

# The Inchon Landing and Pusan Perimeter Breakout

15 – 30 September 1950

## THE SITUATION

On the morning of 15 September heavy fighting continued in the 1st Cavalry Division sector of the Pusan Perimeter north and west of Taegu. To the south in the 2nd Infantry Division Naktong Bulge sector, pockets of survivors from two North Korean divisions, who had crossed the Naktong early in the month, were being slowly reduced and the Naktong River Defense Line restored. Farther to the south in the 25th Division sector heavy, see-saw fighting continued in the Sibidang Mountain, Battle Mountain and Sobuk Mountain area west of Masan. On the northern Pusan Perimeter front ROK troops, augmented by US artillery, armor and, in some places, infantry, battled along a rough east-west line stretching through high hills and mountains from P'ohang-dong on the east coast to a few miles north of Yongch'on – located 15 miles east of Taegu. Overall, the Great North Korean September Offensive had been stopped and UN forces were slowly regaining lost ground in most sectors but were stalled in some. Within the Pusan perimeter, two Army Corps had been formed – US I Corps at Taegu (the 1st Cavalry Division, the 5th Regimental Combat Team, 24th Infantry Division, the British 27th Brigade plus the 1st ROK Division) and US IX Corps at Miryang, (the 2nd and 25th Infantry Divisions).

To date, 84,478 U.S. troops have participated in defense of the Pusan Perimeter.

Meanwhile as a prelude to the landing at Inchon the UN Command organized US X Corps in Japan. X Corps consisted of, the 1st US Marine Division, which sailed from Kobe on 11 September, the 7th US Infantry Division, which had also sailed from Yokohama on 11 September, and the 17th ROK Infantry Regiment which had sailed from Pusan. Two days later, on 13 September, a Navy gunfire support group sailed up Flying Fish Channel and began shelling Wolmi-do, an island dominated by a 335-foot high hill at the northwestern mouth of Inchon Harbor and connected to the mainland by a causeway. As early as 4 September aircraft the US Navy Task Force 77 had begun bombing and strafing North Korean positions on Wolmi-do.

Extremes tides at Inchon, which can rise and fall as much 32 feet in a 12½ hour period, dictated the landing schedule for the Inchon Invasion because at low tide mud flats extend from hundreds of yards to miles offshore. Troops could land only about two hours before high tide to about two hours after high tide. This fact dictated that the first objective to be taken on D-Day was Wolmi-do, which would be used as a fire base against enemy positions in and around Inchon itself. The landing on Wolmi-do would take place shortly before high tide on the early morning of 15 September. The landing at Inchon proper would then take place in the afternoon beginning 3 hours before high tide.

## September 15

At 0633, following an intense air, rocket and naval gunfire bombardment, landing craft carrying the first wave of Marines from the 3rd Battalion Landing Team (BLT,) 5th Marine Regiment, reached Green Beach, on the north arm of Wolmi-do and the first amphibious assault by American forces against an enemy since 1 April 1945 at Okinawa was underway. The initial landing was unopposed and the Marines quickly moved inland against scattered and very light resistance. One and a half hours after the initial landing the Marines raised the American flag on Radio Hill although light, scattered fighting continued for several more hours. 3rd Battalion casualties for this operation were 17 wounded. North Koreans defenders lost over 200 KIA while another 136 surrendered. Once Wolmi-do was secure the 3rd Marine BLT took up defensive positions facing Inchon and prepared to support the main landing later in the day.

Assault troops from the 5th and 1st Marines began going over the side of their attack transports and into landing craft at 1530. The first wave of the 5th Marines reached the seawall of Red Beach at 1733. A Company, 5th Marines, encountered in the troops in the trenches and a bunker just beyond the seawall and an intense firefight ensued. The Marines lost 8 men killed and 28 wounded. However, 22 minutes after landing the company fired a flare signaling that it held Cemetery Hill, its first objective. Meanwhile, the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, had landed on the right side of Red Beach, encountered only spotty resistance and gained its objective.

Assault elements of the 1st Marines began landing over Blue Beach at 1732 and advanced to the Inchon – Seoul highway. By midnight, all first-day objectives had been seized.

Far to the south in the Pusan Perimeter heavy fighting in the 1st Cavalry Division sector continue at all points north and west of Taegu in a confused series of small and medium battles but the division held against enemy counterattacks and made small gains.

While the Inchon Landing was in progress, a second landing was taking place at Changsa-dong on the east coast north 20 miles north of P'ohang-dong and was being made by the Miryang Guerrilla Battalion, an irregular South Korean unit made up of men from North Korea. The landing's purpose was to place a roadblock on the only road supplying North Korean 3rd Division troops fighting a few miles north of P'ohang-dong. The landing was successful but high seas drove the LST carrying the unit aground and broached the ROK Navy vessel. The attacking force made it to the low hills north and west of the town before the North Koreans could react, but they did react. By afternoon the guerrillas were under fire from higher ground to their north, south and west and were forced to

withdraw back toward the beached LST and set up a perimeter in the sand dunes between the road and the beach.

