

A  
VOLUNTEER  
SOLDIER'S  
DAY





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# **A VOLUNTEER SOLDIER'S DAY**

Recollections by Men of  
the Chinese People's Volunteers  
in the War to Resist U.S. Aggression  
and Aid Korea

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The present English edition of *A Volunteer Soldier's Day* is a selection made from the original Chinese edition published by the People's Literature Publishing House, Peking, in September 1956. Kuo Mojo's "Preface" and Choi Yong Kun's "Inscription" in the Chinese edition are also included.

Printed in the People's Republic of China

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## PREFACE TO THE CHINESE EDITION

The campaign to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea stands out as a patriotic movement of great historic significance since the founding of the People's Republic of China.

People's China was scarcely a year old when the Chinese People's Volunteers — the flower of China's sons and daughters — crossed the Yalu River, helped the heroic Korean people to repel the imperialist invaders and safeguard the independence of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and rendered our own borders secure from foreign aggression.

The Volunteers' lofty spirit of patriotism and internationalism at once set an example for the Chinese people and aroused a new patriotic wave throughout the nation. People of all strata displayed the utmost zeal and energy in production and construction to support the Korean war front. After nearly three years of arduous struggle, we finally won the peace and succeeded at the same time in speeding up our domestic construction.

Such a lofty spirit of patriotism and internationalism was widely acclaimed by peoples the world over — peoples who love peace and uphold justice — so that in the moral sense we also gained a monumental victory. As a result, China's international status is enhanced with each passing day, and our role in international affairs, particularly our efforts in defence of peace in Asia and in the world at large, have become such that no enemies of peace, however recalcitrant, can ignore the weight of our influence.

Following the Korean cease-fire came the armistice in Indo-China, then the Asian-African Conference at Bandung and finally the Geneva Four-Power Conference. The demand for

peaceful coexistence and disarmament came to be voiced throughout the whole world. The international tension deliberately created by the warlike clique in the United States and its jackals began to ease day by day. As things stand today, we can say that war is not necessarily inevitable. There are, of course, various factors which have brought about this change in the international situation. It is the outcome of the common endeavours of the people in all parts of the world who have peace and justice at heart. But it must be admitted that the victory won by

the Chinese People's Volunteers in the war to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea was one of the principal factors in turning the tide. These great results of the campaign to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea are of world-wide significance.

A campaign of such magnitude, dedicated to peace and directed against aggression, ought naturally to be accurately documented as a memorial work of lasting educational value to be handed down to our Chinese youth as well as to all peoples who uphold world peace and justice.

We should acknowledge our indebtedness to the leaders of the Political Department of the Chinese People's Volunteers. As early as the first winter after the cease-fire in the Korean war, they planned the publication of *A Volunteer Soldier's Day* and solicited contributions in the form of articles. The whole army was inspired with an enthusiasm for writing. The way they responded with stories resembled the actual fighting on the battlefield. *A Volunteer Soldier's Day* in its present form is the result of sorting out from upwards of 13,600 entries, with a total of more than twenty million words, the entries having undergone careful examination at all levels before they were finally submitted to the Editing Committee.

A literary undertaking on such a gigantic scale, coupled with so strict and well-organized a selection, is no small feat! The book *A Volunteer Soldier's Day*, so created, may well be considered an authentic documentary of the war to resist U.S.

aggression and aid Korea and go down in history as an everlasting literary monument built by the soldiers themselves.

From a purely literary point of view the book is no less a great collective work. Here are true stories and true characters. Nevertheless, these dauntless heroes with their heart-stirring and breath-taking stories cannot be surpassed by the greatest imaginative writing of any nation in the world. The Volunteers produced a number of matchless heroes whose feats are unprecedented in history. These heroes and their feats are not fictional but spring from real life. It is this which makes the book all the more fascinating and vital.

*A Volunteer Soldier's Day* has the added advantage of being a compilation of short stories so that people, occupied as they are these days, will find it convenient reading. Each story is complete in itself. Some consist of diverse extracts by various authors, bound together by unity of theme. This unity of diversity characterizes the book most aptly; for although the collection is made up of individual narratives, they cover the entire campaign to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea, and their central theme is one of praise for patriotism and internationalism. These many and various stories

\_ taken together form a big garden in which blooms a galaxy of flowers of all kinds: a grand orchestra in which thousands of instruments sound in symphony. I have no wish to exaggerate in using these metaphors as a commentary. Actually I cannot think of more appropriate expressions to use in describing this work of eternal and universal appeal.

