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OCMH, S C No. 0-53-10-2

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF MILITARY HISTORY SPECIAL STAFF, U.S. ARMY		CALL NUMBER 8-5.1A BA 29
HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPT FILE REGRADED UNCLASSIFIED ORDER SEC ARMY BY TAG PER		
TITLE 730364 Task Force Crombez	[Redacted]	
OFFICE OF ORIGIN 3d Historical Detachment Military History Section Eighth United States Army Korea (EUSAK) United States Army Forces, Far East 1st Lt. Martin Blumenson		
RETURN TO ROOM 29	OFFICE CHIEF OF MILITARY HISTORY Rm. 714, 119 "D" Street, N.E. Washington 25, D.C.	

Declassified at 12 year intervals;
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INDEX

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DAAG-ASR-S (17 May 73) (73036)

SUBJECT: Request for Review of Classified Documents

TO: DAMH-HSG
Tempo "C"

FROM: DAAG
FCR BG

DATE: 20 JUL 1973 CMT 2
Mr. Abb/31847

I am returning the 5 remaining documents which you forwarded for declassification review on 17 May 1973, on behalf of LTC Roy Appleman (Retired), an unofficial researcher. These documents have been regraded UNCLASSIFIED. There is no objection to their release.

FOR THE ADJUTANT GENERAL:

5 Incl
wd incl 6

Cyrus H. Fraker

fn R. W. HAMPTON
Colonel, AGC
Director of Administrative Services

POSITION FORM

(AR 340-15)

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SUBJECT

DAMH-HSG

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Request for Review of Classified Documents

TO DAAG-ASR-S

FROM

DAMH-HSG

DATE 17 MAY

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TAC Bldg

Tempo C

Mrs. Gibson/31234

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1. LTC Roy Appleman (Ret.) requested that we submit the following documents for review of the classification and possible downgrading to UNCLASSIFIED:

- a. Task Force Crombez.
- b. Action At Wonju.
- c. Chosin Reservoir, 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry Regiment, 24- 30 Nov. 1950.
- d. Action at Kunu-Ri, 17th Field Artillery Battalion.
- e. Action: Evacuation of 44th Ordnance Depot Company from P'YONGYANG, 30 Nov.- 4 Dec. 1950.
- f. Changbong Ni to Hoengsong.

2. Colonel Appleman would like to use the above documents in preparing a book he is writing on General Ridgway.

FOR THE CHIEF OF MILITARY HISTORY:

6 Incl
As stated

Georgia D. Hill
 GEORGIA D. HILL
 COL WAC
 Chief, Historical
 Services Division

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Date **SEP 19 1951**

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE
WASHINGTON

Sec 5



*Task Force Crombez
Feb 19 51
Blumenson*

*Returned
from 19AF*

A/A Interviews - 8th Army
TF Crombez

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OPERATIONS BRANCH A.G.O.

CLASSIFIED RECORDS

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Feb 1951

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COMMAND REPORT

SECTION V: AFTER-ACTION INTERVIEWS

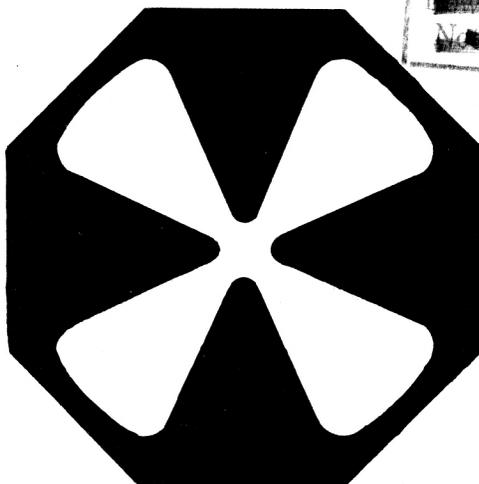
BOOK I TASK FORCE CROMBEZ

HEADQUARTERS

EIGHTH UNITED STATES ARMY KOREA

(EUSAK)

APO 301



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FEBRUARY

1951

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on loan from Alex

8-5.1A Far East, United States Army Forces. Eighth United States Army Korea (EUSAK)
BA 29 Military History Section. 3d Historical Detachment. Command Report, Section V:
After-Action Interviews, Book 1: Task Force Crombez. Prepared by Martin
Blumenson, 1st Lt. 15 February 1951.
Approx 100 pages. Typescript. (S).

Resume of Task Force Crombez action, 5th Cavalry Regiment. Interviews with,
and statements from participating personnel. Maps, after-action interviews, and
photographic supplement.

X Author
Title
Blumenson, Martin, 1st Lt.
3d Historical Detachment
5th Cavalry Regiment

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Resume of Task Force Crombez action, 5th Cavalry Regiment.

II. Interviews with participating personnel

Tab No.	1.	Colonel Crombez
"	2.	Major Parziale
"	3.	Major Wilson
"	4.	Lt Col Heasley
"	5.	Major Humphrey
"	6.	Major Gibson
"	7.	Captain Finley
"	8.	M/Sgt Jones SFC Miller
"	9.	Cpl Cobb
"	10.	Pfc Russell
"	11.	Pfc Bassford Cpl Reed
"	12.	Cpl Campbell
"	13.	Cpl Kemp
"	14.	CWO Umberger
"	15.	Captain Stewart
"	16.	Major Wigler
"	17.	Addenda

8-5.1A1
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III. Statements from participating personnel

Tab No.	18.	1st Lt Boydston, Co A, 70th Tk Bn (Hvy)
"	19.	Cpl Cornelius, "
"	20.	1st Lt Bierwirth, Co D, 6th Med Tk Bn
"	21.	M/Sgt Giddens, "
"	22.	M/Sgt Kirkland, "
"	23.	SFC Maxwell, "
"	24.	SFC Williams, "
"	25.	Pfc Bayes, Jr, "
"	26.	Pfc Lee "
"	27.	Cpl Knutson and Pvt Heggan, Co A, 8th Engr Combat Bn

IV. Extracts

Tab No.	28.	Periodic Operations Report #138, Hq 5th Cav Regt
"	29.	Journal, S2 - S3, 5th Cavalry Regiment
"	30.	Operations Log, 1st Bn, 5th Cavalry Regiment
"	31.	Report, Major Parziale, Regimental S3
"	32.	Unit History, 5th Cavalry Regiment
"	33.	Unit History, Co D, 6th Med Tank Battalion
"	34.	Periodic Operations Report, IX Corps
"	35.	G3 Journal, IX Corps

V. Maps

Tab No.	36.	Map and overlay of route, Task Force Crombez
"	37.	Overlay of Task Force Crombez, and 23rd RCT perimeter

VI. After Action Interview (Evaluation)

Tab No.	38.	Lt Col Pickett, Armored Officer, IX Corps.
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VII. Photographic supplement.

VIII. Interview: Captain Barrett

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RESUME OF ACTION

TASK FORCE CROMBEZ

5th Cavalry Regiment; 15 February 1951

On 14 February 1951, the 5th Cavalry Regiment was ordered to make contact with and relieve the 23d Infantry RCT (with French Battalion attached) which was surrounded by enemy forces at CHIPYONG-NI (CS7947). The KOKSU-RI (CS7741) - CHIPYONG-NI axis was specified for this operation.

The 5th Cavalry Regiment with Company A, 70th Tank Battalion, Company D, 6th Tank Battalion, one platoon, Company A, 8th Engineer Combat Battalion attached, and the 61st Field Artillery Battalion, and 92d Armored Field Artillery Battalion (- Battery A) in support, made a night march from the vicinity of YOJU (CS7928) through enemy territory to the vicinity of HUPO-RI (CS7634), and on the following morning the 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment made initial contact with the enemy in the vicinity of SANGCHOHYON-NI (CS765379). The 2d Battalion was committed, and during the morning and early afternoon of 15 February, both battalions continued attacks against heavy enemy resistance while the 3d Battalion remained in regimental reserve and also as a blocking force against enemy observed on HILL mass 482 (CS7938).

Large numbers of enemy troops were observed in front of the regiment, and by 1100, Colonel Crombez, Commanding Officer, 5th Cavalry Regiment decided that only an armored task force with mobility and fire power would be able to reach CHIPYONG-NI with the rapidity needed. He planned and organized Task Force Crombez to include the following elements: Company D, 6th Tank Battalion; Company A (minus two platoons), 70th Tank Battalion; Company L, 5th Cavalry Regiment, was to ride the tanks to protect them from ground action; four engineer soldiers were to mount the second tank for the purpose of mine observation and lifting.

Although supply trucks and ambulances were expected to arrive in the 5th Cavalry Regimental area for the relief of the 23d Infantry RCT, Colonel Crombez decided that the strong numbers of enemy defending the

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KOKSU-RI - CHIPYONG-NI road made it inadvisable for these wheeled vehicles to be brought to CHIPYONG-NI until the route was cleared.

After artillery and air strike preparation of the area to the front, Task Force Crombez jumped off at 1545, 15 February 1951. The task force column proceeded 1.8 miles when it encountered strong enemy fire. The task force, firing its tank guns, machine guns, and infantry small arms advanced through KOKSU-RI in the face of considerable enemy machine gun, small arms, and rocket fire, and attempts of anti-tank crews to halt it with satchel and pole charges. At the entrance to the pass (CS7845) south of CHIPYONG-NI, the column destroyed and demoralized large numbers of enemy forces engaged in attacking CHIPYONG-NI.

Contact was made with the 23d Infantry RCT on its perimeter shortly before 1700, and at 1710, Task Force Crombez entered the town.

Deciding that the road was not yet sufficiently clear to permit the passage of the supply column assembling at the 5th Cavalry regimental area, Colonel Crombez ordered by radio that the trucks and ambulances would not move to CHIPYONG-NI until he directed ~~them~~^{them} to do so. At the same time, Colonel Crombez decided that the task force had inflicted such destruction on the enemy forces surrounding CHIPYONG-NI that the 23d Infantry RCT would not again be attacked. As a result of these decisions, Task Force Crombez remained in CHIPYONG-NI the night of 15-16 February.

In the meantime, infantrymen of Company L, 5th Cavalry Regiment who had been forced off the tanks of Task Force Crombez by enemy fire endeavored under enemy observation and fire to regain the regimental area. Several tanks of Company A, 70th Tank Battalion, advanced toward KOKSU-RI to cover and evacuate this personnel.

Around noon, 16 February, Task Force Crombez returned to the 5th Cavalry regimental area without encountering the enemy. That afternoon a task force of armor and infantry escorted the supply trucks and ambulances to CHIPYONG-NI and evacuated approximately 200 casualties.

The importance of this aggressive task force was its destruction of enemy forces surrounding the CHIPYONG-NI defenders and isolating them from friendly troops. The action of Task Force Crombez forced the enemy to

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withdraw his forces, and made possible the retention of CHIPYONG-NI by friendly elements.

The importance of this action, in addition to its tactical success, lies in the particular problems posed by the mission to be carried out over difficult terrain heavily defended. Only one very narrow road could be utilized by the 5th Cavalry Regiment, and this was a valley route under constant enemy observation and subject to enemy fire from well-prepared positions on the heights. A further possibility existed that the enemy had laid and was strongly defending minefields which, by disabling one of the lead tanks in the column might have thereby obstructed the route for those following. The decision to attempt an armored breakthrough in the face of these calculations was reached because of the necessity to effect a rapid relief of the encircled 23d Infantry RCT.

 This action illustrates some of the difficulties which arise when riflemen ride tanks through territory defended by the enemy. The riflemen had difficulty firing small arms effectively from moving tanks. They dismounted in order to be effective, and once dismounted, they had difficulty in determining when the tank column was ready to move. Thus, in certain cases, infantrymen who had dismounted to take cover and fire effectively against the enemy were not able to rejoin the tank column and were therefore lost to the task force. Getting aboard a moving tank was not easy. Swinging turrets added another hazard.

 The task force plan lacked provision for evacuation of casualties. The decision by an unauthorized officer to send a two and a half ton truck to follow the tank column was no solution since the personnel in the truck became casualties, the truck was lost, and no evacuation resulted. The expedient of sending tanks forward to cover and evacuate casualties succeeded, even though armored personnel carriers could have been utilized to transport wounded with greater effectiveness.

Martin Blumenson
MARTIN BLUMENSON
1st Lt, AGC
3d Historical Detachment

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AFTER ACTION INTERVIEW

INTERVIEWEE: Colonel Marcel G Crombez, O16198, Commanding Officer,
5th Cavalry Regiment, and Commander Task Force Crombez

ACTION: Task Force Crombez

TIME OF ACTION: 15 February 1951

TIME & PLACE OF INTERVIEW: 26 March 1951 - Headquarters, 5th Cavalry Regiment,
vicinity HONGCH'ON

INTERVIEWER: 1st Lt Martin Blumenson

ASSISTANT: Sfc Raymond Lapino

MAPS: CH'UNGH'ON, NJ 52-10, AMS Series L552
IP'O-RI, Sheet 6726 III, AMS Series L751

On 14 February 1951, the 5th Cavalry Regiment was in corps reserve when Major General Moore, Commanding General IX Corps notified Colonel Crombez by telephone at 1500 that "it looked as if" Colonel Crombez would have to go to the relief of the 23d Infantry RCT (including the French Battalion) surrounded by enemy forces at CHIPYONG-NI (CS7948) and that Colonel Crombez should start planning such an operation along the KOKSU-RI (CS7842) axis. The corps commander telephoned again at 1700 to inform Colonel Crombez, "you'll have to move out tonight, and I know you will do it." The British on the other axis to CHIPYONG-NI, the better and more direct road, were finding enemy forces heavily entrenched along the route and thus were unable to make a rapid advance.

A night march was made from YOJU (CS7928) to the vicinity of HUP'O-RI (CS768346) where a destroyed bridge halted the regimental column. In the morning of 15 February 1951, the 1st Battalion and later the 2d Battalion were committed north toward KOKSU-RI. By 1100, Colonel Crombez realized that the 1st and 2d Battalions were advancing too slowly. He sensed that the enemy offered too much opposition for the infantry battalions to be able to reach CHIPYONG-NI by evening. Feeling that the entire route to CHIPYONG-NI was heavily defended by enemy forces, Colonel Crombez decided that only an armored task force would be able to penetrate the enemy-held territory successfully. He began at that time to plan and organize Task Force Crombez. In addition, he decided that supply trucks and ambulances which were being organized to accompany the 5th Cavalry Regiment to relieve the 23d Infantry RCT would not be able to get through.

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During the morning Major General Moore visited Colonel Crombez at his regimental CP. During the early afternoon, Major General Ruffner, Deputy Commander, X Corps, arrived at the regimental CP and asked Colonel Crombez whether he was going to attempt to reach the 23d Infantry RCT that day. Colonel Crombez stated he would do so personally and that he would arrive there before nightfall. Early in the afternoon, Major General Palmer, Commanding General, 1st Cavalry Division, arriving by helicopter offered the use of his craft to Colonel Crombez who made an aerial reconnaissance of the road to CHIPYONG-NI.

At 1500, Colonel Crombez decided he would not wait for the supply trucks and the ambulances which were arriving from the south, but he would proceed to CHIPYONG-NI with an armored task force. When the road was clear and suitable for wheeled traffic, he would radio back and have Lieutenant Colonel Treacy, Commanding Officer, 3d Battalion, bring in the supply vehicles and the ambulances.

Colonel Crombez composed his task force of the following elements: A total of 23 tanks of Company D, 6th Tank Battalion, and Company A (minus two platoons), 70th Tank Battalion; Company L, 5th Cavalry Regiment. The riflemen of Company L were to ride the tanks with the exception of the first five which were to remain bare. They were instructed to remain on the tanks at all times unless forced off by fire to protect the tanks from fanatic enemy troops who might attempt to knock out the tanks at very close range. Four engineer troops from Company A, 8th Engineer Combat Battalion were placed on the second tank in the column for the purpose of lifting possible mine emplacements. The M46 tanks of the 6th Tank Battalion were placed in the lead because they mounted 90mm guns, because they could turn completely around in place (an important consideration in mountainous terrain traversed by a single narrow road), and because they had better armor protection than the M4A3 tanks of the 70th Tank Battalion which mounted only 76mm guns and which could not turn completely around in place.

Before the task force departed, Colonel Crombez had radio contact with Lieutenant Colonel Chiles, Commanding Officer, 23d Infantry RCT, and Colonel Crombez informed Colonel Chiles that he was coming but without supply trains.

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Colonel Chiles requested that Colonel Crombez come, "trains or no trains." Colonel Crombez asked for air strikes before his departure, and also that liaison planes cover his advance and maintain contact with the advancing column. At 1545, Task Force Crombez, with Colonel Crombez in the fifth tank, departed from the point 500 yards northeast of the road junction in the vicinity of SANGCH'OHYON-NI (CS765380). Major Parziale, Operations Officer, remained at the point of departure. Lieutenant Colonel Treacy was directed to remain at the same place so that on personal order from Colonel Crombez he could bring up the supply trucks and ambulances after the road to CHIPYONG-NI was cleared.

The task force, with the tanks at intervals of 50 yards, proceeded 1.8 miles when small arms and automatic weapons fire at long range began to be received from both sides of the road and also from the right rear. About 30 riflemen forced off the tanks took cover in the ditches. Colonel Crombez directed the column to continue advancing.

As the lead tanks made the sharp bend (CS778408) into KOKSU-RI enemy fire increased in intensity from the high ground west of the town as well as from the ridges to the east. Enemy personnel could be clearly seen, and machine gun fire and tank shells killed many. Not counting the attacking force against CHIPYONG-NI, Colonel Crombez estimated at least 2000 CCF opposing the two infantry battalions which were attacking up the high ridges along the road. Except for die-hard anti-tank crews, bazooka teams, and satchel and pole charge groups, the enemy was emplaced in the high ridges.