## September 16

In the Inchon area by 0730 the two Marine Regiments linked up and established a solid line on the east side of the city. Meanwhile, shortly after dawn, Marine Corsairs sighted six T-34 tanks and approximately 200 enemy infantry three miles east of Inchon on the main highway. The Corsairs attacked, scattering enemy infantry and destroying three tanks with 500 pound bombs and napalm. The remaining three tanks were destroyed a few hours later by Marine Pershing tanks as the 1st and 5th Marines advanced towards Seoul. By midnight, the 5th Marines occupied forward defensive positions overlooking the Seoul highway just west of ASCOM City.

Within the Pusan Perimeter the breakout attack began. The general attack was set for 0900 everywhere on the perimeter but failed to gain traction in many areas at the appointed hour because in many places the North Koreans were attacking and the UN troops defending. In most sectors an observer would have found the morning of September 16th little different from the morning of the 15th, or the 14th, or the 13th. It was the same old Perimeter situation – attack and counterattack. Only in a few places were significant gains made the first day of the offensive. The 15th Regiment, 1st ROK Division, advanced to the right of the North Korean strong point at the walled city north of Teagu. To the south, the US 2nd Division broke through five miles to the hills overlooking the Naktong River. Meanwhile the 5th RCT, now attached to the 1st Cavalry Division, left its assembly area 6 miles south of Waegwan and began advancing toward that city.

To the south in the Masan area, the 25th Division could not get advance because it was under heavy enemy attack in all areas.

## September 17

And dawn broke, D Company, 5th Marines, saw six tanks on the road to their east. As the enemy armored force moved past undetected D Company positions a bazooka knocked out one of the tanks. At the same time, Pershing tanks opened fire on the enemy T-34 tanks, destroying the remaining five while D Company Marines opened fire on enemy infantry escorting the tanks. In a matter of minutes approximately 200 enemy soldiers, out of an estimated 250, were killed while the Marine loss was one wounded. Following this battle the 5th Marines advanced rapidly toward Kimpo Airfield and were at its southern edge by 1600. In the next two hours the 5th Marines seized the southern half of the airfield. Meanwhile the 1st Marines advanced east along the Seoul highway toward Yongdongp'o. During this advance, its armored spearhead destroyed four North Korean T-34 tanks. Three miles west of Sosa, a town halfway

between Incheon and Seoul, the 1st Marine advance was slowed by a North Korean Regiment and at nightfall the Marine regiment dug in a mile west of Sosa.

In Pusan Perimeter, the 2nd Division continued its mop-up in their area east of the Naktong River. By evening they had secured the west bank of the Naktong and prepared cross the following day. During this advance they captured a large amount of North Korean equipment and supplies. The North Koreans did not attempt a single counterattack during this time. Meanwhile the 2nd Battalion, 5th RCT, the regimental point, advanced slowly toward Waegwan against heavy resistance.

In the Masan area a battalion task force from the 35th Infantry Regiment, 25th Division, attacked enemy positions on Battle Mountain in an attempt to drive the enemy from this commanding terrain. This attack failed and a new task force using the 27th Infantry was organized.

## September 18

Between 0200 and dawn the 5th Marines repulsed several company-size counterattacks on the airfield, inflicting heavy casualties on the attackers. The entire airfield was secured by 0800 and elements of the 5th Marines advanced toward Hill 99 on the south bank of the Han River, which they captured. That afternoon a lone Marine Corsair landed on Kimpo Airfield followed a few hours later by elements of the 33rd Marine Air Group. Meanwhile, during the evening, ROK Marines moved up to take positions alongside the 5th Marines.

At dawn the 1st Marines passed through and around the burning town of Sosa, seizing Hill 123, a mile east and north by noon. That afternoon the 1st Marines began receiving heavy artillery fire from the southeast, inflicting heavy casualties. Despite losses, the 1st Marines continued their advance toward Yongdongp'o.

The 32nd Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division, landed at Incheon. As soon as the regiment landed it began moving toward 1st Marines positions on the Seoul highway.

Within the Pusan Perimeter, patrols from the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, 38th Infantry, 2nd Division, crossed the Naktong near Pugong-ni, due west of Changnyong, finding the high ground on the west side of the river clear of enemy troops. As soon as the 38th Infantry Regiment received word it moved its 2nd Battalion across the river. By evening the 2nd Battalion occupied Hill 308, a mile west of the Naktong. Meanwhile, the 5th RCT started its attack against Hill 268, a mile southeast of Waegwan, securing this high ground by late afternoon with the exception of the Hill's northeast corner.

As the 5th RCT advanced, the 5th and 7th Cavalry Regiments fought bloody battles against enemy positions to the north and east of Waegwan on Hills 174,

188, 253, and 903 (Ka-San) while the 8th Cavalry Regiment tried to advance up the Tabudong road. All attempts in 1st Cavalry sectors were stopped cold with heavy casualties on the American side. However, to the east of the 1st Cavalry Division, the 1st ROK Division found a gap in North Korean lines, pressed their advance, and ended up astride the Tabudong-Kunwi road 10 miles northeast of Tabudong.