Needless to say, *A Volunteer Soldier's Day* may serve as an excellent reader on patriotism and internationalism even for those with the minimum of elementary school education. The book is such absorbing reading that I am sure anyone would put it down only with the greatest reluctance. That was the way I felt about it. No sooner had I finished the first story than I was drawn into the second, and then on to the third. I simply had to devour the book at one gulp. I became even more engrossed than when, as a boy, I was im-

mersed in the classical novels *Dream of the Red Chamber* and *Water Margin*. I had never had this feeling about any of the works of our contemporary writers. Frankly, of many such books I could read four or five lines at most. This, of course, was largely due to lack of patience on my part; but then the author somehow always managed to over-decorate his work with superfluous epithets. The sentences were as a rule so long that one could tell at a glance that he had sat and pedantically mulled over his phraseology first and then started off at a stiff, stilted pace, or teetered along gingerly. It seems to me high time we should do something about this style of work.

Although *A Volunteer Soldier's Day* runs to something like a million words, as a reader I think it rather too short than too long. For one reads with real relish the stream of stories our soldiers have poured forth. It's like eating fresh and crisp cucumbers or green peppers, agreeable to the palate and exciting! These stories are also tremendously moving. But I cannot help lodging one private complaint. Might not the Editing Committee have been a bit less exclusive in their selection of the stories? I suspect that there is an abundance of good stuff buried among the rejects. These may not be jewels as yet but perhaps diamonds in the rough, which, after undergoing "cutting," would surely become precious. May I therefore propose to the Editing Committee that after the present volumes are off the press, they consider going over those unpublished papers so as to put out a supplementary edition of *A Volunteer Soldier's Day*?

I think the title of the book — *A Volunteer Soldier's Day* — is quite good. But the title does not imply that the contributor had to limit his story to the events of a single day. When we say "day" here, I personally would interpret it as "millennium." In other words, just as the spirit of the campaign to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea will remain for ever fresh, so will this great collective work mirroring it. The campaign lasted two years and nine months

roughly 1,006 days. This figure calls to mind the masterpiece of Arabian classics called *Arabian Nights, The Thousand and One Nights*. For a thousand and one nights in succession a royal consort had to tell a different story every night to talk a despot out of taking a bloody vengeance on his subjects. The Arabian Nights is a gem in the thesaurus of world literature. And I have no doubt these authentic.. stories of the one-thousand-and-six-day campaign in the cause of peace in the Far East will also be a gem among the anthologies of the world.

Incidentally, I have another suggestion to make to the Editing Committee. I think we ought to do something about translating *A Volunteer Soldier's Day* (including the supplementary edition, if and when published) and have it rendered into national minority tongues as well as foreign languages—Russian, English, French, Spanish, Korean, Hindi, Arabic, Japanese and so on. In this way we may extend the bonds of fraternal international friendship which the Chinese and Korean peoples have welded through fire and blood. In this way too we may disseminate the seeds of patriotism and internationalism farther and wider. Such a step would be a contribution not only to world literature but also to world peace.

The people's heroes who gave their lives in the war to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea are immortal!

**Kuo Mo-jo**

Peking  
June 22, 1956

**AN INSCRIPTION\* FOR  
"A VOLUNTEER SOLDIER'S DAY"**

During the national liberation war of the Korean people, the Chinese People's Volunteers fought with us shoulder to shoulder like our own brothers. They demonstrated unparalleled revolutionary heroism and a lofty spirit of internationalism. Their great and impressive exploits, which we will always remember with deep gratitude, will shine ever brighter as our nation steadily goes forward and prospers.

**Choi Yong Kun**

*Vice-Premier, Minister of National Defence and Vice-Marshal of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*

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\*Translated from Korean.

## **PART ONE**

# FIRST DAY ACROSS THE YALU

— Excerpts from diaries

*October 25*

Having crossed the Yalu River, our force continued pushing south. It was three o'clock in the morning of October 25 when I led the 4th Company to arrive at the North Punghadong Hill.

Without stopping to rest, the fighters started to build field fortifications right away.

To the right before us was enemy-occupied Onchong where scattered fires could be seen emitting a dull yellowish glow through the thick mist. From Punghadong Village at the foot of the hill came the intermittent barking of dogs.

Just before dawn when the night was at its darkest, I stood on the slope and braving the cold wintry wind, lost in thought, I gazed at the fire in Onchong. The battle would commence when day broke, but what sort of an enemy would we encounter? What tactics would they adopt? How should we cope with them? These questions tumbled around in my mind, but for all of them I had only one answer: Whoever they were and no matter what tactics they employed we must stop them here and drive them back, for this place was so near our motherland.