Immediately after the column passed through KOKSU-RI, about 100 additional riflemen were forced from the tanks, but Colonel Crombez, feeling that the success of the task force depended on the ability of the tanks to keep moving, directed the tanks to continue.

North of KOKSU-RI, the road passed through the valley, following the hillside on the left closely, until the high ground or summit when the road then followed along the hills on the east. As the tanks approached the summit in the pass near BENCHMARK 129 (CS789457), close teamwork among the tanks was particularly necessary since the enemy was located at the top of the cliffs, directly overlooking the task force column. Enemy fire

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intensified, and bazooka and satchel charges were thrown from the heights. At the summit of the pass, 5.25 miles from the start, the lead tank was hit but not disabled by a bazooka rocket; all members in the fighting compartment of the tank ~~was~~ ^{were} wounded. The fourth tank was struck in the turret by a bazooka round, and the rocket exploded the ammunition in the ready racks within the tank and set the tank on fire. Captain Hiers, Commanding Officer, Company D, 6th Tank Battalion, and the men in the fighting compartment of the tank were burned to death. The driver of the tank gunned the motor and got the tank off the road in order to keep from impeding the progress of the following tanks. Lieutenant Bierwirth assumed command of Company D, 6th Tank Battalion.

Because the enemy fire had been so intense along the road, Colonel Crombez decided that no wheeled traffic would be able to get through. He radioed the operations officer when he was about one mile south of the summit to hold up the trains and ambulances until Colonel Crombez personally gave the order for them to be brought up. Lieutenant Colonel Treacy, who had been designated as the officer to bring the supply train in to CHIPYONG-NI, had joined the riflemen riding the tanks of Task Force Crombez and had directed a 2 1/2 ton truck to follow the tank column to CHIPYONG-NI for the purpose of picking up the wounded. This truck reached the summit of the pass where it was finally halted by enemy fire. Lieutenant Colonel Treacy was missing in action. This, Colonel Crombez learned later.

Shortly before 1700, Task Force Crombez had almost reached the defense perimeter of the 23d Infantry RCT. Stopping in the vicinity of the road junction near MASAN (CP795465), the tanks cleaned out the area to the right of the road by heavy and concentrated fire. Enemy troops attempting to escape up the draws bunched up in groups of as many as 50 to 100 and were destroyed by the tank 90mm guns firing HE. Colonel Crombez stated that this fire hit the enemy on his flank, as the enemy was making an attack on CHIPYONG-NI.

The task force so demoralized the enemy that his positions disintegrated. Task Force Crombez struck the Chinese Forces attacking the 23d Infantry RCT at the most psychological moment, while they were progressing in their

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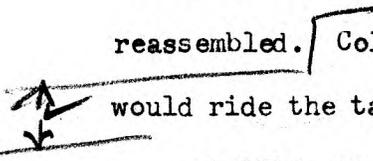
attack against the 23d Infantry RCT. The 23d Infantry RCT was at that moment making a counterattack to regain a 155mm Howitzer battery position which had been overrun. A platoon of tanks of the 23d Infantry RCT met the lead tanks of Task Force Crombez at the 23d Infantry RCT perimeter. After the 23 Infantry RCT tanks turned around, Task Force Crombez, shortly after 1700, entered the defense perimeter of the 23d Infantry RCT, 6.2 miles from the start of the operation. Colonel Crombez made contact with Lieutenant Colonel Chiles who stated that he had been flown in to assume command of the 23d Infantry RCT when Colonel Freeman, former Commanding Officer, 23d Infantry RCT, was evacuated by air after being wounded two days previously.

When Task Force Crombez entered CHIPYONG-NI, 23 infantrymen and the four engineer troops were still aboard the tanks. Of these, 13 were lightly wounded, and one died of wounds that evening. The infantrymen forced from the tanks before reaching CHIPYONG-NI made their way to the regiment, about 100 returning to the original point of departure that night.

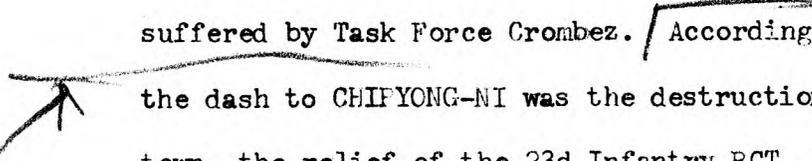
At 1730 Colonel Crombez decided to spend the night at CHIPYONG-NI. His reasons were as follows: one hour of daylight remained, and in the event that enemy opposition was encountered on the return trip, it might be dark before contact could be made with the regiment. Tanks unprotected by infantrymen and operating in darkness could be ambushed by enemy crews or destroyed by mines. But also, Colonel Crombez thought that the fire power of the task force had effectively destroyed the capability of the enemy to attack CHIPYONG-NI that night. In view of the fact that the enemy had attacked the 23d Infantry RCT on the two previous nights, and because ammunition supplies of the 23d Infantry RCT were dangerously low, this decision was a calculated risk. Colonel Chiles anticipated a night attack, and Colonel Crombez agreed to use some of his tanks on the defense perimeter of CHIPYONG-NI. Most of these tanks were placed along the two valley routes to guard the north and west approaches to the town. The enemy did not attack that night.

At 0900, 16 February, the scheduled time for return to the regiment, Colonel Crombez informed his assembled task force that the return trip would be postponed because of the weather. A light snow was falling, and

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visibility at times was less than one hundred yards. Air cover was therefore out of question. The weather cleared up at 1100, and the task force was reassembled.  Colonel Crombez informed the infantrymen that only volunteers would ride the tanks back, but none volunteered.

At 1215, 22 tanks of Task Force Crombez started back. Two questions were in Colonel Crombez's mind. Would the enemy remain in position? And had the enemy placed mines on the road? Colonel Crombez had asked Lieutenant Colonel Ghiles to place a heavy 4.2 mortar concentration on the pass as the task force approached, and this was done. On the return voyage, not a single enemy was seen nor a single shot fired. The task force reached the first and second Battalions of the 5th Cavalry Regiment at 1245. The 1st Battalion on the right was combing the ridges in the vicinity of KOKCH'ON (CS775395), the 2d Battalion was scouring the ridges in the vicinity of HILL 143 (CS763393).

The fact that no enemy forces opposed Task Force Crombez on its return proved that the Chinese Forces had been crushed and decisively beaten and that the operation was a success. Colonel Crombez estimated that over 500 enemy troops had been destroyed. The enemy had been forced to relinquish its attempts to destroy the 23d Infantry RCT and to prevent relief from reaching CHIPYONG-NI. Colonel Crombez further estimated that the task force had accomplished in one hour what would have taken two battalions of infantry four days to accomplish with six times the number of casualties suffered by Task Force Crombez.  According to Colonel Crombez, the value of the dash to CHIPYONG-NI was the destruction of enemy forces south of that town, the relief of the 23d Infantry RCT, and the opening of the Main Supply Route. Only an armored column could have accomplished this in so rapid and decisive a manner, since the mountainous terrain precluded the use of vehicles. The only real danger to the success of Task Force Crombez was the possibility that heavily defended enemy mine fields existed, and this was a calculated risk. 

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A task force of supply vehicles and ambulances under the command of Captain Stewart brought relief to the defenders of CHIPYONG-NI on 16 February 1951.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Serious consideration should be given to provide each regiment with more than one organic tank company.

Martin Blumenson

MARTIN BLUMENSON

1st Lt AGC

3d Historical Detachment

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AFTER ACTION INTERVIEW

INTERVIEWEE: Major Charles J Parziale, O33829, Commanding Officer,
3d Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment (at time of action,
S3, 5th Cavalry Regiment).

ACTION: Task Force Crombez

TIME OF ACTION: 15 February 1951

TIME & PLACE
OF INTERVIEW: 27 March 1951 - Headquarters, 3d Battalion, 5th Cavalry
Regiment, vicinity Hongch'on

INTERVIEWER: 1st Lt Martin Blumenson

ASSISTANT: Sfc Raymond Lapino

MAPS: IP'0-RI, Korea, Sheet 6726 III, AMS Series I751

On 14 February 1951, in the late afternoon, orders were received for the 5th Cavalry Regiment to move from YOJU (CS7928) north to CHIPYONG-NI (CS7947).

The KOKSU-RI axis was specified for the 5th Cavalry Regiment operation because the 27th British Brigade was operating along the other axis to CHIPYONG-NI. Major Parziale thought that the British had also been given the mission of contacting the 23d RCT along its axis.

The 1st, 2d, and 3d Battalions, in that order, moved after dark until around midnight when the regiment was halted by a blown-out bridge (CS768346) at HUPO-RI. The regiment stopped for the remainder of that night, and the attack was ordered to continue at daybreak the following day. The 1st Battalion became engaged almost immediately in the vicinity of MADURI (CS765383), and at 0900, Major Parziale recommended to Colonel Crombez that the 2d Battalion be committed on the left side of the road. This was done at 0930. Enemy opposition was very strong.

Between 1100 and 1200, 15 February, formation of Task Force Crombez was started, and during that time, Colonel Crombez and Major Parziale crystallized the plan for the task force operation. The decision to form Task Force Crombez was made because of the following reasons. The infantry was meeting too much opposition, and only an armored column's mobility would be able to make the quick contact with the 23d RCT at CHIPYONG-NI which was necessary. Infantry would be needed to accompany the tanks to offer pro-

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tection from mines and to keep the enemy from climbing on the tanks and using demolition charges. Enemy minefields heavily defended were a calculated risk.

The task force was planned to break open a supply route to the 23d RCT. After considering the advisability of sending the supply column along with the armored column or having it follow the tank column, it was decided to have the supply column leave the regimental area with tank protection and only on Colonel Crombez's personal order ^{at a later time.} Lieutenant Colonel Treacy, Commanding Officer, 3d Battalion, was designated the officer to conduct the supply column to CHIPYONG-NI.

At 1200, the task force was formed and ready to move on the order of Colonel Crombez, who had decided that he would personally conduct it into CHIPYONG-NI. Orders were given to infantrymen to get off the tanks when the vehicles stopped, cover the tanks and the engineers who might be in the process of mine-lifting, and get back on the tanks when the vehicles started moving again.

During the morning, Colonel Crombez conferred with the division commander and also with the division commander of the 2d Infantry Division, who visited the regimental CP. Colonel Crombez informed both generals he would be in CHIPYONG-NI before nightfall that day.

At 1500, or thereabouts, when Major Parziale spoke on the radio with the S3, 23d RCT, he received the impression that the 23rd RCT needed supplies desperately. Major Parziale at this time was unaware that the 23d RCT had been receiving supplies by air drop. Yet, the S3, 23d RCT wanted Task Force Crombez to come through to CHIPYONG-NI with or without supplies. As a result of this, and after some thought, Major Parziale came to the conclusion that the 23d RCT was in reality most in need of psychological contact with friendly forces, even though the question of evacuating the wounded was certainly an important consideration.

Task Force Crombez ran into its first opposition just short of KOKSU-RI (CS7842). Major Parziale at that time was located at an observation post (CS775398) where he could see the task force column.

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He also had excellent radio communication with Colonel Crombez, and he was able to listen to the inter-tank communication. Major Parziale recalled Colonel Crombez directing the task force column to keep moving. He also heard Colonel Crombez say, "We're killing hundreds of them." In a radio conversation with Colonel Crombez after the arrival of the task force in CHIPYONG-NI, Major Parziale was informed that in Colonel Crombez's estimation the road to CHIPYONG-NI was not yet secure and that the supply column for the relief of the 23d RCT would not move until Colonel Crombez ordered ^{it} personally.

The 1st and 2d Battalions which had maintained strong pressure on the enemy had thus prevented the enemy from concentrating his forces on the task force column. This, Major Parziale felt, was very important. Had it not been for the aggressive attacks of the 1st and 2d Battalions, Major Parziale felt that the task force might possibly not have succeeded.

After several men of Company L returned to the 1st Battalion CP, and as a result of information they brought, tanks of Company A, 70th Tank Battalion moved out of the regimental area several times in groups of two or three and evacuated as well as covered the evacuation of approximately 30 men between 1700 and 1900. These tanks moved as far as the bend in the road just south of KOKSU-RI, venturing no farther because of approaching darkness. These tanks, according to Major Parziale, were not part of the Task Force Crombez plan, but were sent out as a field expedient.

The Company L casualties were evacuated through the 1st Battalion aid station (CS769386) which was set up just behind Company B.

On its return trip from CHIPYONG-NI on 16 February 1951, Task Force Crombez met the 1st and 2d Battalions 400 to 500 meters south of KOKSU-RI.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Major Parziale would have no infantrymen riding tanks through enemy-held territory because the infantrymen would have little chance to defend themselves against enemy fire. He would have the infantry walk through hostile fire rather than ride through, although Major Parziale stated that there was no other alternative in the Task Force Crombez operation.

Martin Blumenson
MARTIN BLUMENSON

1st Lt, AGC

3d Historical Detachment

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AFTER ACTION INTERVIEW

INTERVIEWEE: Major Fred T Wilson, 0450485, Executive Officer, 2d Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment. (at time of action S3, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment).

ACTION: Task Force Crombez

TIME OF ACTION: 15 February 1951

TIME & PLACE OF INTERVIEW: 28 March 1951, Headquarters, 2d Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, vicinity Hongch'on

INTERVIEWER: 1st Lt Martin Blumenson

ASSISTANT: Sfc Raymond Lapino

MAPS: IP'0-RI, Korea, Sheet 6726 III, AMS Series I751

When Task Force Crombez departed the regimental area on 15 February 1951, Major Wilson was at an observation post (CS773382) located midway between SANGCHOHYON-NI and HILL 152. Through his field glasses, Major Wilson was able to follow the task force beyond OKKU (CS7843) and almost into the pass (CS7845).

The first enemy fire directed against the task force came from PYONGCHON (CS776397) and the small village beside it to the north. Very few riflemen dismounted until the tank column was just short of the turn into KOKSU-RI (CS777413), and the Major Wilson saw an estimated 12 or 15 men lying along the dikes to the left of the road and working their way to the dry stream bed.

After the tank column made the turn into KOKSU-RI, seven or eight additional riflemen dismounted.

Major Wilson saw the tanks stop only once, just before entering KOKSU-RI. From there to OKKU, Major Wilson could see only the rear of the tank column which continued without halting.

Major Wilson saw the tanks receiving small arms fire. He could also distinguish heavy explosive bursts, but it was difficult for him to tell whether those bursts were mortar shells or from the tank guns.

On 16 February, Major Wilson was at an observation post (CS780400), northeast of PYONGCHON. Company A was moving from this position to HILL 206 (CS790409), and the battalion staff was concerned about the possibility

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that the returning tanks of Task Force Crombez would fire upon Company A. Major Wilson saw the task force come through the pass south of CHIPYONG-NI, the tanks firing as they came. A regimental tank platoon was deployed at that time at the bend (CS778408) in the road south of KOKSU-RI, and contact was made between the 1st Battalion and the returning task force there.

Martin Blumenson
MARTIN BLUMENSON
1st Lt, AGC
3d Historical Detachment

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AFTER ACTION INTERVIEW

INTERVIEWEE: Lieutenant Colonel Morgan B Heasley, O30175, Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment.

ACTION: Task Force Crombez

TIME OF ACTION: 15 February 1951

TIME & PLACE OF INTERVIEW: 28 March 1951, Headquarters, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, vicinity Hongch'on

INTERVIEWER: 1st Lt Martin Blumenson

ASSISTANT: Sfc Raymond Lapino

MAPS: IP'0-RI, Korea, Sheet 6726 III, AMS Series L751

At 1630, 14 February 1951, the 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, in the vicinity of YOJU, east of the river in battalion assembly area, was alerted to move north and make contact with the enemy. At 1830, the first battalion moved out to make contact with enemy forces believed to be in the vicinity KOKSU-RI (CS7741). The battalion proceeded to HUPO-RI (CS7634) and was halted at a blown out bridge at 2330. Extensive work to construct a by-pass was required, and the battalion went into a perimeter defense at that point. Tanks and engineers were attached to each infantry battalion. The 61st Field Artillery Battalion moving in close support of the regiment did not fire until enemy contact was made. The order of march was as follows: the 2d and 3d platoons, Company A, 70th Tank Battalion; Company B riflemen riding the tanks and four trucks which followed, the command group; Company C; Company A, 1st Platoon, Heavy Mortar company; Company D; Headquarters Company; and the 1st Platoon, Medical Company organic to the regiment.

At 0700, 15 February 1951, the battalion moved out and at 1100 hours contacted an estimated battalion of enemy dug in on the HILL mass 152 (CS7738). The battalion deployed and moved north. By 1500 hours, Company B had pushed to the vicinity of KOKCHON (CS7739). Company A was deployed to the left in the vicinity of MUCHON-NI (CS7638), and Company C was deployed in the vicinity of HILLS 152 and 183 (CS7838). The 2d Battalion committed after the initial enemy contact was located to the left on HILL 143 (CS7639).

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Sometime in the early afternoon Colonel Heasley returned to the regimental group located in the vicinity of SANGCHOHYON-NI (CS7637), where he learned that Task Force Crombez was being organized to break through enemy territory to CHIPYONG-NI (CS7947). This task force was to be joined by 30 supply trucks from IX Corps. Since the supply trucks had not arrived by 1530, Task Force Crombez proceeded without them.