In the Masan area the 27th Infantry tank-infantry battalion-tank task force attacked Battle Mountain, again without success.

At Changsa-dong on the east coast, survivors from the Miryang Guerrilla Battalion were pulled off the beach by US Navy landing craft and the beached LST was destroyed by explosives.

## September 19

Far East Air Force (FEAF) Combat Cargo Command began an airlift to Kimpo, located near Seoul.

In the early morning hours 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, continued its sweep along the Han River and capturing the last high ground (Hills 118, 80, and 85) a mile west of Yongdongp'o. At the same time, the 2nd Battalion seized the high ground in its sector along the south bank of the Han. That night, at approximately 2200, a patrol swam the Han River at a ferry crossing eight miles west of Seoul. They found the crossing suitable for LCVPs. A five-man patrol then continued up the slope of Hill 125 but turned back short of the crest. Shortly before midnight nine Marine LCVPs began entering the Han River. Eight LCVPs were in the water when North Korean mortar and machine-gun fire began striking among the vehicles. Eight turned back to the south bank of the Han and the river crossing was rescheduled for dawn.

Meanwhile, the 1st Marines resumed their attack at dawn. The North Koreans mined the main highway between Sosa and Yongdongp'o, forcing Marine engineers to remove the mines before armor could advance, slowing the advance. Even so, the 1st Marines were able to advance to Kalch'on Creek just west of Yongdongp'o.

Arriving early in the morning the 32nd Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division, took up positions alongside the 1st Marines on the south side of the Seoul highway. Meanwhile the 31st Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division, landed at Inchon.

Within the Pusan perimeter, the 38th Infantry Regiment moved its 3rd Battalion across the Naktong whilst its 2nd Battalion continued its advance to the Ch'ogye road. In the 1st Cavalry sector the 5th RCT continued its fight for Hill 268. Following a napalm and rocket attack by F-51s, the enemy broke and ran for the

Naktong with 5th RCT troops in close pursuit. By evening the 2nd Battalion, 5th RCT entered Waegwan while as many of the enemy as could, abandoning their heavy weapons, vehicles, and supplies, crossed to the west side of the river.

Following a series of delays while crossing the Kumho River near Taegu, the 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry, began crossing the Naktong six miles south of Waegwan at 0630. The first wave met no resistance in the crossing but came under intense North Korean machine-gun fire from Hill 174 as it began moving inland. Supported by air strikes and artillery, the battalion had cleared the hill and finger ridges both north and south by noon. That afternoon, the 3rd Battalion crossed and began advancing north toward Waegwan. The 2nd Battalion followed after dark and was across by midnight. It began advancing south and southwest. Meanwhile, two miles south of the 21st Infantry crossing point, the 1st Battalion, 19th Infantry, crossed the Naktong and the entire regiment was across by midnight, as was the 24th Reconnaissance Company which immediately moved up the road toward Songju, probing for the enemy.

In the 1st Cavalry Division sector the 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry and the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry fought for possession of Hills 253 and 300 against stubborn, dug-in North Koreans and finally, after heavy losses, took both hills. However, they failed to take Hill 371, a mile to the north. Meanwhile, the fall of Waegwan allowed the 1st Cavalry Division to shift the 7th Cavalry's 1st and 3rd Battalions to Waegwan and begin an attack up the Waegwan-Tabudong road.

In the Masan area, the enemy had abandoned its Battle Mountain positions during the night and the 35th Infantry was able to advance toward Chungam-ni while the 24th Infantry occupied Battle Mountain to protect the flank. The 27th Infantry task force went into reserve.

The 10th Philippine Infantry Battalion Combat Team arrived at Pusan.

## September 20

After heavy artillery preparation against Hill 125, I Company, 5th Marines, began the assault crossing at 0645. Enemy automatic weapons and small arms fire on Hill 125 caused heavy casualties to I Company Marines. Despite the casualties, I Company secured Hill 125 by 0940. While this battle was going on other 3rd Battalion Marines, riding LVTs, crossed the Han River encountering little or no resistance and continued north for about a mile cutting the Seoul-Kaesong railroad and the road at the village of Nung-dong. Here the attacking 3rd Battalion Marines turned right and the southeast along the railroad track towards Seoul. Meanwhile, the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, followed the 3rd Battalion across the river with the whole battalion across by 1000. Even before the 3rd Battalion had completed crossing engineers began constructing a pontoon bridge. The 2nd Battalion passed through the 3rd Battalion and continued the advance. By nightfall the 5th Marines, with 12 tanks, were across the river.