At dawn we found ourselves enveloped by a dense fog and were thus unable to observe the enemy. With Commander Sun Hung-chuan of the 4th Company and Political Instructor Wang Tung-en I checked our position again and carefully examined the placing and camouflage of every fighter.

Just past 8 a.m. when the fog had barely dispersed, the droning of motors was heard at the foot of the hill. Two enemy

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trucks were coming along the Onchong Highway straight towards us.

"Damn it all! They are so arrogant; they dare to come without making a search first!" grumbled the angry fighters in the shelter near me.

"Huh, they are already dreaming about crossing the Yalu!" The indignant fighters began to click the triggers on their rifles.

"No firing without order!" I gave the order to the company commander, being afraid that the fighters, in their excitement, would be unable to control themselves, and would open fire prematurely.

Boom, boom! Two columns of smoke rose on the highway. Our mines had exploded. But, strange as it might seem, the enemy lorries came through this unscathed. With a roar, the lorries came straight towards us as if nothing had ever happened.

It looked as, though they regarded the explosions as a casual obstruction. They were quite unaware they were coming up against fresh armed resistance.

"They're presuming too much," thundered Chang Shou-an, leader of the 2nd Platoon. "Just wait, I'll teach them how to behave properly!"

By this time the enemy were pouring out on the highway in swarms, headed by seven lorries full of infantry, followed by foot soldiers in a column of twos, with jeeps, lorries and gun-carriages bringing up the rear. Helmets and a variety of arms glittered in the sun. It seemed as though they really meant business.

"Oho, we're just in time. Had we been late by just one minute these thugs might have advanced to the bank of the Yalu River!" So thinking, I immediately reported the situation by telephone to the battalion command post and asked if we should open fire at once.

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"Don't get excited!" came the calm voice of Chief of Staff Liu, "let all the enemy lorries come over, then wait for the open-fire order!"

The composure of the chief of staff reassured me. I calmed down and repeated the order that there should be no firing. Although the fighters around were silent, they betrayed great impatience for the coming battle.

The last of the enemy's lorries had passed before our very eyes, while a company of their infantry had reached the head of the bridge at the rear and to the right of our position. Meanwhile, large numbers of enemy infantry coming from Onchong continued to push northwards.

Suddenly, from over the great mountain to the north came the sound of furious firing. Obviously, the main force of our regiment had opened fire on the enemy. Why weren't we given the order to start? Picking up the receiver I was ready to put through a call when the bell rang. ". . . Open fire at once!" the voice of the chief of staff was firm and serious. "Take care, your task is to let no enemy at the

rear filter through, not a single one of them!"

"Give it to them!" I gave the order to the 4th company commander, as I put down the earphone.

A shower of bullets rained down on the enemy along the highway!

Tai Cheng-pao  
*Deputy Battalion Commander*

October 25

This morning, two light trucks, loaded with some two dozen soldiers of the enemy's spearhead squad, were riding from Punghadong along the Onchono Highway.

The bandits, far in advance of their main force, looked very cocky. In the twinkling of an eye, they would be in the "bag" we had prepared for them.

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"Fire!" At the order of Company Commander Keng, all at once our machine-guns and mortars started to roar.

Seeing things were going badly with them, one after another the enemy jumped down from their vehicles and ran towards a small stream to the right of the highway. Our platoon took up the pursuit.

I had never met such flabby enemies. They glanced back repeatedly as they ran. Seeing that we were catching up with them, they began to throw away their things, such as blankets, overcoats, and miscellaneous articles. Finally even cartridges and rifles were abandoned, as these encumbered their movements. How they must have regretted their parents had not given them more legs!

"The People's Volunteers give lenient treatment to prisoners of war!" "Surrender your arms and we won't shoot!" We shouted as we chased after them, forgetting for the moment that these foreigners didn't understand Chinese. For the louder we shouted, the faster they fled. Well, we learned that if we were to capture more in the future, we would do well to learn a little of their language!

But no matter how fast the enemy ran, they did not get off scot-free. The fighters of the 8th Squad suddenly appeared, and intercepted them. They had taken a short-cut in front of the enemy. The enemy were stunned. Wei Chun-tsai dashed

up and caught one. Wang Li-chun and I followed him and levelled our guns at some others, upon which they raised their hands, breathing heavily, their eyes blinking and legs trembling. . . .