Colonel Heasley at an observation post (CS772388), east of MUCHON-NI and near Company B, could see Task Force Crombez move out. The column was struck by enemy fire at the road bend (CS778407) south of KOKSU-RI. There, intense enemy small arms and mortar fire was received by the tank column. Since the 1st Battalion had been receiving light artillery fire (47mm, 75mm) during the morning and early afternoon, Colonel Heasley thought it was reasonable to assume that the task force received this fire also. Colonel Heasley followed the progress of the task force to a point just beyond KOKSU-RI; he was able to hear the fire all the way to CHIPYONG-NI.

Task Force Crombez was well organized and aggressive. Although Colonel Heasley wondered at the feasibility of mounting infantry on tanks going through enemy positions, he recognized the need of infantry for tank protection.

About 1700, on Colonel Heasley's order, two tanks of the 3d Platoon, Company A, 70th Tank Battalion which was working with the 1st Battalion, went forward and brought back a group of wounded riflemen who had been forced from the tanks of Task Force Crombez. Several trips were made and Colonel Heasley estimated that between 30 and 50 men were brought back. These rescue tanks proceeded under small arms fire as far as the bend in the road south of KOKSU-RI.

During the morning of 16 February 1951, the 1st Battalion held the positions it had reached the previous day.

Martin Blumenson
MARTIN BLUMENSON
1st Lt, AGC
3d Historical Detachment

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AFTER ACTION INTERVIEW

INTERVIEWEE: Major Robert A Humphrey, 0505236, S2, 5th Cavalry Regiment

ACTION: Task Force Crombez

TIME OF ACTION: 15 February 1951

TIME & PLACE
OF INTERVIEW: 27 March 1951, Headquarters, 5th Cavalry Regiment, vicinity Hongch'on

INTERVIEWER: 1st Lt Martin Blumenson

ASSISTANT: Sfc Raymond Lapino

MAFS: IP'0-RI, Korea, Sheet 6726 III, AMS Series L751
CH'UNCH'ON, Korea, NJ 52-10, AMS Series L552

On 14 February 1951, the 5th Cavalry Regiment headquarters displaced from six miles south and east of YOJU (CS7928) to one or two miles south and west of this town in anticipation of a pending move to relieve the 23d RCT surrounded at CHIPYONG-NI (CS7947). The regimental commanding officer, Colonel Crombez, had received personal orders from the corps commander that afternoon, and the official order of execution arrived at the headquarters at 1730. After Colonel Crombez briefed the battalion commanders, the regiment moved at approximately 1900 in darkness to SANGCHOHYON-NI (CS765379), with the order of march as follows: 1st Battalion, Regimental CP advance, 2d Battalion, Headquarters Company, and the remainder of the CP. This vehicular move was accomplished under blackout conditions, in enemy territory, and over a road on which snow and rain had fallen and which had been chewed up by the 23d RCT on its move to CHIPYONG-NI.

The column was halted around mid-night at SANGCHOHYON-NI. One platoon, Company A, 70th Tank Battalion was with each infantry battalion, as well as one platoon, Company A, 8th Engineer Combat Battalion. The 61st Field Artillery Battalion (105mm howitzers) was kept under regimental control.

At 0700, 15 February 1951, the 1st Battalion jumped off on foot with the mission of taking the high ground east of the road in the vicinity of HILL 152 (CS776383). Lead elements of the 1st Battalion encountered an enemy mine field on the road and shoulders east of MUCHON-NI (CS765388). At that time the Battalion began receiving small arms fire from the north

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and northeast. The unit fanned out and took the high ground according to plan without opposition except for small arms fire.

The 2d Battalion coming up on the left of the road moved generally through MADURI (CS761384) and followed north sweeping the ground in the vicinity of HILL 143 (CS763393).

The regimental CP group, in the vicinity of SANGCHOHYON-NI, was able to observe the battalion operations 800 to 1000 meters distant.

In the triangular area formed roughly by KOKCHON (CS774395), OKTAE (CS787397), and KOKSU-RI (CS777413), great numbers of enemy troops were observed by 1st and 2d Battalion troops, artillery liaison planes, division spotting planes, and the Tactical Air Control Party observation planes (T6) which directed air strikes on this terrain. The regimental artillery fired on this area, lifting only for the air strikes. One battery of 155mm self-propelled howitzers also gave support. This fire fell during the morning and early afternoon of 15 February 1951, in preparation for Task Force Crombez.

In the early afternoon, the 3d Battalion moved up behind the 1st Battalion. Enemy troops were thoroughly entrenched in great numbers on the regimental front and in particular in front of the 1st Battalion, in the OKTAE valley. An estimated 2000 enemy troops were located here. The high HILL mass 482 (CS7938, CS8039) was of great concern to the regiment because it afforded observation for enemy forces. This area was saturated by artillery and air strike and kept under close surveillance.

The 1st and 2d Battalions made probing and pushing attacks, while the 3d Battalion was held in reserve and also as a blocking force against HILL mass 482. When the 1st and 2d Battalions moved into the KOKCHON area, it was felt that the enemy had been pushed apart sufficiently to enable Task Force Crombez to break through.

Major Humphrey listening on the jeep radio belonging to the First Sergeant, Company D, 6th Tank Battalion heard on three different occasions queries from tankers in Task Force Crombez on whether they should slow down or stop in the face of enemy fire. Colonel Crombez in a calm and cool voice directed the tanks to continue forward.

No direct artillery support was given the task force because of the infantrymen who were accompanying the tanks.

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About the time the task force arrived in CHIPYONG-NI, the regimental CP moved to a point (CS772386) east of MUCHON-NI, and was completely set up when mortar fire was received on the CP generally coming from the vicinity of HILL 482. A concentration of about 15 minutes was followed closely by one lasting ten minutes. As a result of this, the CP was displaced to a point (CS762366) south of CHOHYON-NI.

On 16 February, the main CP was located at a point (CS753367) east of MYONGCHON, while the advance CP returned to the area which had received mortar fire the night before.

Martin Blumenson
MARTIN BLUMENSON
1st Lt, AGC
3d Historical Detachment

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AFTER ACTION INTERVIEW

INTERVIEWEE: MAJOR James M Gibson, 048730, Executive Officer, 3d Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, (at time of action, Executive Officer, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment).

ACTION: Task Force Crombez

TIME OF ACTION: 15 February 1951

TIME & PLACE OF INTERVIEW: 27 March 1951 - Headquarters, 3d Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, vicinity Hongch'on

INTERVIEWER: 1st Lt Martin Blumenson

ASSISTANT: Sfc Raymond Lapino

MAPS: IP'Ō-RI, Korea, Sheet 6726 III, AMS Series L751
CH'UNGCH'ON, Korea, NJ 52-10, AMS Series L552

On 14 February 1951, the 5th Cavalry Regiment moved to an assembly area just south of YOJU (CS7928), and the 1st Battalion guarded the pontoon bridge across the HAN River at KORUN-NI (CS8326). At 1800, the 5th Cavalry Regiment received the mission of relieving the 23d RCT in CHIPYONG-NI (CS7947), via the KOKSU-RI (CS7842) - CHIPYONG-NI axis. The reason why the axis was specified was that the 27th British Brigade was using the main YOJU - CHIPYONG-NI axis through TOKSAN-NI (CS8334) and NOEAN-NI (CS8440), and was encountering resistance which made it seem likely that the British would not be able to relieve the 23d RCT rapidly enough. Major Gibson understood that the 27th British Brigade had had the original mission of relieving the CHIPYONG-NI garrison, but due to the heavy enemy resistance encountered, the 5th Cavalry Regiment was committed on the left.

The 5th Cavalry Regiment made a night march the evening of 14 February 1951, through CHANGAM-NI (CS8434), and followed the trail to CHONNAM-NI (CS7933) and CHOHYON-NI (CS7637), in order to reach the KOKSU-RI - CHIPYONG-NI axis. Starting at 1800, the 5th Cavalry Regiment crossed the bridge at KORUN-NI, with the 1st Battalion, 2d Battalion, regimental headquarters, and the 3d Battalion in that order. Company B, the leading element, halted at 2300 because of a blown-out bridge in the vicinity of HUPO-RI (CS768346), and Company A, 8th Engineer Combat Battalion constructed a bypass for tanks during the night.

The 1st and 4th Platoons, Company A, 70th Tank Battalion were attached to the 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment; the 2d Platoon, Company A,

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70th Tank Battalion was attached to the 2d Battalion; the 3d Platoon, Company A, 70th Tank Battalion was attached to the 3d Battalion.

At daylight, 15 February, the regiment continued to move in the original order of march. Initial enemy resistance was met at SANGCHOHYON-NI (CS765379) at about 0800, and Company B deployed off the trucks while Company A was ordered forward. With Companies A and B advancing astride the road, Company C was held in battalion reserve. When the 1st Battalion reached solid positions east of the road, the 2d Battalion was committed west of the road and occupied HILL 143 (CS7639).

The enemy held strong positions on both sides of the road, and the 1st and 2d Battalions making slow progress continued heavily engaged until dark, when they were ordered to button up for the night. (Major Gibson thought this order was given by Major Parziale, regimental S3) Between 1700 and 2000, the enemy fired a great deal of mortar and automatic weapons, an indication from past experience of a hasty enemy withdrawal.

At daylight, 16 February, the 1st and 2d Battalions continued north against very light scattered resistance. Captured enemy stragglers stated that the main body of troops had hastily retreated.

Contact with returning Task Force Crombez was made south of KOKSU-RI.

On 17 February, the 1st Battalion occupied HILL 397 (CS8045), and the 2d Battalion occupied positions in the vicinity of HILL 129 (CS7845) without meeting enemy resistance.

Martin Blumenson
MARTIN BLUMENSON
1st Lt, AGC
3d Historical Detachment

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AFTER ACTION INTERVIEW

INTERVIEWEE: Captain Joe W Finley, O28599, Commanding Officer, Company F,
5th Cavalry Regiment

ACTION: Task Force Crombez

TIME OF ACTION: 15 February 1951

TIME & PLACE
OF INTERVIEW: 28 March 1951, Headquarters, 2d Battalion, 5th Cavalry
Regiment, vicinity Hongch'on

INTERVIEWER: 1st Lt Martin Blumenson

ASSISTANT: Sfc Raymond Lapino

MAPS: IP'0-RI, Korea, Sheet 6726 III, AMS Series L751

On the morning of 15 February 1951, the 2d Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment moved to the vicinity of CH'OHYON-NI (CS760375), where the companies detrucked. Major Allen, Commanding Officer, 2nd Battalion, took the company commanders on reconnaissance as far as SANGCH'OHYON-NI (CS765380). Company G then moved up on HILL 143 (CS763393), Company H moved up along the stream bed to the right, and Company F moved into MADURI (CS761385), as battalion reserve. Company G worked as far as SANCHON (CS768405), and company E moved a similar distance, when the battalion observation post party on the north edge of HILL 143 noticed heavy enemy activity in the vicinity west and south of SAMSANG (CS778429). Company F was then moved along the right edge of HILL 143, and around 1500 occupied the finger ridge (CS768402) just south of SANCHON, about 1000 yards from the road to KOKSU-RI (CS776413). From this position, Captain Finley observed great numbers of enemy troops dug in along the route Task Force Crombez was about to take.

Captain Finley saw Task Force Crombez go up the road and disappear around the bend into KOKSU-RI. It was difficult for Captain Finley to tell whether Task Force Crombez was receiving enemy fire because the tanks were firing. But Captain Finley felt certain that the task force column was receiving heavy fire, especially from the area where the enemy had been observed in great numbers. The tanks halted momentarily at the bend south of KOKSU-RI, fired several bursts from the tank guns, and continued. The

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majority of the riflemen were still aboard the tanks. On the following day bodies and blood were found just above KOKSU-RI, and Captain Finley assumed that the task force met heavy opposition there.

About 30 minutes after the task force disappeared from view, Captain Finley observed a group of about ten friendly soldiers straggling back along the dry stream bed. Passing within voice distance, they identified themselves as being from Company L. Shortly thereafter several men from Company L entered the Company F area and asked that stretcher jeeps be sent up the dry stream bed to evacuate wounded who had been riding the tanks of Task Force Grombez. Captain Finley relayed the message to battalion by radio.

Toward dusk, Companies E and G were pulled back for the night to a line west of the 1st Battalion on the other side of the road. Company F remained to cover and pick up any men from Company L who might return. Captain Finley saw approximately 30 men return. Tanks emerged from the regimental area at dusk and fired against HILL 206 (CS790409) and HILL 239 (793432).

At dark, Company F pulled back and occupied positions at 2100 just above MUCHON-NI (CS765388), with Company G on the left and the 1st Battalion on the right. One single enemy mortar round fell in the vicinity of the CP. There was no enemy contact that night.

The 2d Battalion had had only light contact with the enemy on 15 February, and it was pulled back for the night because the 1st Battalion which was meeting stiff resistance had not been able to advance to a position abreast of the 2d Battalion.

On 16 February, Company F moved north along the low ground in a light snowstorm. The company moved across the open ground and searched out the village of KOKSU-RI. Four tanks in the rice paddy were prepared to assist if needed, but were not called. Company L covered the area from the road left to a distance of 1000 yards. Many enemy dug-in positions were found, but no enemy troops. Company F reached NAMGWANGYANG (CS783442) at 1530.

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Company G had been clearing to the left of Company F, and Company E was doing the same farther to the left. The three companies moved out abreast, but by the end of the day, Company F, moving over easier ground was about 1000 yards in advance of the others.

Since the 1st Battalion was having a great deal of trouble from the high ground on its right, the 2d Battalion was called back at night to KOKSU-RI.

Not much pressure was exerted on the battalions to get to CHIPYONG-NI because it was felt that the 23d RCT was no longer in a desperate situation.

On 17 February, a platoon size patrol from Company F and three tanks went all the way to CHIPYONG-NI.

RECOMMENDATIONS: If armored personnel carriers, the same that are organic to armored field artillery battalions, had been made available to Task Force Crombez, the same result would have been attained with about one-quarter of the casualties suffered. Where infantrymen must run an enemy gauntlet as in Task Force Crombez, personnel carriers should be made available.

Martin Blumenson
MARTIN BLUMENSON
1st Lt, AGC
3d Historical Detachment

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AFTER ACTION INTERVIEW

INTERVIEWEES: Master Sergeant Lloyd L Jones, RA 20838319, Platoon Sergeant, 3d Platoon, Company L, 5th Cavalry Regiment
SFC George W. Miller, RA 37455076, Platoon Sergeant, 3d Platoon, Company L, 5th Cavalry Regiment

ACTION: Task Force Crombez

TIME OF ACTION: 15 February 1951

TIME & PLACE OF INTERVIEW: 28 March 1951, Headquarters, 3d Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, vicinity Hongch'on

INTERVIEWER: 1st Lt Martin Blumenson

ASSISTANT: Sfc Raymond Lapino

Task Force Crombez consisted of 23 tanks, the first four and last four of which were bare, while the others carried approximately ten riflemen each. Just prior to the departure of the task force, the men received information that the task force would break a roadblock and contact the 23d RCT at CHIPYONG-NI. Riflemen riding the tanks had the mission of keeping the enemy from destroying the tanks by ground action. They were to dismount when the tanks stopped, give protection by fire, and mount when the tanks were ready to continue. As the men mounted the tanks they were told that one tanker in each tank would unbutton his vehicle and signal by voice when he was ready to continue.

An air strike directed against the enemy just before the departure of the task force column pointed out the locations of the enemy. The air strike seemed very effective, and the men expected very little enemy fire. Soon after the column got under way, several rounds of 60mm mortar fire fell on the area where the tanks had been assembled, but the men believed that this was not observed fire.

Sergeant Miller was on the 11th tank and Sergeant Jones was riding the 15th or 16th tank. The lead tanks proceeded around the curve in the road south of KOKSU-RI and stopped in the village where they could not be seen by Miller and Jones. The tank column halted, and heavy small arms fire began to be received from a ridge to the right. The men stated the tanks had gone one mile or one and a quarter miles from the point of departure to this first halt.

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Two men on Jones' tank were wounded by small arms fire, and Jones ordered the men to dismount, not so much to protect the tank but in order for them to take cover themselves. Jones himself, remained on the tank until the turret, swinging to the right to fire, knocked him off.

Most of the men who had dismounted were taking cover in a culvert or behind an embankment 15 feet high in a rice field 50 yards to the left of the road. Without warning, the tanks commenced to move forward again and the dismounted riflemen were unable to get back on the tanks. Both men stated that the tankers gave no indication that they were going to start.

A two and one-half ton truck following Task Force Crombez picked up three wounded men from the 1st platoon who were lying on the road. Although Jones had two wounded men with him, he deemed it inadvisable to place them on the truck because of the heavy small arms fire directed against the truck.

Jones sent a man back to the regimental area to ask that litters be brought to the men in the rice field or that more tanks be sent to cover the high ground on the right of the road from which enemy fire was being received.

About 300 or 500 yards to the northwest(see attached sketch), men from the 2d and 4th Platoons were taking cover in a ditch. Jones organized the men of his platoon to take up firing positions on the culvert, while he went to the other groups to order them to withdraw to the culvert before making it back to the original regimental positions.

While the sergeants of the 2d and 4th platoons were organizing the men for the move to the culvert, the enemy took positions on a ridge to the front. Machine gun fire from this position made the culvert untenable. At about this time eight mortar rounds fell near the culvert, one round wounding Lieutenant Lahey, already wounded, quite badly. Lieutenant Johnson, Executive Officer, Company I, who had by this time organized about three-quarters of the men in the field under his control, was also wounded by the mortar fire. Jones then ordered the men to cease fire and withdraw along the ditch. As the men were withdrawing, tanks came up the road from the regimental area and fired against enemy positions on the ridges to the right, but not against the enemy forces who had occupied the knoll to the front.