On the south side of the Han the 1st Marines, relieved by the 32nd Infantry Regiment the previous evening, had shifted northeast to occupy the hills formerly held by the 5th Marines. Company A took up positions on Hill 118. However the 1st Battalion failed to occupy Hills 80 and 85. During the night North Korean forces occupied Hills 80 and 85, then the counterattacked Hill 118 shortly before dawn. The attack was repulsed and the 1st Battalion advanced toward Yongdongp'o. A bloody battle ensued as the Marines retook Hills 80 and 85. Simultaneous with the North Korean attack Hill 118 a battalion sized North Korean force, accompanied by 5 T-34 tanks, moved out of Yongdongp'o and advanced toward 1st Marine positions on the highway west of the city. In the battle that ensued when the North Koreans met the Marines the North Korean force was annihilated. When the battle was over the 1st Marines continued their advance toward Yongdongp'o and by 0945 occupied the high ground on the west side of the city. They remained in their positions for the rest of the day while artillery and air attacks pounded enemy positions within Yongdongp'o.

As the 1st Marines fought its way along the Inchon-Seoul highway and into to Yongdongp'o, the 7th Infantry Division protected its right flank and engaged the units moving toward the battle area from the south. During the day the 32nd infantry Regiment captured T'ongdok Mountain and part of Copper Mine Hill, located approximately two miles south of Yongdongp'o and just northeast of Anyang-ni.

In the 1st Cavalry Division sector, the 5th RCT continued its attack, taking Hill 303 north of Waegwan and clearing all the ground within its area of responsibility, thus achieving all its objectives on the east side of the Naktong. Then at 1945 the 1st Battalion, 5th RCT, began crossing the river a mile above the Waegwan railroad bridge. The crossing went smoothly and the 1st Battalion was followed by the 2nd Battalion. By midnight both battalions were across and dug in on the high ground on the west side of the Naktong. Meanwhile, the 1st and 2nd Battalions, 7th Cavalry, advanced up the Waegwan – Tabudong road (which looped north of the mountains held by the North Koreans) with the advance slowed by mines and enemy road blocks. Despite this the battalions reached Togae-dong that afternoon, 4 miles short of Tabudong.

During the day, the British 27th Brigade crossed the Naktong, using the same site as the 19th Infantry. It was across by late afternoon. Thus, the entire 24th Infantry Division was now on the west side of the Naktong.

To the south of the 24th Division, about two hours before dawn the 3rd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, crossed the Naktong River at the Sangp'o ferry site, just south of where the Sinban River enters the Naktong from the west. The battalion achieved complete surprise, capturing a North Korean battalion headquarters, complete with its staff, and their maps. By noon the battalion had captured Hill 227, the terrain feature commanding the crossing site.

That after the 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry crossed the Naktong, turned north and advanced toward Hill 207, their objective, which they took.

In the 25th Division area the 35th Infantry took the high ground overlooking Chungam-ni. Meanwhile, on the southern flank, the 27th Infantry was engaged in a bitter battle against a well-dug in enemy, making little or no gains for the day.

On the east coast, the 3rd ROK Division finally captured P'ohang-dong and began advancing toward Hunghae.

At Pusan, the Swedish Red Cross Field Hospital arrived and began setting up.

FEAF Combat Cargo Command expanded its airlift into Kimpo into an around-the-clock operation by using night lighting equipment it had transported the previous day.

## September 21

At dawn a Company sized North Korean unit attacked either 5th Marine positions or the Han River. The attack was driven off and the 5th Marines advanced southeast along the road and railroad paralleling the Han River. Resistance increased steadily as the Marines advanced. By evening the 5th Marines faced a line of low Hills running generally north – south along the west side of Seoul. There position was approximately three miles from the main train station in Seoul.

On the south side of the Han River, the 1st Marines began their assault on Yongdongp'o following a preparatory artillery barrage and air strikes. Their advance met in the resistance and was slow. One company, A Company which was located at the far north end of the Marine lines – that is, on the south bank of the Han River, advanced without opposition and soon found itself entering the western part of Yongdongp'o. It advanced to the Seoul highway at the eastern edge of Yongdongp'o where it set up a roadblock and held this position throughout the day against repeated attacks. When night fell the North Koreans still held over half of Yongdongp'o but pulled out sometime during the night. As the battles were going on the 1st Marine Division's 7th Regiment arrived at Inchon and began landing.

Shortly after dawn the 32nd Infantry Regiment secured the rest of Copper Mine Hill. That afternoon the 7th Division Reconnaissance Company arrived at Anyang-ni where it was ordered to turn south on the Seoul-Suwon highway and proceed to Suwon, arriving there at approximately 1600 where it fought a number of small battles as it made its way through the town and to a blocking position three miles south of Suwon. After dark a tank-infantry task force from the 32nd (Task Force Hannum) arrived at Suwon. Shortly after arriving a short sharp tank battle ensued between tanks from B Company, 73rd Tank Battalion, and two

North Korean T-34 tanks. One B Company tank was destroyed and one T-34 tank was destroyed.