Thus we put an end to the enemy's spearhead squad.

The commander commended us in the presence of all, but he also pointed out emphatically that this victory marked only the beginning of the battle.

Chien Ming-tai  
*Deputy Squad Leader*

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October 25

A fleet of enemy lorries, skirting the foothill at Punghadong on the Onchong Highway, raising clouds of dust, were hurtling straight in our direction. Lying in ambush in the woods by the roadside, we could clearly see the men in the lorries in glittering steel helmets laughing heartily.

Suddenly the chugging of the motors was drowned by a violent burst of gunfire. Our regiment was making an attack.

The lorries halted. The soldiers jumped down hurriedly and ran towards a hill near the highway.

Seeing that they intended to seize the vantage point, we sallied out to get ahead of them. We had about the same distance to cover as they did in this mountain-climbing race, but we were more than a match for them, for we were more energetic and nimbler of foot. When we reached the top of the hill our enemies were still inching up, some 30 metres from the top. What an excellent target they presented. We just rained down grenades on them. Those who remained alive turned on their heels, some muffling their heads with woollen greatcoats, and rolled down hill like barrels.

"Ha! Ha! These good-for-nothings dare to dream of marching towards the Yalu River!" I was amused at the sight of the enemy in such utter confusion.

Battle cries went up all over the place. On the highway, in the rice fields and on the hill slopes and at the river banks, the steely light of bayonets flashed. Our whole regiment was out to attack.

Led by our squad leader, we swooped down on the enemy. Abandoning their lorries, they ran pell-mell in all directions, without daring to return a single shot.

Running after a tall fellow, I shouted: "Yield your gun and you'll be spared!" But how could he understand Chinese! He not only did not stop but ran even faster. As he went, he took off his greatcoat and flung it to the ground. Then he discarded his boots and ran barefooted for all he was

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worth. Seeing it would be impossible to overtake him I was forced to take aim and shoot.

When my rifle jammed, my squad leader suggested to me: "Go to the lorries and change it for a new one!" When I ran to the highway, I found things in the lorries in a mess. I rummaged all over hoping to find an automatic rifle. Suddenly I espied the barrel of a gun sticking out of an eiderdown sleeping bag. I grabbed hold of it and pulled but found it very heavy. I gave a violent jerk and out popped the head of a man. Taken by surprise, I raised my useless gun. The fellow was so frightened he cradled his head in his hands and wailed, so taking the tommy-gun from around his neck, I made him leave the lorry under escort.

In the woods by the roadside were massed a crowd of prisoners of war with begrimed faces and tousled hair. They looked entirely different from the swashbuckling rogues they had been a few minutes before. They told the interpreter that they had intended to reach the bank of the Yalu River that very day.

It was my first battle in the war to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea. Today, October 25, at Onchong we checked the advance of the enemy towards the Yalu River.

Chen Ching-yu  
*Fighter*

## **FIRST BATTLE ACROSS THE YALU**

**CHAO SHUN-SHAN**

*Deputy Squad Leader, Meritorious Fighter First Class*

It was midnight. Our battalion was pushing southward along a wild trail, but when we reached the highway 30 *li*\* south of Unsan, we got word that a band of enemy troops fleeing from the north had got away. The battalion command decided to give chase in a southeasterly direction. But to cut off the retreat of the main body of the routed enemy forces further up, the company commander ordered our squad to remain in ambush.

"This road has to be sealed off," he told us in a determined tone. "You must not let a single foe get away." Then he added, "If you can hold them here, our pursuit troops will relieve you very soon."

Having given us our assignment, the company commander immediately set off with the rest of his men to hunt down the fleeing enemy.

Over the town the sky glowed red as the artillery boomed to the accompaniment of clattering machine-guns. Enemy tanks and trucks rolled along a road beyond us, headlights glittering. It was clear the retreating enemy would soon turn up. We quickly noted the terrain. On our left was a rice-paddy and to our right a ditch choked with weeds. Our squad leader decided to take the left side with two sub-groups and assigned me two machine-gunners, Yu Shih-hsiung and

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\* A *li* is equivalent to half a kilometre or one-third of a mile.

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Tien Yu-fu, to guard the right. We started digging in immediately. Yu, Tien and I dug a rectangular foxhole and mounted our machine-gun at the roadside.

"Hurry up!" some of the diggers urged their comrades. "We'll need to, you know. This time we're going to face their 'trump card' army."