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Sergeant Miller in the meantime, when his tank halted, helped a man who had a broken leg off the tank. When the tank started moving without warning, the riflemen, under enemy fire, were forced to take cover behind the culvert. While Jones moved to the men of the 2d and 4th Platoons, the men at the culvert had to cut out steps, with their shovels because of the ice and snow on the ground and ^{the} steepness of the embankment, so that they could take up firing positions.

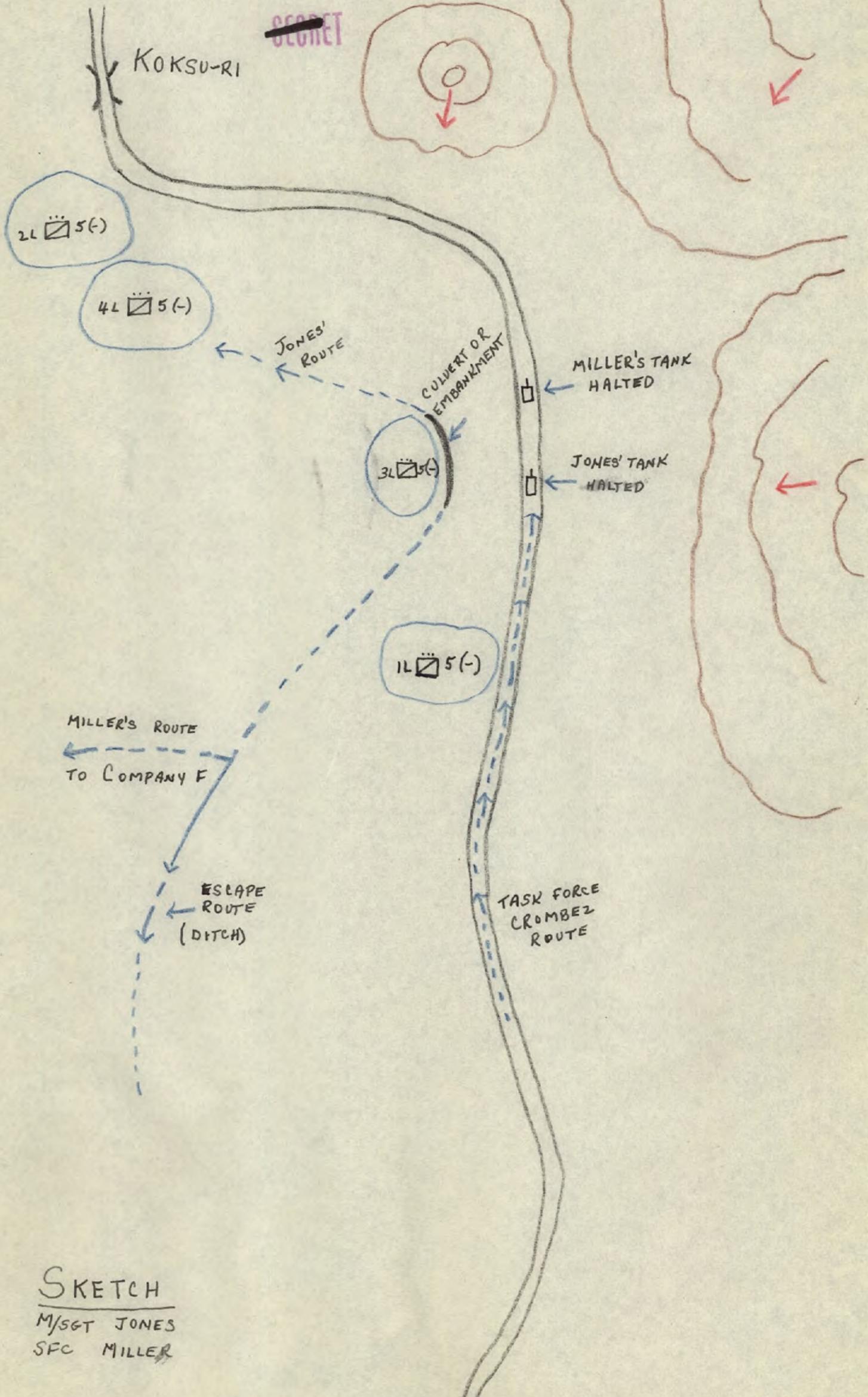
As the men in the field, an estimated group of 50, began to withdraw, Miller suggested and received permission from Lieutenant Johnson to move westward about 2000 yards to Company F which was in position on a hill from where it could observe what was taking place out of range of its weapons. Miller reached Company F, contacted a platoon leader, and requested that tanks and medical aid men be sent to cover and evacuate the men in the field. In the meantime, Jones's runner had gotten back to the regiment, and tanks were starting out to pick up the wounded. These tanks went to within 500 or 600 yards short of KOKSU-RI. Miller and Jones saw these tanks make two trips in this fashion. The men of all the platoons under Jones withdrew safely along the ditch and reached Company A after dark.

Martin Blumenson
MARTIN BLUMENSON
1st Lt, AGC
3d Historical Detachment

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 M/SGT JONES
 SFC MILLER

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AFTER ACTION INTERVIEW

INTERVIEWEE: CPL Hubert M Cobb, RA 17255989, 4th Platoon,
Company L, 5th Cavalry Regiment

ACTION: Task Force Crombez

TIME OF ACTION: 15 February 1951

TIME & PLACE
OF INTERVIEW: 27 March 1951, Headquarters, 3d Battalion,
5th Cavalry Regiment.

INTERVIEWER: 1st Lt Martin Blumenson

ASSISTANT: Sfc Raymond Lapino

Cpl Cobb was gunner of a 57mm recoilless rifle. When he mounted the 19th tank in the Task Force Crombez column, he knew only that the men of Company I were going to ride the tanks. He was instructed to get off when his tank stopped, take cover, and remount when the tank was rolling again. Cobb did not carry his 57mm rifle with him, and before he mounted the tank, he traded his .45 caliber pistol with a South Korean for an M1 rifle.

After proceeding a very short way, 200 or 300 yards, Cobb's tank halted, and Cobb dismounted and took cover against enemy fire. He was unable to see very much. As the tank started to move, Cobb remounted together with about one-third of the personnel who had originally been on the tank.

Soon after the column crossed the river, Cobb's tank halted again in the middle of town [KUKSO-RI ?]. Cobb and another man helped a wounded soldier off the tank and placed him under a burned truck. Cobb remounted the tank while the other man remained to guard the wounded man. From there to CHIPYONG-NI the column halted several times but only for very short intervals.

Cobb fired his weapon all the way to CHIPYONG-NI. He stated he fired about 350 rounds. At times he was able to see the enemy he fired on. He stated he saw three enemy machine guns, several Bren guns, bazookas, grenades thrown, and pole charges attempted. Near the 23d RCT perimeter, he saw several enemy troops drop ammunition they were carrying and flee.

On the following day, when Task Force Crombez was ready to return to the regiment, the riflemen were asked whether they would volunteer to ride the tanks back. No one volunteered.

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Cobb stated that it was almost impossible to get back on a tank once it had started to move.

Martin Blumenson

MARTIN BLUMENSON
1st Lt, AGC
3d Historical Detachment

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AFTER ACTION INTERVIEW

INTERVIEWEE: PFC Donald F Russell, RA 16281631, 4th Platoon,
Company L, 5th Cavalry Regiment

ACTION: Task Force Crombez

TIME OF ACTION: 15 February 1951

TIME & PLACE

OF INTERVIEW: 27 March 1951, Headquarters, 3d Battalion
5th Cavalry Regiment

INTERVIEWER: 1st Lt Martin Blumenson

ASSISTANT: Sfc Raymond Lapino

PFC Russell, a platoon runner, rode on the 19th tank in the column of Task Force Crombez. The tank halted almost immediately, and the seven or eight men on Russell's tank dismounted, then remounted. Between this time ~~time~~ and the second tank halt, several men riding the vehicle were wounded by enemy fire. Russell jumped off and took cover in the ditch where he met Corporal Cobb. After talking over whether they should remain in the ditch or continue with the column, they decided to remount the tanks. Cobb mounted one tank, and as Russell was running alongside, he received a mortar fragment in his hand. He passed up his carbine to Cobb so he might get on the tank more easily, and he fell in the road. He got on the next tank. When the column halted again, Russell jumped off his tank and ran up to get back his weapon from Cobb. By this time, Task Force Crombez had reached the 23d RCT perimeter at CHIPYONG-NI.

Russell stated that when he fired his weapon he could see the targets, but it was very difficult to hit anything because of the movement of the tanks. He saw enemy machine guns and some bazooka teams. Mortar rounds were hitting on the shoulders of the road. He heard no enemy artillery, nor did he see any enemy running away from the tank column.

Martin Blumenson
MARTIN BLUMENSON
1st Lt, AGC
3d Historical Detachment

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AFTER ACTION INTERVIEW

INTERVIEWEES: PFC Homer Bassford, RA 13327851, Platoon Runner,
1st Platoon, Company L, 5th Cavalry Regiment.
CPL George E Reed, US 57505844, Radio man,
1st Platoon, Company L, 5th Cavalry Regiment.

ACTION: Task Force Crombez

TIME OF ACTION: 15 February 1951

TIME & PLACE
OF INTERVIEW: 28 March 1951, Headquarters 3d Battalion, 5th Cavalry
Regiment, vicinity HONGCH'ON.

INTERVIEWER: 1st Lt Martin Blumenson

ASSISTANT: Sfc Raymond Lapino

These men were informed just prior to the departure of Task Force Crombez that they were to ride tanks to break through an enemy road block and make contact with the 23d RCT in CHIPYONG-NI. The instructions they received from the non-commissioned officers of the company were that they mount the tanks, dismount when the tanks stopped, cover the tank, and mount again when the tanks were ready to start. These men stated that they followed instructions, but by the time they had gotten off the tanks, the tanks had started up again, and there was no way to get back on.

Both men stated they were riding on the 5th tank, the first one to have troops on it. There was firing from enemy forces when the tank they were riding first stopped. The men were able to see the enemy as they were pinned down with several others in a rice paddy beside the road which afforded little protection. Machine gun and mortar fire fell in the near area.

Bassford and another man were sent back by a non-commissioned officer to the 2d Battalion. There they made contact with the Battalion Commander who sent tanks toward KOKSU-RI to cover the withdrawal of riflemen forced off the tanks. When the tanks arrived the men had already started to return to the regimental area. The wounded in the rice paddies were picked up and loaded on the tanks and brought back to the regimental area.

Martin Blumenson
MARTIN BLUMENSON
1st Lt, AGC
3d Historical Detachment

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AFTER ACTION INTERVIEW

INTERVIEWEE: CPL PAUL CAMPBELL, ER57307061, 4th Squad, 2d Platoon,
Company L, 5th Cavalry Regiment.

ACTION: Task Force Crombez

TIME OF ACTION: 15 February 1951

TIME & PLACE
OF INTERVIEW: 27 March 1951, Headquarters, 3d Battalion, 5th Cavalry
Regiment

INTERVIEWER: 1st Lt Martin Blumenson

ASSISTANT: Sfc Raymond Lapino

On 14 February 1951, when Cpl Campbell with nine others mounted on the 6th tank in the column of Task Force Crombez, he had no clear idea of the mission of that force. The riflemen were instructed to dismount when the tanks halted, advance 50 yards and cover the tanks until the vehicles were able to advance again, and then to remount. At the first enemy resistance to Task Force Crombez, the platoon sergeant on Campbell's tank ordered the men to dismount with the exception of Campbell who was directed to man the .50 caliber machine gun mounted on the tank. The men on Campbell's tank had carried a .30 light machine gun with them, and they proceeded to set up the weapon on the ground, but just as the gun was ready to operate the tanks moved on. By the time the machine gun was disassembled, it was too late for the men to regain the tank. Some mounted other tanks.

Campbell fired the machine gun all the way into CHIPYONG-NI. He saw enemy crews with satchel and pole charges, but he saw no bazooka teams, nor did he see any enemy fleeing the tank column. He fired at a range between 50 and 200 yards. When the tank gun fired to the right, Campbell fired to the left, covering the blind side of the tank.

Campbell stated the enemy was using burp guns, Bren guns, heavy and light machine guns, and small arms against the tank column.

Martin Blumenson
MARTIN BLUMENSON
1ST LT, AGC
3d Historical Detachment

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AFTER ACTION INTERVIEW

INTERVIEWEE: CPL Wayne O Kemp, RA 15268516, 1st Platoon,
Company L, 5th Cavalry Regiment

ACTION: Task Force Crombez

TIME OF ACTION: 15 February 1951

TIME & PLACE
OF INTERVIEW: 27 March 1951, Headquarters, 3d Battalion,
5th Cavalry Regiment

INTERVIEWER: 1st Lt Martin Blumenson

ASSISTANT: Sfc Raymond Iapino

Cpl Kemp was gunner of a .30 caliber machine gun.

When he mounted the 18th tank of the Task Force Crombez column, Kemp was instructed as follows: as soon as enemy resistance was encountered, some men were to dismount to the left, and some to the right in order to cover the tanks from ground action; when the tanks started, the men were to remount.

About one half mile from the start, everyone on Kemp's tank dismounted on order of the platoon sergeant when the tank halted. Enemy fire was being received. When the tank commenced moving, Kemp was told to run alongside the tank. He did so, and as he was running, he was wounded in the arm. No one was able to get aboard the tank because by this time it was going too fast.

The assistant machine gunner had Kemp's machine gun, and he and Kemp were separated when they got off the tank. Kemp, armed only with a .45 caliber pistol, took cover in a ditch with a group of others. Some men fired into the village ahead from where it was thought enemy fire was coming.

Following the tanks of Task Force Crombez, a 2 1/2 ton Service Company truck came along with a driver and several ROK litter bearers. The truck stopped and picked up Kemp, Sgt Mogue, the platoon sergeant, and Sergeant Kerzan, the squad leader.

Continuing behind the tanks, the truck picked up three wounded men of the 4th Platoon who were lying in the ditch. As he was picking up the wounded, the driver of the truck was hit. Sergeant Kerzan drove the truck, and although he was wounded again, he continued driving. All along the

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way, the truck and its occupants were subject to enemy fire. The truck managed to reach the pass south of CHIPYONG-NI where it was knocked out. Kemp and some of the wounded were carried from the truck and placed on a tank which carried them into CHIPYONG-NI.

Martin Blumenson

MARTIN BLUMENSON
1st Lt, AGC
3d Historical Detachment

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AFTER ACTION INTERVIEW

INTERVIEWEE: Chief Warrant Officer Clarence L Umberger, W907030,
Unit Administrative Officer, Company L, 5th Cavalry
Regiment

ACTION: Task Force Crombez

TIME OF ACTION: 15 February 1951

TIME & PLACE
OF INTERVIEW: 28 March 1951, Headquarters, 3d Battalion, 5th Cavalry
Regiment

INTERVIEWER: 1st Lt Martin Blumenson

ASSISTANT: Sfc Raymond Lapino

On 15 February 1951, all the combat soldiers of Company L rode the tanks of Task Force Crombez, with the exception of the 5th Platoon of Company L, composed of ROK personnel. Five South Korean soldiers rode the 2 1/2 ton truck which followed the armored column to pick up the wounded, and all this personnel were killed, wounded, or missing in action.

The riflemen of Company L riding the Task Force Crombez tanks totalled approximately 160. This figure was reached as follows: company strength, 15 February 1951 totalled 186; of which 12 were kitchen personnel, six were drivers, two were clerks, and two were supply men. Several men who were sick did not accompany the tanks.

Officers accompanying the tanks were: Captain Barrett, Commanding Officer, Company L, *First Lieutenant Lahey,* First Lieutenant Johnson, First Lieutenant Chastain, Platoon Leaders, Company L.

Martin Blumenson
MARTIN BLUMENSON
1st Lt, AGC
3d Historical Detachment

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AFTER ACTION INTERVIEW

INTERVIEWEE: Captain Keith M Stewart, O27700, Assistant S3,
5th Cavalry Regiment

ACTION: Task Force Crombez

TIME OF ACTION: 15 February 1951

TIME & PLACE
OF INTERVIEW: 27 March 1951, Headquarters, 5th Cavalry Regiment,
vicinity Hongch'on

INTERVIEWER: 1st Lt Martin Blumenson

ASSISTANT: Sfc Raymond Lapino

At 1200, 16 February 1951, Captain Stewart was designated as commander of a task force which had the mission of moving supplies and ambulances to the 23d RCT at CHIPYONG-NI. Although the 23d RCT was not so much concerned with supplies because of air drops it had received, it was vitally concerned with evacuating about 200 wounded. Only the very serious cases had been flown out of CHIPYONG-NI by helicopter.

Supply trucks had been coming in to the regimental area in piecemeal fashion, and by noon 28 2 1/2 ton trucks, most of them filled with ammunition, and 19 ambulances were ready to go to CHIPYONG-NI. These vehicles were supplied by the 2d Division Service Company, X Corps, and the 5th Cavalry Regiment. One platoon of Company I, 5th Cavalry Regiment, one platoon of Company D, 6th Tank Battalion, and two platoons of Company A, 70th Tank Battalion acted as escort.

At 1230, Captain Stewart told the officers concerned to assemble at a point (CS767385), 1000 yards northeast of SANGCH'OHYON-NI.