At Waegwan, in the 1st Cavalry sector, the 3rd Battalion, 5th RCT, was relieved of its positions on Hill 300 four miles north of Waegwan by the 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, and it began crossing the Naktong. It was across by dark. To the Northeast of Waegwan, the 1st and 3rd Battalions fought their way to the Tabudong – Taegu highway where the 1st Battalion turned south to clear the road and to link up with 8th Cavalry units advancing on the town from the south. The link-up took place that afternoon. As this was taking place, the 1st ROK Division advanced south to the Waegwan – Tabudong road preventing enemy withdrawal in that direction. Thus the North Korean 1st, 3rd, and 13th Divisions on Ka-san and surrounding terrain had been cut off.

In the 23rd Infantry sector, the enemy counterattacked 3rd Battalion positions at dawn. Heavy fighting ensued with heavy losses on both sides but in the end, the 3rd Battalion retained possession of Hill 227. To the north of this fight, the 1st Battalion, supported by a tank platoon from the 72nd Tank Battalion, attacked up the road toward Sinban-ni, 5 miles to the west. A bitter battle ensued with the battalion stopped cold half way to its objective.

On the road six miles to the north of the 23rd Infantry, the 38th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Division, advanced west on the Ch'ogyehyopch'on road against heavy enemy resistance but was able to capture Hill 239 overlooking Ch'ogyeh.

In the 25th Division area, the 35th Infantry captured Chungam-ni and the well-known Notch 3 miles southwest of the town then advanced 8 miles, past the Much'on-ni road fork, to the high ground of Chinju Pass. Meanwhile, enemy forces in the southern (27th Infantry) area began a full scale withdrawal westward.

Combat Cargo Command C-54s began airlifting supplies, including sixty-five tons of rations and ammunition to newly captured Suwon airfield south of Seoul. C-119s initiated airdrops of food and ammunition to front-line UN troops.

## **September 22**

Early in the morning the 1st Marine Division issued orders for the capture of Seoul. Under this plan the 1st Marines would attack across the Han River from Yongdongp'o while the 7th Marines would cross the Han River using the same crossing point as the 5th Marines and then deploy north of 5th Marine positions forming a line for a three regiment assault on the Seoul. Meanwhile, units of the 5th Marines were engaged in heavy fighting at the western edge of the city, making little or no progress.

Shortly after midnight four North Korean T-34 tanks attacked 7th Division Reconnaissance Company positions three miles south of Suwon. In this

encounter two T-34 tanks were destroyed. The remainder of the night was fairly quiet and shortly after dawn the Reconnaissance Company proceeded to Suwon Airfield where it was joined at approximately 1000 by Task Force Hannum. Later that afternoon the 31st Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division, arrived at Suwon Airfield and relieved the two units. Meanwhile, a number of small battles took place between the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry and North Korean units seven miles northeast of Anyang-ni. In these the 1st Battalion secured the hills south of the Han River railroad and highway bridges.

In the Pusan Perimeter sector, the North Koreans counterattacked the 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry, positions on the Sinban-ni road. The day-long battle ended in a stalemate. To the north, the 38th Infantry took Ch'ogye. Meanwhile the 9th Infantry began crossing the Naktong, leaving its 2nd Battalion on the east side of the river to mop, or contain, enemy still on that side of the river.

In the 1st Cavalry Division sector, the division organized Task Force 777, consisting of the 7th Cavalry Regiment, the 77th Field Artillery Battalion, and the 70th Tank Battalion. Led by the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry, Task Force 777 jumped off from just west of Tabudong and advanced against occasional organized resistance as it sped toward the river crossing at the Sonsan Ferry. After the task force had turned on to the river road at the village of Kumgok, it was ordered to proceed on to Kaktong-ni and cross there. It arrived just before midnight and was fired on by an antitank gun, which was destroyed. However, during this exchange a shell from one of the tanks hit a North Korean ammunition truck, which exploded lighting up the night. By the light of exploding shells the task force saw hundreds of enemy in the water trying to cross the Naktong as well as a jungle of abandoned tanks, trucks and artillery pieces. It immediately opened fire, killing an estimated 200 North Korean troops in the water and capturing more than 200 more.

In the mountains north and west of Taegu, the 1st ROK Division, augmented by National Police units, continued their advance south and took the Walled City on Ka-san (Hill 903,) then continued to clean out enemy pockets on that mountain and from surrounding hills.

To the east, the ROK Capital Division took Kigye and advanced toward Andong. On the east coast the 3rd ROK Division captured Hunghae, driving the North Korean 5th Division northward toward Yongdok.

For all intents and purposes, the Battle of the Pusan Perimeter was over.

The 65th Infantry Regiment, from Puerto Rico, arrived at Pusan and began unloading.

## September 23

The 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry, captured Hill 290, a dominating terrain feature three miles south of the Han River and seven miles southeast of Yongdungp'o. Hill 290 dominates the southeastern approaches to Seoul. Meanwhile, the 2nd Battalion 32nd Infantry seized the hills south of the railroad and highway bridges across the Han to Seoul.