Yes, we had known all along that these troops now put to flight were part of the U. S. First Cavalry, said to be one of the "trump cards" of the U.S. imperialists and the cream of the U.S. army. The so-called "cavalry," however, had not one horse. It was a completely mechanized unit. The name "cavalry" was an old label handed down from Washington's days, people told us. Now, our first encounter with the invaders was to be a crossing of swords with this "trump card" of theirs. It would afford us an excellent opportunity of testing the imperialist armed strength. We were soon to see how much or how little these fiendish beasts who had crossed the Pacific to ravage the Yalu banks with fire and sword were really worth! Actually it didn't make any difference to us what they amounted to. Even if they should turn out to be fire-breathing monsters, we would break their necks just the same.

Before we had finished our foxhole, the long convoy of trucks, tanks and armoured cars had turned in our direction. They looked like a fiery-dragon writhing so that you couldn't count its segments. I was a little worried at the sight. Would our squad be able to stop them? If this "premiere" should turn out a flop, could we ever face the folks back home? No, we couldn't let that horde get away no matter how many they were. We simply had to give them a taste of the Chinese People's Volunteers' medicine!

"Prepare for battle!" ordered our squad leader. His voice was calm and clear. Yu immediately ripped open the cartridge bag. Tien took out six clips of cartridges and handed them to me. "These are yours, Deputy Squad Leader," he said. "Don't waste any."

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"Steady, Deputy Squad Leader! We must keep cool!" Yu hastily remarked.

I knew how they felt.

A heavy tank shook the ground under our feet and blinded us momentarily with reflected light. Then as soon as the blasted "iron turtle" got within ten metres or so of us it emitted two shells followed by a hail of machine-gun bullets whizzing over our heads. Obviously the tank had spotted us.

Highly impatient, I half wished that we could get it at once. Then suddenly I heard a deafening roar as a huge shadow passed over me. Tien had sprung to his feet, protesting to the tank demolition team on the opposite side. "What! You let the thing get away?"

Almost instantly a big commotion was raised on the left side of the road. For the man who had dashed over to the tank turned back again when he saw its five-pointed-star insignia which he took for our own.

"But it's a white star!" cried someone near him. "It surely belongs to the American devils!"

In the midst of this confusion, Fan Chi-tai, the leader of the tank demolition team, suddenly rose and in a flash tossed a bangalore torpedo against an armoured car charging our line. The car immediately exploded and went up in flames, splashing me all over with diesel oil. The vehicle behind the armoured car crashed into its rear, while the rest of the convoy came to a screeching standstill.

Flames, lights, and the flashes of the exploding grenades lit up the road dazzlingly white, so that one could see very clearly those close-packed, helmeted soldiers on

the trucks and artillery vans.

Before they could disperse, we swooped upon them in a fierce attack with machine-guns, tommy-guns and hand-grenades.

"Get 'em, boys! And give'm the works!" the squad leader shouted spiritedly.

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The "trump card" army had no chance even to return fire. All you could hear was scared squeals. Some of the men jumped off the truck in a flurry and tried to squeeze into the ditches at either side of the road. Others stupidly sought cover four or five metres from our foxhole. I thought that since we were greatly outnumbered we should take advantage of the panic and give the enemy a good hard blow. So I swept the ditch with the machine-gun. They dropped one after another and lay howling like wounded wolves. "We'll see how much more noise you'll make," said I as I picked up the machine-gun and pumped lead into the ditch three more times. That silenced the yelping for good; only a few used their last breath moaning.

I began to feel somewhat relieved, not so much because we had stopped the enemy or killed many of them as because I felt now I had a pretty good idea of their fighting strength. This much-publicized "trump card" army proved to be a dud.

The enemy soldiers at the end of the motorcade finally woke up. They had apparently come to realize their predicament, for they massed like a swarm or bees for a breakthrough under the command of a few barking officers. I took up my gun, and at the first round of firing the ones surging forward fell to the ground like so many bundles of straw. Those trailing behind turned on their heels and scurried away like a drove of scared ducks.

"Nice work! They're done for!" Yu and Tien shouted exultantly.

Having beaten off several of the enemy's counter-assaults, I found my ammunition belt empty and turned round for re-supply. But as soon as I had reloaded my gun, ready to pick off the scattering runaways, I heard a noise from the truck parked beside me. By golly! There are enemy soldiers still lurking around here! Before I had a chance to take aim, a big hulk of a man had jumped in front of me. He must have taken leave of his senses, for instead of shooting at me with his carbine he threw it away and, shrieking like mad,

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Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea. *Oil Painting by Tung Hsi-wen*

man a grab for my machine-gun. Hardly had I got my bearings when two more of the enemy jumped off the truck, hurling themselves at me ferociously. At this critical juncture, Yu and Tien (the latter had been wounded in the leg) leaped from the foxhole, each seizing one of the attackers before they could lay hands on me. The two pairs came to grips and, tumbled down into the foxhole.