The vehicles assembled at 1430 and were placed in the following order of march: one platoon, Company D, 6th Tank Battalion (5 tanks); 28 trucks; two tanks, Company A, 70th Tank Battalion; 19 ambulances with four tanks interspersed; one wrecker; and two tanks, Company A, 70th Tank Battalion. Vehicles which broke down or were knocked out were to be pushed or pulled off the road, and the column was to continue without halting. The infantrymen rode on the trucks, and they were instructed to get on another truck if the one they rode was disabled. The column departed at 1500, with Captain Stewart in the third tank.

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Although Captain Stewart worried about receiving enemy mortar fire along the route, no enemy contact was made, and the column arrived in CHIPYONG-NI without incident at 1545, making contact with the 23d RCT in the pass south of the town. One wounded man was picked up along the way. The wrecker picked up the truck which had been knocked out on the previous day in the pass south of CHIPYONG-NI and also the wrecked tank of Captain Hiers.

The ambulances and about seven trucks were loaded with wounded, and the vehicles departed CHIPYONG-NI at 1715 with tanks in front, in the middle, and in the rear of the column, and arrived in the regimental area without incident about 1815.

Martin Blumenson

MARTIN BLUMENSON
1st Lt, AGC
3d Historical Detachment

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AFTER ACTION INTERVIEW

INTERVIEWEE: Major Ralph L Rigler, 0383942, S4, 5th Cavalry Regiment
ACTION: Task Force Crombez
TIME OF ACTION: 15 February 1951
TIME & PLACE
OF INTERVIEW: 28 March 1951, Headquarters, 5th Cavalry Regiment,
vicinity HONGCH'ON
INTERVIEWER: 1st Lt Martin Blumenson
ASSISTANT: Sfc Raymond Lapino

Major Rigler stated that the supply trucks for the relief of the 23d RCT at CHIPYONG-NI were provided by IX Corps and the 2d Infantry Division, as well as by the 23d Infantry Service Company and certain 23d RCT artillery ammunition vehicles. He stated that five ambulances were provided by the first platoon, 15th Ambulance Company, attached to the 5th Cavalry Regiment, and the rest were provided by the 2d Infantry Division.

Martin Blumenson
MARTIN BLUMENSON
1st Lt, AGC
3d Historical Detachment

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N O T E

Although no formal interviews were secured from the following officers of the 5th Cavalry Regiment, informal conversations aided the interviewer in understanding the Task Force Crombez operation.

Captain George Marley, 01821743, Assistant S2, 5th Cavalry Regiment

Captain Robert J Cook, 059922, Commanding Officer, Company L

1st Lt Marvin H Gibbs, 058405, Awards and Decorations Officer

1st Lt Homer S Long, Jr, 059158, Liaison Officer

1st Lt James W. Kent, 01294848, Executive Officer, Company L

Martin Blumenson

MARTIN BLUMENSON

1st Lt, AGC

3d Historical Detachment

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STATEMENT

21 February 1951

On 15 February 1951 at about 1630 hours, Task Force Crombez, consisting of D Company 6th Tank Battalion, A Company 70th Tank Battalion, L Company 5th Cavalry Regiment, set out of Chip'yong-ni, Korea, with a mission of breaking through to the 23d Infantry Regiment which was completely surrounded by strong and determined enemy forces.

Soon after crossing the initial point, the task force was subjected to a fusillade of accurate enemy small arms, automatic weapons, and mortar fire, which inflicted heavy casualties on the infantry riding the tanks. The infantry were forced to dismount and take cover from the devastating fire.

The majority of the infantry were able to remount the tanks as they continued on the mission. These elements firing as they proceeded, inflicting tremendous casualties on the enemy personnel attempting to destroy the tanks with dynamite made into satchel, and pole charges, grenades and bazookas. All along the route the column was subjected to a large volume of sniper fire directed at the open hatches and infantry on the outside of the tanks.

At one particularly hazardous befile in a pass one tank was destroyed and two were damaged by enemy bazooka fire. The task force proceeded, precluding further damage to the tanks with intense firing all along the road and in the surrounding hills.

Under the able command of Colonel Marcel Crombez, the task force succeeded in breaking through the enemy infested area to the embattled 23d Infantry Regiment, arriving at the psychological moment to raise the fighting morale of the surrounded regiment, and to destroy the enemy's will to push the attack. Partly as a result of the casualties inflicted by the task force and the resulting decrease in the enemy's will to fight, enemy forces withdrew from south of Chip'yong-ni. The task force had succeeded in opening a road to the regiment allowing an influx of supplies to them and the evacuation of their wounded. As a result of the successful completion of its mission, Task Force Crombez helped to save a trapped Regiment and enabled UN forces to hold a valuable tactical and strategic position along the central front.

THOMAS W. BOYDSTON
1st Lt Armor
Co A 70th Tk Bn (Hv)

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S T A T E M E N T

20 February 1951

On 15 February 1951, Company "A" 70th Tank Battalion attached to the 5th Cavalry Regiment was assigned to Task Force Crombez for the mission of breaking through to the 23rd Infantry Regiment, who was completely surrounded by elements of three Chinese Divisions. At 1625 hours, 15 February 1951, the task force pushed off with Infantry mounted on all tanks. The column moved forward about a thousand yards and at that time, started receiving a tremendous amount of automatic weapons and very accurate mortar fire. The fire was so deadly and accurate that most of the Infantry was forced to dismount from the tanks and take cover along the road. The tanks returned the fire and as the Infantrymen remounted, continued moving forward toward the objective. Along the entire route the task force was attacked by enemy personnel armed with pole charges and blocks of TNT, but due to the intense fire layed down by the tanks and Infantry, they were unable to get in close enough to disable the tanks.

As the column moved through a defile just short of the objective, accurate bazooka fire destroyed one tank and damaged two others. Without stopping the column, the task force fired on the enemy positions silencing the bazooka fire and allowing the column to move through and make contact with friendly elements of the 23rd Infantry Regiment.

HIRAM E. CORNELIUS
Cpl., RA13274964
Co "A", 70th Tk Bn (Hvy)

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STATEMENT

On 15 February 1951, the 5th Cavalry Regiment was given the mission of breaking thru to the encircled 23d Infantry Regiment in Chip'yong-ni.

A tank Infantry task force, composed of "D" Company, 6th Medium tank Bn, two platoons of "A" Company 70th Tank Battalion and "L" Company, 5th Cavalry Regiment was formed under command of Colonel Crombez, Commanding Officer, 5th Cavalry Regiment.

Task Force Crombez attacked at 1500 hours 15 February 1951. About 500 yards south of Koksuri, the lead element came under heavy rocket, mortar and automatic weapons fire. Very heavy cannon and machine gun fire was laid down by "D" Company and the Infantrymen of "L" Company, 5th Cavalry, who were riding the tanks.

In Koksuri and the high ground just north of it, the enemy resistance became heavier and most of the Infantry were shot off our tanks. The foot soldiers climbed back on the tanks and the column continued the advance firing very rapidly and effectively.

Going thru the cut about 2,000 yards south of Chip'yong-ni, the enemy, in great strength, attacked from above with anti-tank rockets, anti-tank rifles, pole charges and satchel charges with intense small arms fire. The lead tank, commanded by Lt De Schweinitz was penetrated thru the top of turret and several of the crew were wounded. The Company Commander Captain Hiers, his gunner and loader were killed when a rocket penetrated the left side of their tank exploding the ammunition in the ready racks. Although severely burned, Cpl Calhoun, the driver of the tank, drove the vehicle thru the pass and off the road, thus permitting the column to continue its advance without interruption. During the entire action, Colonel Crombez was directing the column and picking out targets for the tankers.

Just south of Chip'yong-ni, the task force was halted by tanks from the 23d Infantry, which were blocking the road. SFC Maxwell, in the second tank of "D" Company, dismounted under heavy enemy small arms fire, went forward and caused the tanks from the 23d to clear the road.

As Task Force Crombez entered the perimeter around Chip'yong-ni, it destroyed, or drove off, an enemy force which had overrun a battery of 155 mm Howitzer.

The task force assembled near the air strip in Chip'yong-ni and prepared to defend during the night 15 - 16 February 1951. The Commanding Officer, 23d Infantry, requested that "D" Company support the French Battalion.

About 0400 hours, 16 February 1951, one section of the 1st Platoon placed cannon and machine gun fire on an enemy concentration south of Chip'yong-ni, silencing an enemy machine gun.

The column continued south at about 10 miles per hour reconnoitering by fire until it reached the lines of the 5th Cavalry Regiment just north of Chip'yong-ni.

All personnel of "D" Company, 6th Medium Tank Battalion conducted themselves in an exemplary manner. Each of the tank commanders did superior jobs. The tank drivers did such a fine job that not one of the tank commanders in the company had to speak to his driver and thus they could concentrate on spotting targets and getting fire on them. The gunners did exceptionally well in placing accurate and effective fire on the enemy from the roving vehicles. The Infantry did an outstanding job of covering the tanks and not letting the enemy mount the tanks, also, they fought hand-to-hand combat at one time and those Infantrymen in the rear picked up as many wounded as possible.

During the operation I was Platoon Leader, 3d Platoon "D" Company and assumed Command of the Company when Captain Hiers was killed and acted as Company

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Commander throughout the feet of the operation of Task Force Crombez.

WILLIAM R. BIERWIRTH
1st Lt Armor

C E R T I F I C A T E

I certify that the above statement by 1st Lt William R. Bierwirth was made in my presence and that Lt Bierwirth was wounded in action and evacuated before he had an opportunity to sign this statement.

EGBERT B. CLARK III
1st Lt Armor
Commanding

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STATEMENT

21 February 1951

On February 15, 1951, Company "D" 6th Medium Tank Battalion, "A" Company, 70th Heavy Tank Battalion and "I" Company, 5th Cavalry Regiment, were formed into Task Force Crombez, and given the mission of breaking through to and relieving the 23d Infantry Regiment, 2d Infantry Division, and the French Battalion attached to the 23d Infantry Regiment, who were cut off and surrounded at the town of Chip'yong-ni, South Korea.

At approximately 1500 hours, the task force moved out making contact at 1515 hours, south of Koksuri after moving about 500 yards down the road, my platoon, which was the third in the column, began receiving intense small arms, machine gun, and anti-tank rifle fire, and the Infantry Platoon leader riding on my tank, was wounded and one other soldier. The column was halted for about five minutes, due to a by-pass in the town of Koksuri. At this time, the enemy fire became so intense that all the Infantry riding my tank had to dismount to take cover. In so doing, the Infantry Platoon Leader was killed. I had ordered my platoon to lay down as much fire as possible on the high ground and to cover the Infantry as much as possible. As the Infantry mounted we were ordered to move out and keep going due to the heavy fire coming in on my tanks. We moved out and through the town of Koksuri and encountered about two companies of Chinese troops on the high ground to the west and east of the road. In spite of the heavy fire being laid down by the task force, the Chinese made very determined attacks on our tanks with bazooka, pole charges, hand grenades and what seemed to be bottles of gasoline. My gunner knocked out two men with bazookas and two with pole charges and the Infantry killed many of the charging enemy. At this time, some of the Infantry were engaged in hand-to-hand combat in the ditches with the enemy. The Task Force Commander, Colonel Crombez, ordered us to keep moving at all cost. At one point, the column stopped and the Chinese tried to close in again, but were driven off or killed by the heavy fire being laid down by all the Infantry and tanks. As the columns approached a point three-thousand yards from the town of Chip'yong-ni, we entered a pass with high ground on both sides and hundreds of small troop dug-outs. Here we came under the most intense fire. Both tanks and infantry were putting out as much fire as possible but the lead tank was hit.

The fourth tank, with Captain Hiers, entered the pass and his tank was hit by bazooka fire on the left side of the turret killing him, his gunner, and loader and severely wounding the driver and bow-gunner. The driver, seriously wounded, pulled the tank off the side of the road and Colonel Crombez ordered the other tanks to move faster. As my platoon entered the pass, a bazooka hit the top of my turret, but failed to explode. As we neared the defense perimeter of the 23d Infantry Regiment which had been under heavy attack, Task Force Crombez arrived and they had very little ammunition left and had suffered heavy losses. Colonel Crombez, Task Force Commander, decided that we would remain in Chip'yong-ni for the night. Company "D" Medium Tank Battalion was attached to the French Battalion for the defense of the perimeter and all wounded were taken to the aid station and the company re-organized under Lieutenant Bierwirth.

At 1230 hours, 16 February, Task Force Crombez was formed up for the return trip and pushed off at 1250 hours with an artillery and mortar barrage on the pass to the south of Chip'yong-ni. As the column entered the pass, we received light machine gun fire but the gun was silenced by heavy fire from the task force. No enemy were sighted on the return trip, and about 500 yards north of Koksuri we met friendly troops and tanks.

JESSIE O. GIDDENS
M/Sgt Plt Ldr
Co D 6th Med Tk Bn

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STATEMENT

On 15 February 1951, at 1500 hours, Colonel Crombez mounted my tank, which was the fifth tank in the column, and assumed command of the task force. We buttoned-up after the first 500 yards. Colonel Crombez directed fire for our gunner and was in complete charge of the task force. If the column slowed down he would urge them to move on. When the lead tank was slowed and we had no communications with them, Colonel Crombez told the number two tank to close in on it. This kept the lead tank moving and the column continuing toward its objective. Colonel Crombez informed his S3 not to let any other vehicles try to come through this road until he gave the order. About 800 yards short of the friendly force's position, we spotted three tanks blocking the road. Determining they were friendly, SFC Maxwell dismounted and got the tanks off the road. We arrived at the objective just in time to fire on enemy which had overrun the friendly artillery positions. The enemy fire was the most intense I have encountered to date. The enemy was very aggressive and the presence of armor didn't bother them. They made numerous close-in attacks during the action and employed small arms, automatic weapons, mortar and rocket launcher fire against us.

Throughout the attack, Colonel Crombez was very calm and controlled the forces in an outstanding manner. Because of his constant encouragement to the crews, our losses were light.

M/SGT JOE KIRKLAND
Company "D"
Medium Tank Battalion

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STATEMENT

On February 15, 1951 "Task Force Crombez" had the mission of breaking through to the 23d Infantry, who were surrounded in Chip'yong-ni. We left our assembly area at 1500 hours then we made contact at 1515 hours about 500 yards from Koksuri. We moved into Koksuri and came under bazooka and 51 calibre anti-tank fire also contacted about 400 Chinese. As we moved forward we contacted more enemy infantry men on both sides of the road all the way. When we were about 2000 yards from Chip'yong-ni, I spotted a bazooka man moving over a hill of a pass in which we had to go. I called 1st Lt De Schweinitz, my Platoon Leader, who was the point tank but I was too late with my call and the Lieutenant's tank was hit through the top of the turret, wounding 1st Lt De Schweinitz, Cpl Donald P Harrell the gunner, and Pvt Joseph Garland, the loader. Lt De Schweinitz's radio was put out of order and no one could contact him. I was in the second tank. As I came through the pass my tank was hit in two road wheels, one on each side of the tank. I started taking the call from Colonel Crombez, the task force commander. Approximately 500 yards from where I started taking the calls we spotted tanks down the road. I started to fire on them but the lead tank turned its turret and I recognized it as one of our friendly forces. We came up to a halt and both just set for awhile. We had no radio contact with each other, so I dismounted from my tank and went forward on foot and made contact with the lead tank from the 23d Infantry Regiment and told him to pull back so we could get on through. When we entered Chip'yong-ni some of the men of the 23d Infantry and some of the French troops came out and kissed my tank.

We pulled on up in the town and took up defense position for the night with the French Battalion. We had to pull two tanks up on the hills surrounding Chip'yong-ni and fire on some Chinese. All went well for the night. The next morning Colonel Crombez called for an artillery barrage on both sides of the road. We started out on our return trip at 1250 hours. We came out of Chip'yong-ni firing but met no resistance. On the way back I noticed Captain Hiers's tank setting along side of the road burning. For the rest of the way back we met no enemy. We contacted a friendly force just north of Koksuri. I was in the second tank on the way up and my job was Section Leader of the first Section of the Second Platoon. I became Platoon Sergeant when Lt De Schweinitz was evacuated and Sergeant Kirkland became Platoon Leader.

JAMES MAXWELL
SFC "D" Company
6th Med Tnk Bn.

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STATEMENT

21 February 1951

On 15 February 1951, "D" Company of the 6th Tank Bn, two platoons of "A" Company 70th Tank Bn and "L" Company, 5th Cavalry Regiment were formed into Task Force Crombez. The task force was given the mission of driving through enemy lines to the encircled 23d Infantry Regiment at Chip'yong-ni.

We pushed off at 1515 hours and made contact some 1000 yards south of Koksuri. I was in the 9th tank in the column and could observe the Infantry dismounting under the machine gun fire. The Infantry Remounted and we moved into Koksuri, where enemy fire became very intense. We moved through the small arms, mortar and automatic weapons fire with the Infantry remaining in their exposed position. Each time we stopped we had to fire continuously to stop the enemy, even then, the Infantry killed many as they attempted to climb on to the tanks.

The enemy fire and their attempts to destroy the Infantry-tank force increased as we neared 23d Infantry positions. The enemy made their all-out effort to halt our advance as we entered through the cut. In this vicinity one tank was knocked out, two others damaged and the Infantry fought the enemy in hand-to-hand combat to keep them off the armor.

We arrived in the 23d Infantry's perimeter at the psychological moment, to assist in the defeat and rout of an enemy attack which had already overrun their 155mm artillery positions.