North of the Han River the Marines, including a ROK Marine battalion, continued their attack against enemy positions on Hills 66 and 88, which blocked their advance into the city. Fighting was heavy and the Marines made only small gains throughout the day. Meanwhile the 7th Marines finished crossing the Han River and moved into position.

In the 2nd Division sector, the 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, crossed the Naktong, passed through the stalled 3rd Battalion and took Sinban-ni after hard fighting. The 1st Battalion passed through the 2nd Battalion and then took Ch'ogye.

Meanwhile the British 27th Brigade, attached to the 24th Division, attacked the hills controlling the road to Songju but was forced to withdraw from Hill 282 when a flight of F-51s attacked their hill with napalm and rockets instead of enemy-held Hill 388 and the North Koreans followed up the air attack with a counterattack. This error caused heavy casualties among the Scottish Argyll Highland Battalion. Later that day the 1st Battalion, 19th Infantry attacked south from Pusang-dong on the Waegwan-Kumch'on highway and took Songju.

In the south the 25th Division attacked westward. The attack stalled in the north as the 35th Infantry fought off an enemy counterattack at Chinju Pass.

To the north in the 1st Cavalry Division area, the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry crossed the Naktong River and advanced to Sangju, which had been abandoned by the enemy. Tanks and artillery crossed later in the day and joined the battalion there.

HQ Fifth Air Force in Korea moved from Pusan to Taegu.

## September 24

About 0400, the 2nd Battalion, 32nd Infantry launched an attack toward the Han River. This attack caught the North Koreans asleep and the 1st Battalion quickly overran enemy positions, capturing a regimental headquarters as well as tanks and equipment. In the next few hours, the 2nd Battalion cleared all North Koreans from a fold in the Han River southeast of Seoul setting the stage for an attack on Seoul the following day.

North of the Han River the Marines continued their attacks on the enemy-held hills on the western approaches to the city. After a day of heavy fighting the Marines captured Hills 66 and 296 partially opening the way into Seoul.

Meanwhile the 3rd Battalion, 187th Airborne Infantry Regiment arrived at Kimpo after being flown from Japan. On arrival, it assumed responsibility for the defense of the airfield.

In the Suwon area, a North Korean tank-infantry force attacked 31st Infantry positions two miles south of the city. The attack was defeated with the North Koreans losing 4 T-34 tanks.

In the 25th Division area, the 27th Infantry advanced toward Chinju along the southern coast road while the 35th Infantry advance to the Nam River.

In the 2nd Division sector, the 23rd Infantry attacked Hyopch'on from the southeast while the 38th Infantry attacked the town from the northeast in a double envelopment movement. By blocking the north – south Chinju – Kumch'on road, the 38th Infantry cut off at least two enemy battalions and when these battalions fled Hyopch'on to escape from the advancing 23rd Infantry, they ran into preregistered kill zone the 38th had established. The North Koreans lost approximately 300 killed at the roadblock while several hundred more were killed on the road by air attack. Survivors ran for the hills and in doing so became targets for repeated strikes by F-51s supporting the advance.

Meanwhile the 24th Infantry Division attacked up the Taegu – Taejon highway, making slow progress against well dug in enemy positions. The advance was stopped 3 miles short of Kumch'on by mines, artillery concentrations and the use of every remaining North Korean T-34 in that area as the enemy bought time so its forces could retreat northward.

By I Corps orders, the 1st Cavalry Division's point stopped at Sangju to allow the rest of the Division to catch up.

## September 25

At dawn the Marines resumed their attacks on the remaining hills blocking their entry into Seoul. Shortly after dawn the Marines were joined by two tank platoons from the 1st Tank Battalion, including a flame throwing tank. Resistance on Hill 105 was heavy until the flame throwing tank got close enough to destroy enemy trenches. At this point the enemy broke and more than 300 surrendered as the Marines took this position. Hill 88 fell shortly afterward and the Marines entered the western edge of the city. Marine casualties were severe while the North Koreans lost over 1750 men killed and an unknown number more wounded.

Meanwhile, beginning at 0600, the 32nd Infantry Regiment, 7th Division, crossed the Han River three miles southeast of downtown Seoul. The 32nd was followed across the Han by the ROK 17th Infantry Regiment. During the day these units took South Mountain, while others took Hill 120. The units on South Mountain and Hill 120 dug in for the night and awaited the expected counterattack. To the east, the 17th ROK advanced toward Hills 348 and 292.

Shortly after dusk, two large enemy columns were spotted trying to flee north. B-29s dropped flares throughout the night as Marine night fighters strafed and bombed the fleeing enemy while artillery pounded them.

In the 25th Division sector the 35th Infantry attacks across the Nam River, taking Chinju.