This timely help from Yu and Tien renewed my strength and confidence. My opponent and I were locked in a desperate fight over the machine-gun, on which each of us had a firm grip. I knew perfectly well the effect of success or failure in this duel on the course of the whole battle. If I should be deprived of the weapon, not only would our squad be in danger of being wiped out, but what was a more serious threat, the enemy could break through our ambush and launch an attack from the rear upon our columns engaged in hot pursuit. I could not afford to waste too much time grappling with this fellow either; the sooner he was finished off the better. But things weren't so simple as I would have wished. My adversary was pretty beefy, and taller than myself by half a head. I couldn't make out whether he was a driver, an officer or a machine-gunner. He glared at me with his greenish eyes the outlandish picture of a wily wolf in a service cap. If only there were a slab of stone around or even a lump of clay, I would have picked it up and bashed his face in with it; but there was no such weapon at hand.

The tussle was fast exhausting me. But I knew full well this was our first

engagement with the U.S. aggressors and people back home were waiting for news of our victory. I had to hang on to the gun even though it should cost my life.

So I fought on with all my strength. The beast suddenly released his left fist from the gun to land me a smack in the jaw. I ducked and he hit the gun-butt. With his grip thus loosened I pulled the gun with a jerk which sent him staggering until he fell flat on his back, still however clutching the machine-gun with one hand as firmly as ever. I steadied my

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self and was going to deal him a return blow when I saw him reach in his holster for his pistol. I quickly seized him by the wrist with the hand I was going to hit him with while catching hold of the gun with the other. I knew that in a long-drawn-out scuffle like this he had it over me for his sheer brawn alone; and indeed, before long he managed to free his hand and tried to get at his pistol again. At this crucial moment I suddenly found Yu beside my opponent. Over-excited, I shouted out, "Yu Shih-hsiung, get his pistol! Quick!" It never occurred to me then that my partner might not be in a position to help me.

I regretted this exceedingly afterwards and could never forgive myself this thoughtlessness and mistaken judgement. For in the thick of a life-and-death struggle, when one has to fight tooth and nail, he certainly has no hand to spare to aid others.

Now Yu was no better off than I in his own fight. Nevertheless, when he heard my call he didn't hesitate a moment but lent a hand and knocked the pistol to the ground. I immediately grabbed it and took aim. . . . But the flash of metal beneath Yu's elbow caught my eye, and I cried out in warning, "Yu Shih-hsiung, look out! He's drawing a gun on you! . . ." Hardly had my caution rung out when I heard a muffled shot. Damn it! The devil had got his chance!

Furious, I aimed point-blank at my rival and pulled the trigger vengefully. But the confounded thing seemed to be even stiffer than the machine-gun. It simply wouldn't click. We were in a worse fix than ever, for the sprawling beast threatened to spring to his feet again. Then, in the twinkling of an eye, Yu, still grappling with his adversary, had got on top so that I caught sight of the pick on his back. I dashed over and seized it, but then began to doubt whether it would be of any use after all, whether I could deal the brute a telling blow with it. But I set my teeth and with all the strength I could muster bashed him square on the head with it.

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It proved a finishing blow. The tide was turned. Yu's assailant took to his heels but I got the start on him. My pick was already poised for my second victim. The fleeing beast threw up his hands to protect his head but it didn't do him any good. My pick smashed right through his skull. The third enemy struggled desperately to get away too, but held tight in Tien's clutches, he met the same fate.

The surrounding ridges now echoed with gunfire fast and thick. Brother units arrived. With bugles blowing their stirring call, legions of comrades-in-arms poured grenades upon the vehicles and tanks stranded on the road.

Thus ended a stiff battle. Yu and Tien, both seriously wounded, were found unconscious near the foxhole. I knelt down beside Yu in whose hand the enemy's revolver was still firmly clutched and whose teeth remained tightly set. As I was wiping the blood from Yu's body I discovered the bullet wound in his belly. It grieved me deeply, especially since he had got hit because of me. Tien, who was close by, had his right leg broken and his trousers were drenched in blood. He had already been wounded when he had got into the scuffle, yet when the assailants came at me he had struggled to his feet, seized one of them and had grappled with him until I had finally managed to finish him off.