Through the entire action, Colonel Crombez coordinated the maneuvers of the tanks and Infantry, producing the effective killing fire against the enemy force. The tanks and Infantry were under the command of Colonel Marcel Crombez, who supervised the task force so effectively that our losses were held to a minimum.

BILLY R. WILLIAMS
SFC, "D" Co, 6th Tnk Bn.

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STATEMENT

On the 15th of February 1951, about 1500 hours, I was informed that Colonel Crombez would ride as my tank commander and would receive fire orders from him. We were among the first tanks to fire on the enemy troops. He gave me clear, short fire commands and spotted two or three rocket launchers teams. He was very calm throughout the action and urged the tanks to keep moving through the heavy enemy fire.

PFC THOMAS BAYES, JR.
Gunner, "D" Company
6th Medium Tank Battalion

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STATEMENT

On the 15th of February 1951, I drove the tank from which Colonel Crombez commanded the task force. He was very calm, made sound decisions and continuously controlled the maneuvering of the column and the fire of the tanks in which he was riding. We were under fire from 500 yards south of Koksuri until we met three tanks from the encircled friendly force. One of the tankers jumped out of his tank and moved the tanks off the road so we could pass through to our objective. We then fired on the enemy, who had overrun the artillery position with a strong force.

PFC GEORGE C LEE
Driver, "D" Company
6th Medium Tank Bn

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COMPANY A 8th ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION
AFO 201

20 February 1951

On 15 February 1951, four (4) EM Cpl Derald L Knutson, RA16246440, Cpl Stanley O Nelson, RA16313337, Pfc Albert E Heggan, RA12339736, and ROK personnel K1107404, were on a mine detector team that went with a task force from the 5th Cavalry Regiment that broke through to the 23d Infantry Regiment at Chip'yong-ni, Korea. The following information was rendered by the EM concerned:

We were riding on the second tank in the task force remaining on the alert for mine fields. All of a sudden the task force was subject to intense mortar, machine gun, and small arms fire. Throughout this fire Knutson, Heggan and K1107404, tenaciously stayed on the tank to render the necessary assistance in case they ran into mines. It was during this action that Cpl Nelson was wounded and fell from the tank.

DERALD L. KNUTSON
Cpl RA16246440

ALBERT E HEGGAN
Pvt RA12339736

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E X T R A C T

Hq 5th Cav Regt
CS 749367
161800/I Feb 51

Periodic Operations Report No 138 for period 151800/I to 161800/I Feb 51

MAPS: Korea 1:50,000 Sheet 6726 III

Par Four: 5th Cav RCT (-) moved CP from vic CS 781395 to vic CS 763366 due to concentrated enemy mortar fire. 1st Bn received S/A and AW fire from hill mass 206 CS 788409 at close of last period, enemy contact was broken at 1900/I. Units reported all quiet during remainder of night. 1st Bn sent patrols out 0730/I to Oktae CS 788399, hill 183 CS 783385. B Co combed ridgeline at CS 778396 commencing 1000/I, reported it secured 1045/I. C Co moved along high ground SE of Oktae CS 786399, securing B Co's right flank. A Co secured ridgeline at CS 780400 at 1235/I, continued on to hill 206 at 1325/I securing same at 1400/I. C Co swept Oktae and vicinity at 1405/I, no enemy contact reported. A Co dispatched patrols N and NE of hill 206 approx 1500 yds, patrols returning 1555/I, no enemy contact reported. 1st Bn closed into tight perimeter at 1700/I SW edge of hill 206 at CS 782413. (See overlay) 2d Bn sent patrols at 0900/I to Koksuri CS 778414, to CS 768412, and to high ground vic CS 759406. Patrols reported no enemy contact. F Co secured CS 768412 at 1235/I, continued moving forward toward CS 772425. Patrol reached CS 760414 at 1250/I meeting no enemy resistance. C Co moved into Koksuri at 1340/I and continued on toward high ground N of Koksuri CS 771419, securing same 1400/I. "E" Co moved to CS 760413 and patrolled north to CS 761420 reported no enemy contact. Bn CP moved to CS 760413 and patrolled north to CS 761420 reported no enemy contact. Bn CP moved 1645/I closing into new area vic Koksuri 1525/I. Bn closed into tight perimeter in Koksuri for night. 3d Bn moved from CS 765365 at 1100/I to assembly vic CS 765393, closing 1200/I. Blue Bn dispatched patrol approx 1000 yds NE of their position at 1330/I, patrol returned 1600/I reported no enemy contact. Bn closed into tight perimeter vic CS 765376 at 1700/I. Task Force Crombez departed Swing positions enroute Inspire 151545/I Feb 51. Task Force commanded by Col M. G. Crombez, reported that they encountered heavy machine gun fire 1/2 mile S of Koksuri and upon passing town received continuous heavy machine gun and mortar fire a distance of approximately 4 1/2 miles. Estimated enemy force of 2,000 using 2.36" R/L's, pole and satchel charges, opposed task force advance along MSR from Koksuri to Chip'yong-ni CS 798478. Task Force Commander gave estimate that force killed between 500 and 700 enemy enroute 23d Inf Regt positions. Task Force Crombez approached the 23d Inf positions at the psychological moment while the Chinese forces were launching an attack against the 23d Inf positions. The 23d Inf defense had been penetrated beyond the 155 mm how btry positions. The artillery howitzer crews had abandoned their positions. Swing 6 had radioed to Inspire 6 the time Task Force Crombez started the spearhead drive to the 23d Inf positions, the 23d Inf started their counterattack to regain their positions just before Task Force Crombez arrived at the 23d Inf positions. The enemy encountered were either killed or became demoralized and abandoned their positions and fled across the mountains. Task Force arrived at Inspire perimeter at 1700/I. Task Force remained at 23d Inf Regt night of 15 Feb 51 with expectation of returning 160900/I Feb 51 but were unable to move out at predesignated time due to snowstorm and general poor visibility throughout the morning precluding air cover over route back. Task Force commenced return 1230/I, closing into Swing forward positions 1315/I. No enemy sighted on return trip. This proved the fact that the enemy had been decisively beaten and abandoned their well prepared positions. It is the opinion of Swing 6 based upon the number of enemy and their well prepared positions that it would have taken about four days to eliminate the enemy whereas the armored Task Force Crombez eliminated all enemy opposition in about one hour of heavy fighting. Supply Trains composed of 19 ambulances and 26 2 1/2 ton trucks (loaded with supplies), departed Swing positions for 23d Inf under Swing control and escorted by tanks and infantry, closing into Inspire's positions 1620/I. Supply train loaded with wounded started back 1800/I but progress was held up at bad bridge CS 779423, closing in Swing area 1840/I.

OFFICIAL:
PARZIALE
S3

CROMBEZ
Col

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EXTRACT FROM JOURNAL S2-S3, 5th CAVALRY REGIMENT

14 February 1951

1600 Tempest 6 [Commanding General, IX Corps] - move out at once
to extricate 23d RCT

1655 General Palmer [Commanding General, 1st Cavalry Division]
arrives via helicopter.

15 February 1951

1250 Major General Ruffner arrived CP

1545 Task Force Crombez started

1645 TF Crombez linked up with 23d RCT

1710 TF Crombez arrived 23d RCT at 1710.

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EXTRACT, OPERATIONS LOG, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 14 February 1951.

- 0700 Bn command group departed Bn assembly area for reconnaissance of area north of Yoju and vicinity Tangu-ri.
- 1000 27th BCB in Tangu-Ri. Bn will go into position NE of Yoju vicinity bridge.
- 1200 Bn in position. Mission to hold bridgehead north of Yoju.
- 1630 Bn alerted to move north to Chipyeong-Ni to extricate 23d Infantry Regiment, 2d Infantry Division.
- 1700 3d Platoon, A Company, 70th Tank Bn arrived and attached to Bn.
- 1905 Baker with 2d and 3d Plt, A Company, 70th Tank Bn, one section HMG and Command Group departed to go up on Koksu-ri - Chipyeong-ni road to make contact with enemy. Remainder of Bn waiting for transportation.
- 2010 Trucks arrived to transport remainder of Bn. Moving out to catch up with advance elements.
- 2215 Remainder of Bn caught up with Baker at (CS768346).
- 2330 Bn directed to go into perimeter at present position. Engineers working on bypass and do not think it will be completed until morning. Bn CP at (CS768346).
- 2430 Bn in position in perimeter.

15 February 1951

- 0700 Bn moving out; Baker with platoon of tanks in lead.
- 0915 Tanks with Baker informs civilians in (CS758373) state enemy came to eat in town last night and left for unknown destination. Further state enemy on hill one mile north on left side of road.
- 0930 Baker dismounted and searching ridges to left and right of road vicinity (CS765379).
- 0945 Tanks with Baker state suspected mine field at bypass. Engineer platoon dispatched. Tanks further inform observed activity 600 yards to right flank. Arty plane observed activity. Baker observed activity in same area and believe more enemy behind hill; setting up 60mm mortars to take them under fire.
- 1025 Baker in position at (CS770386), Able to move up from across road.
- 1035 Air strike in front of Baker on village of Oktae.
- 1055 Tanks reported observed troop movement at (CS792409), may be friendly troops. Plane dispatched to search.
- 1110 60mm mortar fire being received by Baker, Able and tanks.
- 1145 Air reports little activity, many positions at (CS792409). Arty being put on.
- 1220 Charlie going into position vicinity mortars to secure Bn right flank. 1st Tank platoon reverted to Co control.
- 1300 Baker reports receiving S/A fire from right rear. Charlie directed to send one platoon up finger on Baker's right.

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- 1400 Charlie still moving to secure Baker right flank. Baker waiting for Charlie to get into better position to support them. Able on west side of road securing left flank.
- 1415 Charlie reports receiving little S/A fire from hill behind objective.
- 1430 Air strike on Oktae and hill to rear.
- 1445 Charlie reports receiving S/A and A/W fire from hill 500 yards east of Hill 152. Holding platoon up until they put mortar fire on suspected area.
- 1500 Charlie reports working one platoon down finger toward Baker. Also reports enemy who is firing into Baker are in draw in front of tanks. Tanks notified.
- 1555 Tank Task Force passing through Bn position on way to Chipyeong-ni via Koksuri.
- 1630 Baker and Charlie directed to pull back and get into Bn perimeter.
- 1645 Section of tanks dispatched to get men who were with Tank Task Force and now pinned down in Koksuri.

16 February 1951

- 0700 Patrols dispatched by companies north and northeast to make contact with enemy.
- 0930 Patrols report no enemy contact. Companies directed to move out.
- 1000 Baker moving to ridge in grid square (CS77-39), Charlie to secure right flank by moving up west alope of ridge in grid square (CS 78-39). Bn objective Hill 206. Tanks at (CS775403) to cover Baker.
- 1045 Baker has knoll at (CS776396) secured. Charlie on finger in grid square (CS78-39). Able moving up behind Baker on left.
- 1115 Baker has knoll at (CS777396) secured.
- 1245 Tank Task Force returning from Chipyeong-ni minus infantry.
- 1315 Swing [5th Cav Regt 7] informs Swing White [2d Bn 7] in Koksuri.
- 1325 Able jumped off for Hill 206 after artillery and mortar preparation.
- 1400 Able has Hill 206 secured. No enemy resistance. Many positions. Charlie directed to sweep valley (CS 78-39) and village of Oktae.
- 1600 Bn to go into perimeter vicinity south slope of Hill 206.

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E X T R A C T

REPORT, S3, 5th Cavalry Regiment

Road from Keksu-ri - Chipyeong-ni, Korea 15 Feb - 16 Feb 51

Terrain: Mountain slopes on one side and flat rice paddies on the other, butcliffs on both sides of the road at the pass. Weather: Cloudy & bright - visibility, good.

Enemy Morale: High

Casualties: Very high (estimated to be 500 - 700 KIA)

Fire: All types from positions on the road and high cliffs on either side. Enemy also employed bazooka teams and anti-tank crews carrying satchel and pole charges.

Observation: Excellent for the enemy through the entire route of march of the task force.

Task Force MISSION: To drive through enemy lines to the encircled 23d Inf Regt at Chipyeong-ni and render all assistance possible to that unit.

Morale: Very high

Casualties: High percentage of the Infantry was slightly wounded, with seven being killed.

"L" Company was riding the tanks, covering the blind side of the armor, killing those enemy who attempted to mount them and at one time fighting the enemy in hand-to-hand combat in the ditches. The tanks layed down effective fire when the Inf was dismounted.

Colonel Crombez directed the maneuver and fire of his task force in its mission to break through the enemy lines to an encircled 23d Inf Ret in Chipyeong-ni, Korea. The task force plunged through the four-and-a-half-mile enemy road block and struck a crushing blow against an aggressive enemy force estimated to be 2,000. The enemy employing small arms, mortar, automatic weapons and bazooka fire, were determined in their efforts to destroy the Infantry and halt the advance of the tanks. Moving into the 23rd Infantry's perimeter, the task force, under Crombez's supervision, decisively repulsed and defeated an enemy attack which already overran the 155 artillery positions.

Colonel Crombez assumed personal command of the task force, fully aware of the enemy's strength and capabilities. He could have ordered any of his officers to accompany the Infantry-tank team on its mission to relieve the pressure on the 23rd Infantry Regiment, occupying Chipyeong-ni, Korea.

Repulsed an enemy attack which had overrun the 23rd Infantry's position, re-opened communications on the M. S. R., killed an estimated 500-700 enemy and contributed to the defeat of an attack on UN Forces by at least two enemy divisions.

CHARLES J. PARZIALE, Major Infantry

Then Regimental S3, now Commanding Officer, 3d Bn 5th Cav Regt

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EXTRACT FROM UNIT HISTORY, 5th CAVALRY REGIMENT

14 February 1951

5th Cavalry RCT composed of: three battalions, Medical Company (-), Company A, 8th Engineer Combat Battalion, 61st Field Artillery Battalion, 92d Armored Field Artillery Battalion (SP) moved across the HAN river to the vicinity of HUPO-RI (CS767346) where it was halted by a destroyed bridge and a bypass requiring two hours work.

15 February 1951

1640 1st Battalion closed for night on HILL mass 152 (CS777382).

1600 2d Battalion dug in on HILL mass 143 (CS763394).

1650 3d Battalion outposted ridge line in grid square (7637).

16 February 1951

0730-1700 1st Battalion patrols searched OKTAE (CS788399) and HILL 183 (CS783385), and swept adjacent areas. Formed perimeter for night southwest of HILL 206 (CS782413).

2d Battalion closed in KOKSU-RI

3d Battalion located in assembly area at (CS765393).

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E X T R A C T

UNIT HISTORY

Company "D" 6th Medium Tank Battalion
APO 301 c/o FM San Francisco, Calif

18 February 1951

15 Feb 51 - 16 Feb 51

0900 15 Feb 51 departed assembly area vic Ach'on with 5th Cav Regt. Leading elements made contact with enemy at 1020 hours at CS7740, Map Korea 1/250,000. A Tank Inf Task Force was formed with L Company 5th Cav Regt and 2 platoons of "A" Company 70th Tank Battalion. Task Force under Command of Colonel Crombez 5th Cav, attacked at 1515 hours. Enemy contact was made 500 yards south of Koksuri, from that position until the Task Force arrived within the lines of the 23d Inf Regt at Chip'yong-ni the column was under very heavy attacks from an estimated Inf Regt which made determined close in attacks with rocket-launchers, mortars, anti-tank rifles, pole charges, hand grenades and automatic weapons and rifle fire.

The majority of "L" Company 5th Cav Regt was shot off or jumped off of the tanks in the vicinity of Koksuri. The tanks advanced at approximately 12 miles per hour laying down intense fire from all weapons.

Going thru the cut at CS7946, Map Korea 1/250,000, the enemy attacked the tanks from above with rockets and pole charges. Lt De Schweinitz's tank was penetrated thru the turret roof, he and his gunner and loader were wounded. Captain Hiers was in the fourth tank, as he came thru the cut his vehicle became enveloped in flames and stopped off the road. Captain Hiers, his gunner and loader were not seen to dismount. The driver and assistant driver escaped and were picked up by M/Sgt Carter in the Recovery Vehicle and by Lt Boydson, Company "A" 70th Tank Bn. No one in the column saw Captain Hiers' tank hit, the sleeping bags and packs on the turret were burning prior to the time the tank entered the cut.

The column joined a platoon from tank Company 23d Inf Regt at CS799464. The Task force entered the perimeter 23d Inf Regt and routed a group of enemy which were over running a battery of 155mm Howitzers of the 503d F.A. The Task Force assembled and went into defensive position vicinity air strip in Chip'yong-ni. All wounded were taken to the 23d Inf Aid Station.

During the night 15 - 16 Feb 51, the CO 23d Inf placed Co "D" in support of the French Bn. At about 0400 hours 16 Feb 51 a section of the first platoon fired on enemy column in front of the French 2d Company, the enemy column turned away from the perimeter.

At 1250 hours 16 Feb 51 the tank elements departed Chip'yong-ni and arrived at assembly area CS7637 Map Korea 1/50,000 at 1320 hours, no enemy were observed on the return trip. At 1500 hours the 3d Platoon, "D" Company, under command of SFC Williams, departed assembly area escorting supply trucks and ambulances to the 23d Inf Regt. The 3d Platoon returned escorting the wounded at 1720 hours 16 Feb 51

It is estimated that on the attack to link up with the 23d Inf Regt on 15 Feb 51, "D" Company tanks killed at least 1200 enemy. Our losses two (2) tanks damaged, one (1) officer and two (2) EM killed, one (1) officer and four (4) EM wounded.