In the 2nd Division sector, the 38th Infantry started northwest from Hyopch'on toward Koch'ang. Their advance was slowed because the road had to be cleared of abandoned enemy vehicles and equipment. According to prisoners, the North Korean 2nd Division abandoned all its vehicles, heavy weapons and equipment as it scattered into the surrounding hills. The 38th Infantry advanced 38 miles during the day, stopping a few miles short of Koch'ang. Meanwhile the 23rd Infantry fought its way toward Koch'ang on parallel road to the north of the 38th Infantry.

In the 24th Division area, the enemy stubbornly held their positions 3 miles southwest of the town on the main highway so during the early morning hours the 5th RCT circled south and attacked the city from that direction. They entered Kumch'on, now reduced to burning rubble, about noon.

By late evening the entire 1st Cavalry Division was concentrated in and around Sangju. Shortly before midnight, the division commander, General Hobart Gay, received permission from I Corps to advance and link up with X Corps units in the vicinity of Suwon. Meanwhile, the 1st ROK Division had crossed the Naktong and moved up to the Hamch'ong-Poum area northeast of Sangju, thus protecting the 1st Cavalry Division's right flank.

Combat Cargo Command landed a battalion of 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team at Kimpo to guard the X Corps' northern flank as it moved out from Inchon.

## September 26

Shortly after dawn the North Koreans attacked 32nd Infantry positions on South Mountain. The attack was a disaster for the North Korean regiment; it lost 394 killed and 174 surrendered. Meanwhile, to the east, the 3rd Battalion, 32nd Infantry was advancing toward Hill 348 when it spotted a large enemy force on the highway. It attacked immediately, killing over 500 North Korean soldiers,

destroying 5 T-34 tanks plus artillery. To the east the 17th ROK Regiment took Hills 348 and 292 and by evening enemy troops had been cleared from both the 17th ROK and 32nd Infantry sectors. Meanwhile, in Seoul itself, the Marines were slowly clearing the city of enemy in what came to be known as The Battle of the Barricades. By nightfall, X Corps forces controlled approximately half the city.

South of Suwon, the 31st Infantry attacked south toward Osan, advancing to the place where Task Force Smith first engaged the North Koreans on 5 July. The attackers dug in just south of there.

The 38th Infantry, 2nd Division, arrived at Koch'ang shortly after dawn and was joined two hours later by advance units from the 23rd Infantry. Repeated air attacks had reduced the town to almost nothing. In Koch'ang, the 38th Infantry captured an enemy field hospital. That afternoon, the 23rd Infantry left for Anui, fourteen miles away, arriving at approximately 2230.

The 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Division, took lead out of Kumch'on and its 2nd Battalion entered Yongdong that morning and found three American prisoners in the local jail. The regiment continued on to Okch'on, 10 miles east of Taejon, where it stopped briefly to refuel the tanks and give the men a short rest. It started on towards Taejon in mid-afternoon but was stopped a short distance west of Okch'on when the lead tank hit a mine and was then destroyed by hidden antitank guns. The fight continued through the rest of the afternoon and into the early evening so the division dug in for the night.

1st Cavalry Division Task Force 777 left Poun a few minutes before noon, advancing rapidly toward Ch'ongju, arriving there around mid-afternoon encountering no enemy resistance. The town was deserted except for a few civilians. The task force continued north on the Ch'onan, on the main Seoul highway, arriving shortly after dark. The town was full of enemy soldiers, most wandering aimless around. None fired on the American unit, now led by tank platoon from the 70th Tank Battalion. After leaving Ch'onan, the three-tank platoon headed north on the main highway at full speed and rumbled into Osan passing through the city. The platoon stopped just north of town while the platoon leader tried to contact the task force unsuccessfully. T-34 tank tracks warned the commander the enemy was probably nearby and he decided to try and force his way through to X Corps lines. Realizing X Corps would probably fire on his tank as he approached, he ordered driving lights turned on and proceeded at full speed. The three tanks began receiving small arms fire from enemy troops and then small arms fire from US infantry as they passed through their lines; fortunately having the lights on prevented X Corps tanks and antitank weapons from firing on them. He reached 31st Infantry lines at 2226. They were very fortunate since they forced their way through a major North Korean tank force as they approached X Corps lines. The rest of the task force was not so lucky. They were still 10 miles south of Osan when they ran into enemy tanks. In the ensuing battle the task force destroyed 7 T-34 tanks but lost 2 KIA, 28

wounded, plus two tanks and 15 other vehicles. At this point, the task force stopped for the night.

## September 27

The Joint Chiefs of Staff sent General MacArthur a comprehensive directive to unite Korea under Syngman Rhee, if possible. However there were limitations. He was to determine whether Soviet or Chinese intervention was likely, and to report any such threat at once. Only ROK troops were to be allowed by the UN Command in provinces bordering China and the Soviet Union. The JCS cancelled further strategic bombing of North Korea.

FEAF Combat Cargo Command finished airlifting the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team to Kimpo.

The Battle of the Barricades continued inside Seoul throughout the day but by evening, except for small pockets and a few snipers, the city was free of North Koreans. Casualties were moderate.

