the 16th, though with a certain amount of confusion.

B. Critique.

1. In the conduct of the entire campaign, or the battle command, we have underestimated the enemy. In view of their past characteristics in battle, we expected the enemy to flee at CHIPYONG-RI, after the enemy at HOENGSONG was annihilated.

2. Unfamiliarity with the situation. We thought the enemy had merely field works when they had organized key points of defense and other such defense work as bunkers, wire entanglements et cetera, with tanks acting as mobile fortresses. We not only did not organize, coordinate, and have the attacking units under a centralized command, but even two regiments of the same division failed to coordinate their movements, resulting in a "You fight, I rest" attitude.

3. Owing to insufficient time, and underestimation of the enemy, the mobile attacks generally lacked "attack-the-strong" preparations, hence violating the principle of the "Fear quick, one slow" tactical technique. Officers did not survey the terrain in detail and famil-

ialize themselves according to the principle of mobile warfare, but instead, engaged the enemy hastily without adequate preparation.

4. We did not organize and employ artillery fire, and the artillery units lagged behind. Infantry weapons too, were not exploited to their full capacity. For instance, the 1st Battalion, 344th Regiment, launched three successive attacks on a small hilltop at the south of the railway station, and each of the three attacks failed in turn because of lack of fire support.

5. On the night when we failed to destroy the enemy and retreated, the withdrawal of our main force was not adequately executed. The enemy was close, facing us on the other hill, and our troops were closely concentrated; hence, though our losses were negligible on that night, yet we suffered greater losses on the following day. For instance the positions on MASAN (CS7247) could accommodate only one company at most, yet the entire 2d Battalion, 343d Regiment, was ordered to defend that hill where each enemy shell inflicted several casualties. We have been taught a lesson at the expense of bloodshed.

6. When carrying out an approach movement, if time allows, construct as many field works as possible while the troops advance. Besides the many advantages to be gained from these field works in offense or defense, they will also help to decrease the number of casualties suffered by reinforcements as they are being brought up from the rear.

7. Officers of the middle and lower ranks were unable to take advantage of opportunities, assume initiative and coordinate their movements at the right moment. They failed to take advantage of opportunities which the enemy could have been completely annihilated. For instance, when the 2d Battalion, 343d Regiment, was attacking MASAN, enemy troops were discovered to be moving at the base of the mountain in disorderly formation but did not attack the enemy. In another instance, the 3d Battalion of the 343d Regiment lost its bearings, resulting in lack of cooperation. The 1st Battalion, 344th Regiment, did not complete its mission to attack the enemy. The 3d Battalion of the 344th Regiment did not exploit its success and continue the attack after it had occupied the hilltops on the front; instead it waited for the enemy, without launching an attack which could have inflicted heavier casualties upon the enemy.

8. Inaccuracy of combat reports: During the course of the battle, the 343d Regiment sent in a report stating that it had entered CHIPYONG-NI and was organizing attacks to be launched against PONGMI-SAN, while actually it had not even crossed the railroad. Then again, the 344th Regiment falsely reported completion of the first stage, preventing the higher command from making the proper decision.

9. Interrupted and delayed communication: Divisions were unable to send timely situation reports to armies, and armies could not inform divisions of their intentions, thereby greatly affecting the control of the battle. For instance, an order to intercept the enemy at 1800 hours of the 15th was received by the division at 0330 hours on the 16th. The result was that troop displacements were carried out in haste.

10. Inexperience of divisions in carrying out interception: Troop displacements were carried out too hastily, affecting the morale of the troops. They were not aware that the primary intention of enemy reinforcements was to rescue their troops surrounded at CHIPYONG-NI, and that without knowing the intention of our displacements the enemy did not direct attack immediately.