That was my first combat experience after crossing the border into Korea. The engagement gave me some idea of the poor stuff the American invaders were made of. They were called a "trump card" army, but they were a farce. The outcome of the battle testified that it was our unity of purpose, our resourcefulness and courage that gave us the strength to defeat the superior-armed enemy. Victory shall be ours for ever!

## **SEIZING AN ENEMY ARTILLERY POSITION**

**LIU CHING-HSIANG**

Deputy Political Director

The road to Sokchangdong, which we were to capture, was exposed to enemy artillery fire from Sangkudong. The regimental commander summoned the cadres of the vanguard battalion together and specified that our battalion should wipe out the hostile artillery position. The artillery position was garrisoned by Americans, and this was to be our first encounter with the U.S. imperialist army. Having given the assignment, the regimental commander searched our faces with a sweeping glance and asked us guardedly, "Well, can you do it?"

It was no walkover of course. For one thing we were completely in the dark as to the enemy strength; also we had no guide to fall back upon. But an order was an order. Besides it was a timely bid. Everybody was thoroughly fed up with the nuisance of the enemy guns. And so when the commander put the question to us we replied as with one voice, "Definitely!"

Immediately after the conference we approached our battalion commander and got the mission assigned to our company. When we returned with the news, our men were jubilant. Chang Kuang-chun, Third Platoon Commander, elbowed his way through to remind me, "Deputy Political Director, don't forget to put our platoon in the vanguard."

Actually there is little difference between the vanguard and rearguard. But somehow our men always contended for the

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spearhead as though those coming up from behind would have no opportunity of shooting at the U.S. invaders at all.

We first consulted our map, then with the aid of a compass moved northward in the direction of the enemy's shelling. We had marched two *li* and then after crossing a brook had started up a hill when I discovered to my surprise that the Ninth Company was ahead of us. "How can this be!" I thought to myself. "We are supposed to be the spearhead, but here they are ahead of us. Nothing doing!" So we pushed on at the double and soon overtook them.

Two more ridges and a peal of gunfire burst directly in front of us. Judging by the sound the trajectory was quite high. There was also shooting from the ridges on either side, and artillery shells whizzed over our heads in rapid succession. We squatted on our haunches, and under cover of our raincoats flicked on a flashlight and studied the map. With the aid of the compass we located the enemy emplacement as somewhere ahead to our left. This being the case, if we proceeded straight on into the artillery position. we would get fired upon from three directions. On the other hand, if we could bypass the frontal position by skirting the ravine and thus get at the enemy from behind, it would mean half the battle. I consulted with the company commander on this and he said, "Good, you go ahead with the Third Platoon. but beware of exposing your men; see that they approach their goal unobserved." Then he added. "We'll stay here to cover you with machine-guns. But if you aren't spotted by the enemy so much the better. If you are we'll open up, and at the same time you'll draw off a small detachment from your own men to cover your advance."

As soon as we got down to the ravine enemy gunfire broke out again from either

side. I stopped to listen. The projectiles were still quite high, which proved that the foe had seen nothing. We marched faster and faster; and after we had advanced one *li*, the gunfire gradually lessened. We must have penetrated the enemy base in depth. We halted.

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There was a dead calm on all sides. Then we immediately made for the hill ahead and to our left.

Scarcely had we got up when the enemy artillery roared out right in front of us. I was so taken by surprise that nearly let out a cry. It turned out that the hilltop we were on was just to the left of the enemy's rear. I motioned my comrades to lie flat on the ground. Then I looked about me and saw a highway running north-south at the foot of the hill. To the left of the road was a string of towcars, and to the right a piece of open ground. It was from here that the artillery fire was spurting. The enemy gunners were hard at work while their trucks were shuttling back and forth with supplies.

"Deputy Instructor, let's charge now," said the Seventh Squad Leader Li Pao in undertones. He simply couldn't contain himself any longer.

"That's right. Let's charge!" came an echo.

I could tell immediately that the echo came from none other than Peng Chi-kuei.

"Stay where you are!" I ordered, restraining Li.

Frankly I had the fidgets myself. Who could be at ease when he saw his own troops being strafed by enemy guns? As a matter of fact my trigger finger was itching. but my mission demanded a cool head. Two more of our platoons were yet to move up. so we would have to wait. If we should expose ourselves before we got in battle position we might make a mess of things and lose the victory.