On 19 Feb 51, Captain Hiers' tank was recovered and it was seen that it had been hit by a rocket, probably 2.36, which penetrated the turret into the ready racks. It is believed that all three men in the turret were killed instantly. The fighting compartment of the tank is unsalvagable but the power package and portion of the gun are being salvaged.

#D# Company is saddened by the loss of Captain Hiers, it's very able and much loved Company Commander. However, morale of "D" Company is very high.

WILLIAM R BIERWIRTH
1st Lt Armor
Commanding

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I certify that the above statement by 1st Lt William R. Bierwirth was made in my presence and that Lt Bierwirth was wounded in action and evacuated before he had an opportunity to sign this statement.

EGBERT B. CLARK III
1st Lt Armor
 Commanding

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E X T R A C T

PERIODIC OPERATIONS REPORTS, IX CORPS

No 427, period 141800 to 142400 I Feb 51

Composition of Friendly Forces: Co D 6th Tk Bn passed to operational control 5th US Cav RCT at 141930 I Feb 51

Operations ordered: To CO, 5th US Cav RCT at 142330 I Feb 51:

(1) Move your command without delay vic KOKSU-RI CS775414, establish base of operations and secure YOJU CS795280 - KOKSU-RI - CHIPYONG-NI CS800477 road for use of supply and evacuation vehicles 23d US Inf Regt.

(3) Co D, 6th Tk Bn and 92d FA Bn pass to your operational control upon arrival YOJU.

(4) Maintain close coordination with 21st US Inf on your left and 27th BCB on your right.

Results of operations: 5th US Cav RCT, enroute to KOKSU-RI CS7842. Occupied defense perimeter vic CS770345 at 142400 I Feb 51.

No 429, period 150600 to 151800 I Feb 51

Operations ordered: To CO 5th US Cav RCT: Following boundary between 5th US Cav RCT and 2d Bn, 21st US Inf Regt effective immediately: CHONSO-RI CS717398 east along road to CS751406, north to CS751420, northwest to CS722475

Results of operations: 5th US Cav Regt. Regt attacked north from previously reported positions at 150700. At 151005 Regt engaged an estimated enemy platoon vic CS784415. Regt received 10 rounds 82mm mortar fire from vic CS753396. Regt continued the advance and by 151300 was attacking high ground south of KOKSU-RI CS775414 with 1st Bn on the right and 2d Bn on the left. Regt was continuing attack at close of period.

No 430, period 151800 to 152400 I Feb 51

Results of operations: 5th US Cav RCT continued attack vic KOKSU-RI at close of period.

No 431, period 152400 to 160600 I Feb 51

Results of operations: 5th US Cav Regt. At 151300 the RCT attacked enemy elements on high ground S of KOKSU-RI vic CS7741. Estimated 300 - 600 enemy dispersed at 151630. Enemy employed SA, AW, and mortar fire. Friendly artillery, air, SA, AW, and mortar fire killed and wounded 75 to 100 enemy. Task Force CROMBEZ: Established contact with 23d US Inf Regt at 151717 where they remained. Bns closed into defensive perimeters at 151650.

No 432, period 160600 to 161800 I Feb 51

Results of operations: (1) 5th US Cav Regt. TF Crombez inflicted 500 enemy KIA en route to relieve 23d US Regt and the remainder of the 5th US Cav Regt inflicted 2900 enemy KIA in action against enemy 15 Feb 51 (delayed report). TF Crombez departed 23d US Regt area 161245 and closed 5th US Cav positions vic CS775414 at 161315 I Feb 51 without incident. Task Force Stuart; consisting of 2 Tank Platoons, 19 ambulances, and 26 2 1/2 ton trucks, departed 5th US Cav positions at 161530. Arrived 23d US Inf area at 161600, and returned to 5th US Cav positions at 161800 without incident.

No 435, period 170600 to 171800 I Feb 51

Results of operations: (2) 5th US Cav Regt (with 23d US Inf Regt attached).

No 438, period 180600 to 181800 I Feb 51

23d US Inf Regt departed and were enroute to assembly area.

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EXTRACT

G3 JOURNAL - IX CORPS

- 141400 Feb 5th Cav alerted for possible employment up KOKSU-RI - CHIPYONG-NI axis to assist 23rd Inf Regt if necessary
- 150300 Feb Adv elems 5 Cav reached HUPO-RI (CS769347) at 2250. Bridge damaged - ctm forced to construct bypass. 5 Cav closed HUPO-RI 0300. Strong inf patrol sent to vic CS760372. Patrol at dest 0045. No contact. 5th Cav to continue N at 0700.
- 15 Feb bridge guard by 1 reinf co - ETD 0700; ETA 0830
- 150545 - 0600 Feb 92 FA Bn in pos vic YOJU. Will fire on KOKSU-RI. 23rd RCT sector out of range. By pass completed. Div must leave bridge guard. CO, 5th Cav RCT notified to send bridge guard immediately.
- 15 Feb 5th Cav - departed CS769347 to CS777412 at 0700. Adv elems at CS765388.
0800 - en reported on HILL 152 (CS776383) and HILL 143 (CS763393) - Co B dismounted to investigate
1000 - now at CS772395 - no contact
1005 - contact vic CS7740

0915 - bridge at YOJU secured
- 151515 Feb 5th Cav - encountered en vic CS784415 at 1005 hrs
- en mortar (82mm) vic CS753396
- en dug in from CS792423 to CS788435; en also in tunnels from CS679478 to CS797478 running east.
- 15 Feb 1130 - Co D, 6th Tk Bn 1½ miles S of KOKSU-RI.
- 151335 Feb - vehicles furnished for 5 Cav movement released at 1300 and enroute
- 15 Feb 5 Cav - plan: atk KOKSU-RI - 2d Bn on left, 1st Bn on right - 1300 - upon securing KOKSU-RI, TF of Co D, 6th Tk Bn, 2 plats, Co A, 70th Tk Bn, and one Inf Bn will pass through and atk objective. 2 Inf Bns will secure high ground W of KOKSU-RI along MSR
- 15 Feb 5 Cav - jumped off 0700; en contact 0800. By 1230, 4 air strikes against est enemy bn vic KOKSU-RI. 1300 - 1st and 2d Bns attacked high ground S of KOKSU-RI. 3d Bn (minus one Co), Co D, 6th Tk Bn, and Co A (less 2 plats), 70th Tk Bn organized into TF to pass through 1st and 2d Bns and move to CHIPYONG-NI. 1 plat, Co A, 70th Tk Bn atchd 1st Bn. 1 plat, Co A, 70th Tk Bn atchd 2d Bn. 92d FA Bn (-A Btry) moved to vic CS762368. 61st FA Bn in vic CS762368. 5th Cav in radio contact with 23rd Inf through 1st Cav Div.
- 161400 Feb 5th Cav secured KOKSU-RI. En resisted force with SA, grenades, and pole charges. Enemy forced to withdraw.

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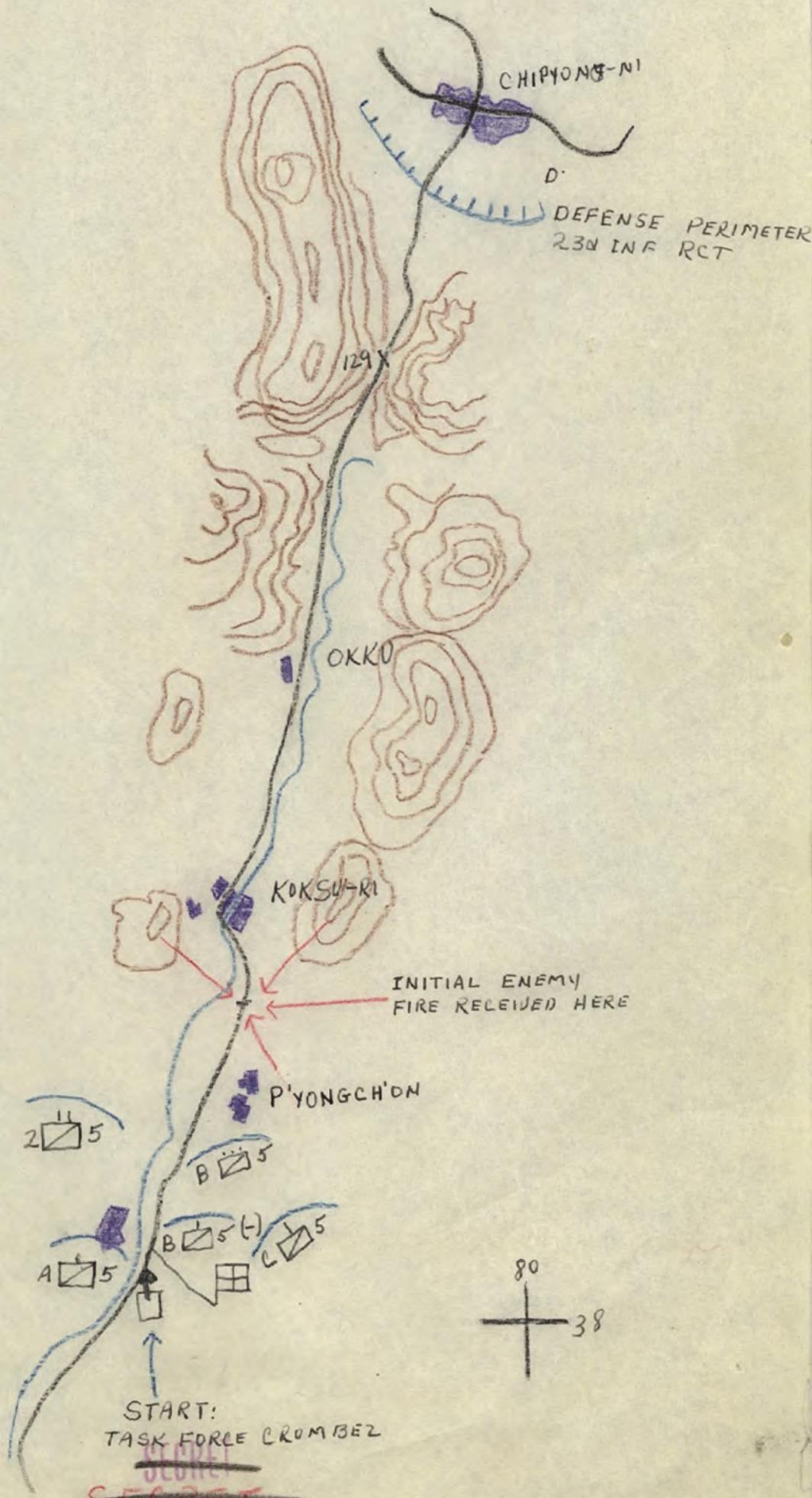
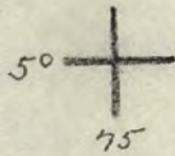
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IP'O-RI, KOREA, AMS SERIES L751

1:50,000

FOURTH EDITION-AMS (FEC)

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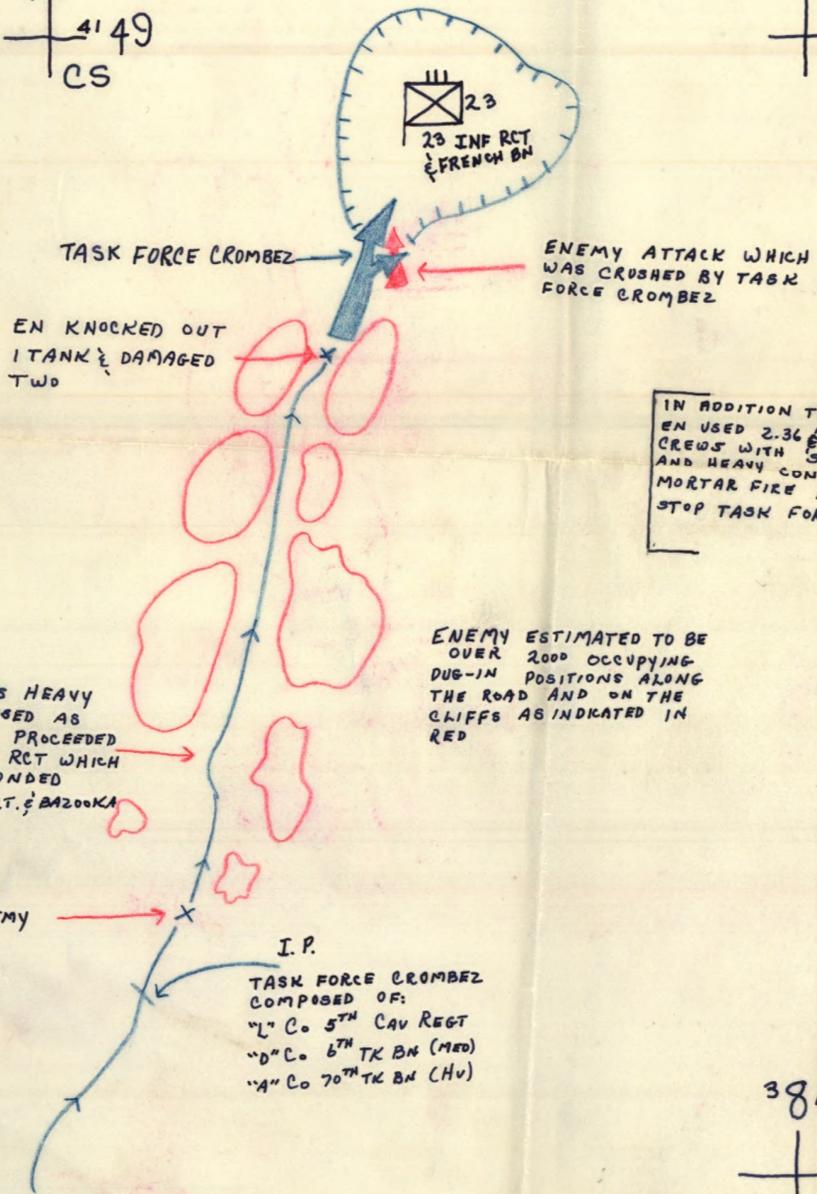
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TASK FORCE CROMBEZ

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4149
CS

384
4149



384
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REF:
5TH CAV REGIMENT
SCALE: 1: 50,000
SHEET: 6726-III

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AFTER ACTION INTERVIEW (EVALUATION)

INTERVIEWEE: Lieutenant Colonel George B Pickett, O23932, Armored Officer, IX Corps

ACTION: Task Force Crombez

TIME OF ACTION: 15 February 1951

TIME & PLACE OF INTERVIEW: 1 April 1951 - Headquarters, IX Corps, vicinity HONGCH'ON

INTERVIEWER: 1st Lt Martin Blumenson

ASSISTANT: Sfc Raymond A Lapino

Lieutenant Colonel Pickett emphasized at the outset that his remarks were not intended as criticism but as an evaluation of an armored action that had to be performed without the proper equipment which was not available. Colonel Pickett considered Colonel Crombez to have done a magnificent job with what he had. A capable commander, who realized the urgency of the situation, Colonel Crombez appreciated the shock effect of an armored formation on the enemy.

Lieutenant Colonel Pickett felt in general, that infantry divisions did not utilize the tank battalion headquarters as it was intended to be used when a special tank mission had to be performed. In this case, Colonel Crombez had no tank battalion headquarters, and he did the next best thing. Within the limitations of equipment available to him, Colonel Crombez had the best task force organization possible, and therefore the correct one.

The entire evaluation from the point of view of armor hinged around the fact that tank-borne infantry could not be expected to do the job of armored infantry. This proved without doubt the necessity of having in Korea an armored division or at the bare minimum an armored group with a tank battalion, an armored infantry battalion, an armored field artillery battalion (105mm) and a reconnaissance company. The CHIPYONG-NI action was definitely a mission for a combat command or an armored group. If Colonel Crombez had had to fight in CHIPYONG-NI, he would have needed his infantry. An armored infantry company mounted in armored personnel carriers would have arrived in CHIPYONG-NI ready to fight. Infantry losses would have been reduced by 80 percent.

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The relief of the 23d Infantry RCT was an ideal job for a reinforced tank battalion, with armored infantry in support, and it proved false the generalization that Korea is not tank country. The component element of an armored division or an entire armored division can be used in Korea.

The terrain from KOKSU-RI to CHIPYONG-NI would not have held an entire armored division. But a combat command or an armored group with the attack by a reinforced tank battalion (containing a minimum of one company of armored infantry) in the lead, followed by a reinforced armored infantry battalion (containing at least one tank company) could have done the job with only a small fraction of the loss and have been able to continue the attack in the CHIPYONG-NI area after arriving.

Communication maintenance, and re-supply facilities in the average infantry regiment are not adequate to support for continuous operation the number of tanks the 5th Cavalry Regiment had at the time. The operation at CHIPYONG-NI was successful because the unit which arrived had a protected perimeter to move into. It could not have protected itself or established a perimeter of its own.