2 Inclosures

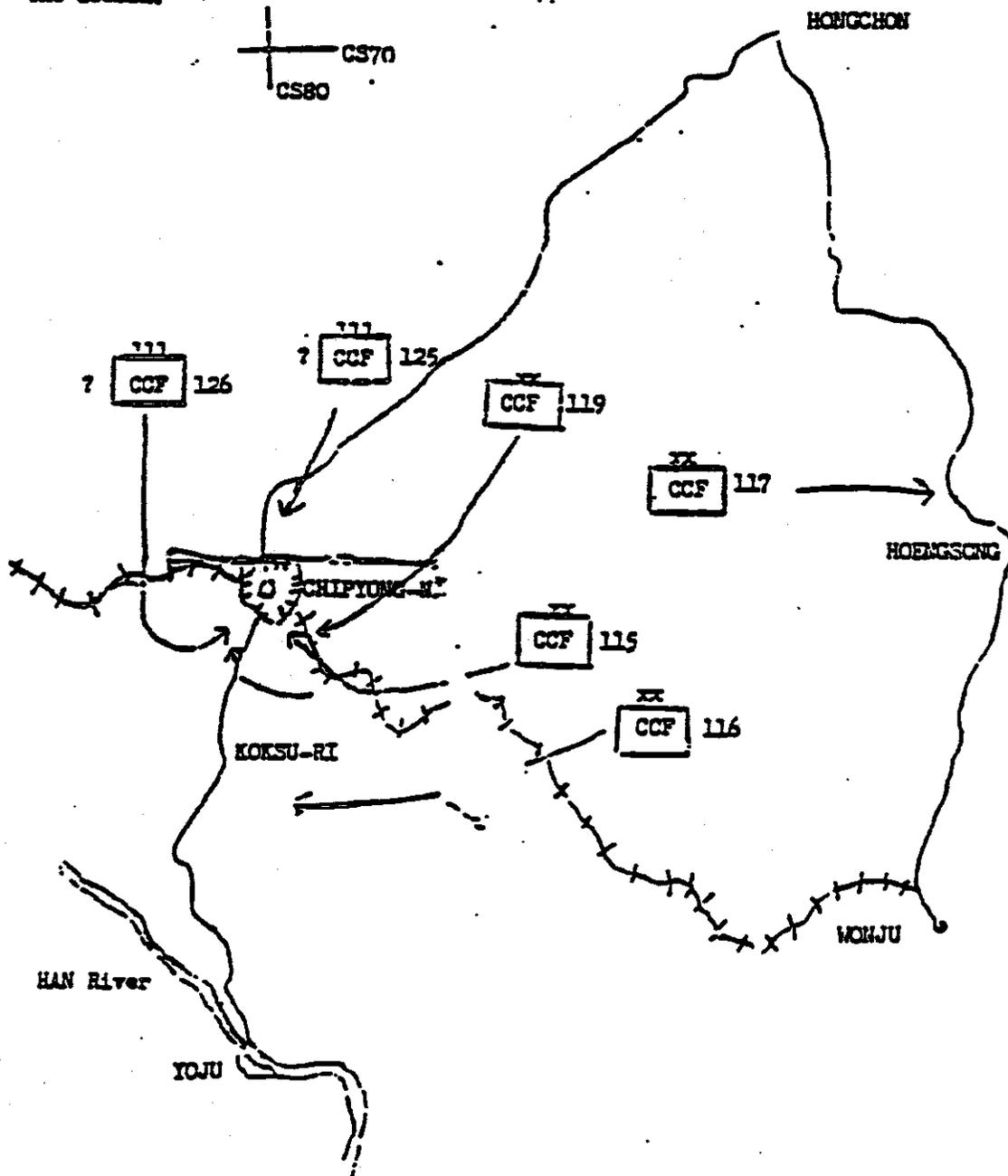
Inclosure #1 Overlay CHIPYONG-NI

Inclosure #2 Overlay CHIPYONG NI 1:50,000

BATTLE OF CHIFYONG-NI

14-16 Feb 51

The following overlays were prepared by the G-2 Section, EUSAK, to give a clearer picture of the disposition and movement of CCF units in the attack.