South of their overnight positions, the 31st Infantry ran into heavy resistance from the 105th North Korean Armored Division. Gains during the day were small but the North Korean suffered heavy losses in men, tanks and artillery, inflicted by air attacks and artillery.

Meanwhile, a few miles to the south, at dawn the 1st Cavalry Division's Task Force 777 moved out toward Osan. They encountered small pockets of resistance but entered the town at 0800; at 0826 Platoon Sergeant Edward C. Mancil, L Company, 7th Cavalry, met elements of H Company, 31st Infantry a short distance north of Osan. The rapid advance by Task Force 777 cut off the North Korean 105th Armored Division in the Ansong and P'yongt'aek area plus miscellaneous units in the Taejon area.

In the 25th Division area, all regiments advanced, with 3rd Battalion, 24th Infantry reaching Hadong around 1730. There they learned a group of captured Americans were only being herded northward toward Kurye. At Komdu, 10 miles north of Kurye, advance elements liberated 11 Americans, most from the 3rd Battalion, 29th Infantry Regiment.

At Anui, disaster struck the 3rd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, when an enemy mortar/artillery barrage hit the town. As this bombardment opened, a round struck the 3rd Battalion command post killing the battalion executive officer, the S-2, the assistant S-3, the motor officer, the artillery liaison officer and an antiaircraft officer. The battalion commander was seriously wounded as were 25 enlisted men. Later that afternoon, the 9th Infantry Regiment entered Hyongp'ung-ni, the last hold out in the old Naktong Bulge area.

At Okch'on, the 24th Division was fought to a standstill as the North Koreans threw everything they had into the battle so the rest of their forces could escape from Taejon.

## September 28

Just south of Osan on the main highway an all-day battle developed between the 31st Infantry, 7th Infantry Division and North Korean troops trying to escape northeastward. This battle was fought by artillery units and with air strikes. By dark, the North Koreans had either been killed or fled. Not a single American soldier was killed.

In the 25th Infantry Division area and just short of Namwon, several vehicles from the 25th Division Reconnaissance Company, leading the advance, became stuck in the river crossing south of the town. One tank, commanded by Sgt. Raymond N. Reifers, was already across so he continued on alone, entering the town about 1200, finding it full of the enemy. The tank's appearance apparently surprised the North Koreans, who fled in all directions, scurrying across roof tops and jumping fences to get away. As he was trying to withdraw his tank from this precarious situation, Sgt. Reifers heard voices yelling from a wall-enclosed building, "GI's in here. Don't shoot." Reifers radioed for help saying, "Somebody get up here quick. I'm all alone in the town. It's full of enemy and there are American prisoners here." At this point, stuck vehicles were pushed into deep water alongside the ford and tanks loaded with infantry made a dash for the town and 86 Americans were liberated. That afternoon, after clearing Namwon of enemy troops, advance units from the 25th Infantry Division moved toward Chonju meeting scattered, but light, resistance.

That afternoon, the 2nd Division started the 38th Infantry moving toward Chonju, on the west coastal plain some 73 miles away and over a mountain range. Meeting only light and scattered resistance the 2nd Battalion, 38th Infantry arrived at Chonju at 1315 where it ran into more organized resistance. In the ensuing firefight the regiment killed more than a hundred North Koreans and captured another 170.

At 0700 an air strike hit North Korean positions west of Okch'on. This was followed by an attack by 2nd Battalion, 19th Infantry who found the enemy had withdrawn during the night. Scouts from the 19th Infantry entered Taejon at 1630. Meanwhile, the Air Force was hitting North Korean forces fleeing toward Choch'iwon.

ROK troops advanced into North Korea for the first time.

## September 29

The 2nd Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division, fought its first battle of the Korean War on the southeast side of Seoul when the North Koreans attacked their positions. In this battle the 2nd Battalion suffered 79 casualties. The North Koreans suffered more than 400 killed.

In the 25th Division sector, division units took the town of Iri while Kunsan, the port city on the Kum River, fell to the 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment. Meanwhile the 35th Infantry moved around the east and north sides of the Chiri Mountain area, a 750 square mile area of 6,000-7,000 foot high forested mountain fastness with Chinju, Hadong, Namwon and Hamyang as its four corners. Several thousand North Koreans had withdrawn into this area intending to continue the fighting as guerrillas.

In the southwest corner of Korea at Yosu, ROK Marines landed and liberated the city.

On the east coast and central corridor, ROK forces made rapid advances and were approaching the 38th Parallel in both sectors.

General Douglas MacArthur received permission to cross into North Korea.

## September 30

The 1st Marine Division assumed responsibility for Seoul and the 32nd Infantry began moving south to rejoin the 7th Division in the Suwon-Osan area. Scattered fighting continued throughout the day as the Marines cleared the few remaining small pockets of enemy.

Except for mopping up, South Korea was back under its government's control.

Zhou Enlai, the Chinese Foreign Minister warned: "The Chinese people will not supinely tolerate seeing their neighbors being savagely invaded by the imperialists."