As an indication of the speed with which Task Force Crombez was organized, Lieutenant Colonel Pickett stated the following details. When Major General Moore sent Colonel Crombez to the relief of CHIPYONG-NI, the 5th Cavalry Regiment had Company A, 70th Tank Battalion attached. Company D, 6th Tank Battalion was located at CHANGHOWAN-NI (CS7908) in corps reserve. The remainder of the 6th Tank Battalion was in 24th Infantry Division reserve at TAEPYONG-NI (CS7117), seven miles from Company D. Either Colonel Crombez or General Palmer, Commanding General, 1st Cavalry Division, requested that the company in CHANGHOWAN-NI be attached to the 5th Cavalry RCT. General Moore at 1700, 14 February, instructed Lieutenant Colonel Pickett to move that company out to join Colonel Crombez immediately. At that time, Colonel Crombez and the 5th Cavalry RCT were in the YOJU area. Colonel Pickett's reaction was that the entire 6th Tank Battalion ought to be sent. But General Moore had already notified either General Palmer or Colonel Crombez that he would secure Company D immediately, and General Moore would not discuss any changes in the plan at that time. General Moore instructed Lieutenant Colonel Pickett to have the company move in 30 minutes; Company D

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6th Tank Battalion moved in 28 minutes, and the first sergeant with the Kitchen and administrative sections moved an hour later. Company D, 6th Tank Battalion was commanded by Captain Hier, one of the outstanding tank company commanders in Korea. His loss in the task force operation was a severe loss to the service.

Task Force Crombez revealed certain additional information. The Chinese Communist Forces have in their possession the 3.5 rocket launcher and ammunition for it. Hier's tank was knocked out by this rocket; evidence for this lies in the fact that Lieutenant Colonel Crowden, Commanding Officer, 6th Tank Battalion, or a member of his staff, found the tail fins of the 3.5 rocket beside Hier's tank. In addition, the rocket launcher emplacement on the hillside was located, together with evidence that three or four rockets had been fired. The only way for the Chinese to have secured this weapon is from US forces abandoning equipment in hasty withdrawal. The rocket struck Hier's tank in the turret just in the rear of the spare track blocks, set the tank on fire. The tank burned completely. The second tank to be disabled (the lead tank in the task force column, commanded by Lieutenant De Schweinitz) was also an M46 vehicle, and by the size of the hole it is known that a 2.36 rocket penetrated the turret and wounded all three men in the compartment because of spalling (armor flaking off from blast and creating shrapnel effect inside the turret).

Lieutenant Colonel Pickett was waiting in the vicinity of KOKSU-RI on 16 February for the return of Task Force Crombez. The 1st and 2d Battalions, 5th Cavalry Regiment were still meeting enemy resistance, which seemed to disintegrate when the armored column on its return from CHIPYONG-NI appeared. Lieutenant Colonel Pickett spoke immediately with Lieutenant Bierwirth who had upon the death of Captain Hier assumed command of the company.

Colonel Crombez was handicapped by the absence of a tank battalion headquarters, for such a headquarters would have contained all the specialist personnel and equipment necessary for an armor action.

Some armored personnel carriers organic to armored field artillery battalions and used by them as ammunition carriers could have been made available to Task Force Crombez if the operation had not been conceived and

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executed so quickly. Twelve hours would have been necessary to make these carriers available, They could also have served to evacuate the wounded.

Radio or visual signals should have been arranged between the infantrymen and the tankers for coordination, and the rush-job aspects of this operation made impossible adequate arrangements.

It is difficult to fire from the back deck of a tank, which was not intended for that purpose. Tanks carrying infantrymen through enemy territory where the riflemen must fight is not an assault formation. In this case, however, Colonel Crombez had no alternative because he lacked armored personnel carriers.

A tankdozer should have been a part of the task force for use against physical obstructions or roadblocks, but again one was not available to Colonel Crombez for use.

In the estimation of Lieutenant Colonel Pickett, the people who formed Task Force Crombez knew what they needed, but what they needed was not available.

Martin Blumenson

MARTIN BLUMENSON
1st Lt, AGC
3d Historical Detachment

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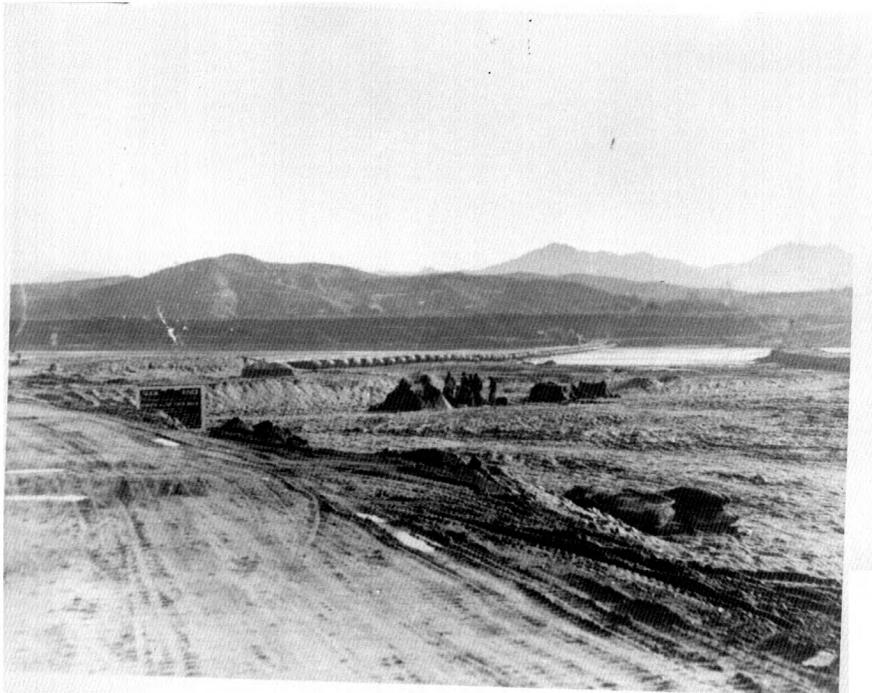
Colonel Marcel Crombez, Commanding Officer
5th Cavalry Regiment
26 March 1951



Colonel Crombez and Major Charles Parziale,
Commanding Officer, 3d Battalion, 5th
Cavalry Regiment

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Bridge east of YOJU; from west bank
26 March 1951



Road and terrain - looking north toward
CHIPYONG-NI 26 March 1951

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Terrain vicinity CHOHYON-NI - looking north
26 March 1951



Terrain south of KOKSU-RI - 26 March 1951

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Road into KOKSU-RI - 26 March 1951

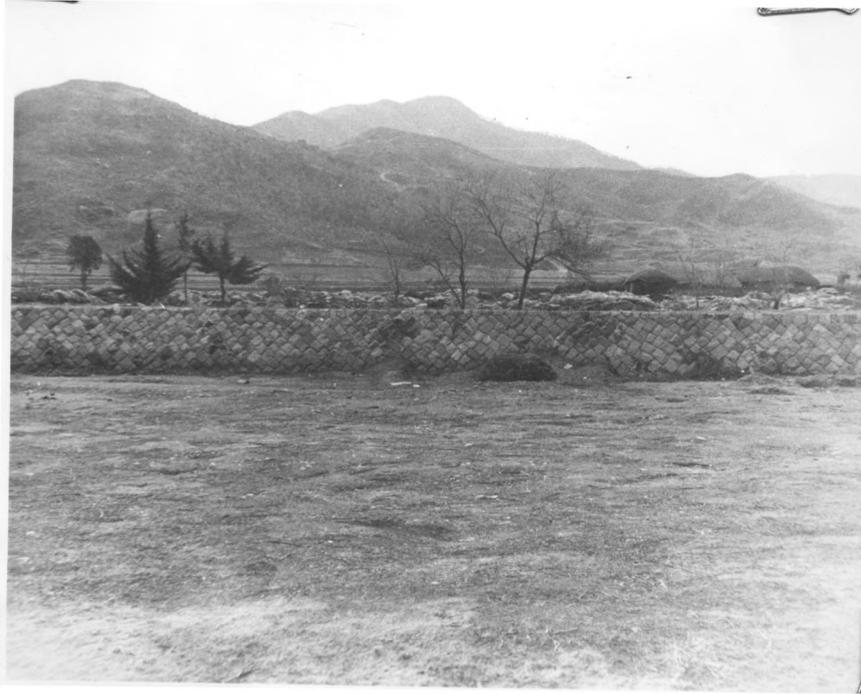


Road into KOKSU-RI, looking south
26 March 1951

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KOKSU-RI, right of road to CHIPYONG-NI
26 March 1951



KOKSU-RI, right of road to CHIPYONG-NI,
looking south
26 March 1951

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KOKSU-RI, right of road to CHIPYONG-NI,
looking south
26 March 1951



Highway underpass (railroad bridge) entering
CHIPYONG-NI
26 March 1951

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CHIPYONG-NI, looking north from underpass
26 March 1951



CHIPYONG-NI, looking north - 26 March 1951

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AFTER ACTION INTERVIEW

INTERVIEWER: Captain John C Barrett, 028481, Assistant G2, EUSAK
(at time of action, Commanding Officer, Company L,
5th Cavalry Regiment)

ACTION: TASK FORCE CROMBEZ

TIME OF ACTION: 15 February 1951

TIME & PLACE OF INTERVIEW: 26 April 1951; Headquarters, EUSAK,
Taegu Korea

INTERVIEWER: 1st Lt Martin Blumenson

ASSISTANT: SFC Raymond Lapino

At 1100, 15 February 1951, Captain Barrett was informed by Lieutenant Colonel Treacy, Commanding Officer, 3d Battalion, that Company L and approximately 25 tanks would make up a task force to go to CHIPYONG-NI to relieve the 23d Infantry Regiment. The task force was scheduled to depart at 1300 that day. Captain Barrett prepared his company for this mission.

At 1215, Colonel Treacy gave Captain Barrett additional information. The mission of the infantry was to protect the tanks against enemy infantry. Whenever the tanks halted, Company L was to dismount and deploy on both sides of the road in order to protect the tanks and the squad of engineer soldiers accompanying the task force. When the tanks were ready to proceed, the infantry was to remount the tanks.

Captain Barrett immediately contacted Captain Hier, Commanding Officer, Company D, 6th Tank Battalion, and they discussed the employment of the infantry in the task force. It was agreed that if the tanks were halted, the infantry would deploy 50 to 75 yards off the road. When the tankers were ready to proceed, they would signal the infantry to remount. Hier would inform the tanks by radio, and the tankers in turn would inform the infantry by voice. It was a natural assumption on Captain Barrett's part that the tanks would not be buttoned up because of the infantry riding them.

At 1300, Colonel Treacy informed Captain Barrett that the task force would be delayed because the supply vehicles for the 23d Infantry Regiment had not yet arrived.

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Colonel Treacy further stated that the mission of the task force was to bring supply vehicles into the 23d Infantry Regiment perimeter. The task force would return to the regimental area that same afternoon.

Captain Barrett returned to the company and issued the attack order to the platoon leaders, stating the mission of the task force and the mission of the infantry. He instructed his platoon leaders to exert utmost control over the men in action. Infantrymen who became separated from the tanks were to assemble and make their way back to friendly lines if possible or wait near the road, utilizing the best available defensive positions, for the return of the tanks. They could then rejoin the tanks returning that afternoon from CHIPYONG-NI. Captain Barrett had the platoon leaders study the map so they would be oriented on the ground at all times. He also instructed the platoon leaders to select one man per tank to fire the .50 caliber machine gun mounted on the tank.

At approximately 1500, Captain Barrett was told by Colonel Treacy that the task force was ready to depart. Colonel Treacy at that time instructed Captain Barrett to have a 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -ton truck follow the rear of the tank column to pick up the wounded, since the task force had no means of medical evacuation. Captain Barrett ordered the Service Company truck assigned to Company I to follow the task force column. He also ordered four ROK soldiers of the 5th Platoon, Company L to accompany the truck and act as litter bearers.

Captain Barrett mounted his company on the tanks, leaving the first four tanks bare. He rode on the second tank that carried infantry, along with Colonel Treacy and ten enlisted men. The executive officer of the company, Lieutenant Johnson, rode the rear tank. For company communication, Captain Barrett and Lieutenant Johnson each had one SCR 300 radio, Captain Barrett and the platoon leaders each had a SCR 536.

The task force started from the tank park about 1530. Approximately 1000 yards from the initial point of departure, the column received the first enemy fire directed against it. This consisted of small arms fire only, increasing in intensity until the column reached KOKSU-RI. The column passed through KOKSU-RI with the tanks and infantry "in good shape." Casualties at this time were extremely light.

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Two thousand yards beyond KOKSU-RI, the tanks halted for a reason unknown to Captain Barrett. He ordered the infantry to dismount according to instructions. The company deployed along the road with the exception of some wounded who remained on the tanks. The tanks remained halted eight or ten minutes. The infantry was heavily engaging the enemy in a small arms fire-fight on both sides of the road when the tanks began moving without notifying the infantrymen.

As soon as Captain Barrett saw the tanks start to move, he ordered the company to load up. Due to the fact that the tanks were 75 yards distant from the infantrymen, the tanks were moving at a fast rate of speed when the men were able to reach them. Approximately 70 men of the company were able to rejoin the tanks, including Captain Barrett and one platoon leader, Lieutenant Chastaine.

Captain Barrett was not able to remount the tank he had been on originally because it had moved out rapidly, but he joined the column on the fifth or sixth tank behind his original carrier. Colonel Treacy mounted that tank, but shortly thereafter, he was knocked off due to traverse of the turret. From reports of infantrymen Captain Barrett secured in CHIPYONG-NI, he learned that Colonel Treacy rejoined the column on about the twentieth tank. Those in the rear of the column were unable to catch up with the tanks. Some stayed with the wounded.

The men left on the ground were organized by Lieutenant Johnson, the executive officer, and Sergeant Jones, and they reached friendly lines later that day. One platoon leader, Lieutenant Lahey, was killed at this time.

According to the mission he had received, Captain Barrett felt it was necessary to leave the remainder of the company in command of the executive officer and to proceed with the men able to rejoin the tanks.

The column advanced about 1500 yards receiving enemy small arms and mortar fire. There the tanks halted because they had met tanks of the 23d Infantry Regiment.

Captain Barrett again ordered the infantry to dismount, deploy, and protect the tank column. At this time about 30 men of Company I remained with the task force. The others had been wounded or killed and had fallen

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off the tanks, including Lieutenant Chastaine who was killed before this halt.

When the road was cleared, the task force proceeded to CHIPYONG-NI. Again, no signal was given by the tankers when the tanks were ready to move. However, the tanks moved out so slowly that it was comparatively easy to get on them. There was no shooting at this time, and the tanks moved very slowly.

The 2½-ton truck with a load of wounded followed the column to the pass, within sight of the 23d RCT perimeter. Captain Barrett learned what happened to the truck by talking later with members of the company. On the following day he spoke with a wounded man of Company L who had spent the night on the truck. This man informed Captain Barrett that after the driver of the truck was wounded, Sergeant Kerzan, although wounded himself, drove the truck to the pass. At this time, since the tanks had departed, the Chinese closed in on the road and took all who were able to walk prisoner, including Colonel Treacy.

At CHIPYONG-NI, Captain Barrett was informed by Colonel Crombez that the task force would not return to the regimental area that evening, although the infantrymen who were not wounded "volunteered to a man" to return on the tanks.

The infantry fired from the moving tanks, engaging the enemy at 50 to 60 yards. This fire was not effective unless the tanks were moving slowly. Just before the 2d halt, as the tanks were moving slowly, Captain Barrett shot and killed at a distance of 50 yards three enemy soldiers who were carrying a bangalore torpedo as they trotted across a rice field toward the tanks.

The task force returned the next day, without the infantry because Colonel Crombez had given the men a choice of volunteering or not. Captain Barrett ordered the men not to volunteer.

Captain Barrett returned with the task force on 16 February to the regimental area because he was desirous of finding out what had happened to the remainder of his company.

Upon his return to the regimental area, Captain Barrett secured a company jeep and with the jeep driver immediately returned over the same route to CHIPYONG-NI, picking up wounded men who were still lying alongside the road. He picked up four men in this manner. As he reached the truck in the pass

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near the 23d RCT perimeter, the task force of tanks, ambulances, and supply vehicles arrived on its way to CHIPYONG-NI. Captain Barrett stopped the ambulances and put the wounded inside. The truck had not been disabled, but it did have a flat tire. It was driven off within an hour by members of the 23d Infantry Regiment.

Company L casualties were extremely heavy due to the intense enemy small arms fire which could not be avoided as long as the men remained on the tanks. Approximate casualty figures, as Captain Barrett remembered them, were as follows: 20 KIA (including four Koreans), 40 WIA, 20 MIA.

Captain Barrett's control by radio of the company was hindered by the tank radios which completely obliterated all company channels.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. If a task force is contemplated where movement will be a continuous dash through enemy territory, Captain Barrett recommended that no infantry be employed for these reasons: 1) tanks can provide their own protection, for the tank behind can cover the one ahead; 2) if infantry is not allowed to deploy and maneuver against the enemy, the infantrymen riding tanks are in effect "sitting ducks silhouetted against the sky, ideal targets for enemy fire."
2. Some type of outside communications should be placed on the Patton tanks.
3. Some type of elevated rack should be devised so that infantrymen may ride the back deck of the Patton tanks. Although the weather on 15 February was quite cold, the deck of the Patton tank was too hot to stand on for any length of time. As an example of this, one man on Captain Barrett's tank wounded seriously by a bullet in the head was knocked unconscious. Because of the intensity of the enemy fire, it was five minutes (not more) before the wounded man could be attended to. In that short time, his clothing caught on fire, and the man undoubtedly suffered severe burns.
4. Captain Barrett recommended that tanks not be permitted to traverse their turrets and fire their 90mm guns while the infantrymen are on the tank. The concussion of the blast will knock men off the tank. Guns can be fired

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straight ahead or at a slight angle of traverse without knocking riders off,
provided the infantrymen have sufficient warning so they can crouch behind
the turret for protection against the blast.

Martin Blumenson
MARTIN BLUMENSON
1st Lt, AGC
3d Historical Detachment

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