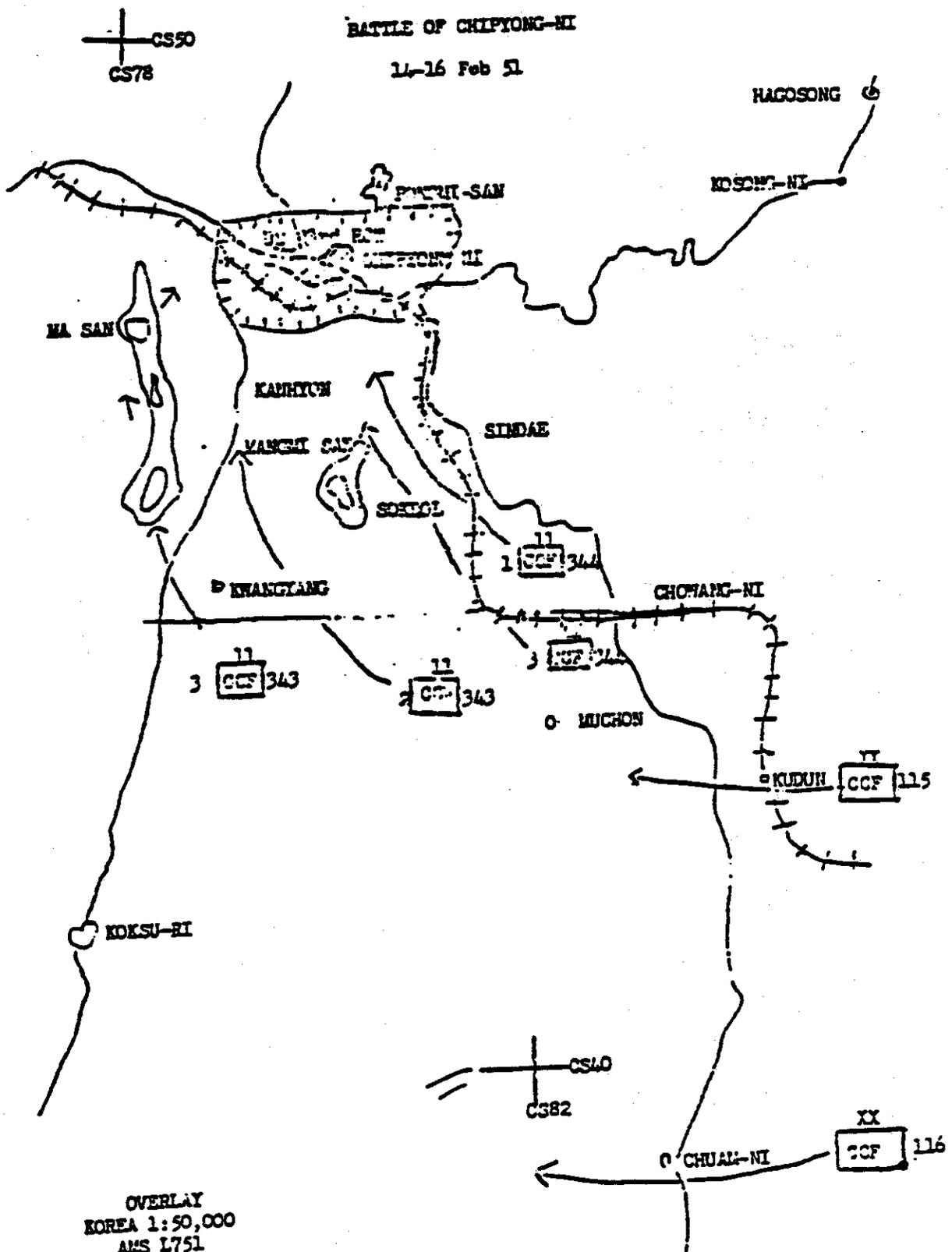
OVERLAY: KOREA: 1:250,000
AMS 552

CS20
DS00

OVERLAY NO 2

BATTLE OF CHIPYONG-NI

14-16 Feb 51



OVERLAY
KOREA 1:50,000
AMS L751