The company arrived and I reported to both the company commander and the political instructor. The commander shook my hand with the firm grasp of one who was quite satisfied with our performance. I was certain that he would order an immediate attack, but he only told me that our company as spearhead had moved so fast that we were out of touch with the main forces of our battalion. Under the circumstances, he said, it would have to be carefully considered whether it would be wise to attack immediately.

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"But further deliberation won't be necessary," I said to myself. "We've got enough

men here to take care of the enemy. I fixed my eyes on the commander pleadingly, awaiting his final decision with the greatest anxiety. At last he ordered in a determined voice, "Attack! We mustn't let this opportunity slip by. Let our spearhead take the enemy single-handed!"

There was no need to explain the plan of attack to my men. I swiftly led the Third Platoon to the foot of the mountain, ready to charge under cover of another platoon personally commanded by the company commander.

"Comrades, come on! Now's the time to show what you're made of!" I shouted.

Immediately the Seventh and Ninth Squads darted forth like arrows and swooped down upon the artillery position. The big guns were still howling from their craned necks when a storm of flying grenades and bullets accompanied by battle-cries suddenly broke under their barrels. The enemy were frightened into fits by our surprise descent upon them and the guns did no more howling; instead the gunners started screaming.

Quite a scuffle had already taken place before the enemy on the opposite ridge woke up and launched a machine-gun counter-attack. I ordered our heavy machine-gunners to return fire. It was Chang Yung-hai, Machine-Gun Platoon Leader, who rushed over to the gun at the roadside and fired point-blank at the opposite ridge.

The U.S. artillerymen were soon thrown into panic and were fleeing pell-mell. Our men gave chase as though hunting down hares. The enemy troops atop the hill, seeing their fire power of no help to their gunners, sent down a detachment in hopes of retaking the artillery position. But only death was awaiting them.

"Take it easy!" I tried to restrain our Third Platoon Leader. "Don't shoot till they get close enough."

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We hid ourselves by the roadside and waited until the detachment came down to well within 20 or 30 metres of us. Then we opened up, completely wiping out the counter-attackers with our tommy-guns and grenades.

But the ground in dispute was of vital importance to the Americans. Despite their heavy casualties they regrouped and fought back desperately time and again. We were overwhelmingly outnumbered, but we fought with grim determination and each held firmly his own captured position. Throughout the operation our heavy machine-gun was kept in action — when the gunner fell, the squad leader took over, then the squad leader got wounded and the second gunner took his place.

"We are here for keeps! We dare you American gangsters to come near us!" our dogged combatants challenged.

The morale of our men greatly inspired me. As I ran back and forth signalling commands with my wounded arm, I shouted at the top of my voice, "Comrades, this artillery position is and will remain for ever ours!"

The battle grew fiercer until it boiled down to a hand-to-hand fight. Seeing that the Ninth Squad Leader Su Chinchiao was at grips with an enemy soldier, Peng Chi-kuei quickly came to his help. He sprang over as deftly as a cub and hit the American with a grenade-shell which shattered his skull. Now, before Peng could turn round, an enemy lunged towards him from behind. He ducked so adroitly that the attacker himself was thrown down. Peng swung his gun-butt and dispatched him swiftly. On the left side of the road Messenger Chin Cheng-teh, though wounded, kept fighting and held his assailants at bay until he ran out of ammunition. When the foe finally closed in, he let go his last grenade, ending his own life and the lives of all six of his assailants.

In this way we pinned the enemy down until the Second Platoon came up. They immediately fought their way to the road so as to cut off the enemy's reinforcements.

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In the end the Americans turned tail and fled, leaving behind 16 artillery pieces, 28 trucks and numberless dead. While listing our booty, which was scattered among the corpses on the battlefield, we saw a signal hanging in the sky. Our comrades had occupied Sokchangdong!

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## **THE BATTLE AT TOSU HILL**

**LI HSING-YEH**

*Company Commander, Meritorious  
Fighter First Class*

Braving a bitter cold of 40 degrees below zero, we crossed the ridge of Nangrim Mountain — so high that it was bare of any traces of birds or beasts — then hastened south through the night along the mountain path skirting Changjin Reservoir.

The lake was frozen solid, its broad surface covered with a layer of snow, stretching in an endless white haze as far as the eye could see. The mountains, rising and falling beside the lake, were also thickly mantled with snow. Were it not for the occasional trees dotting the slopes, you might have thought them pure snow piled in mountainous heaps. It was like marching in the Arctic.

We followed a wild mountain trail that led us over several ridges exceeding a thousand metres in height. The snow was above our knees, and every step required a great effort. An icy wind threw swirling powdery snow into our faces, blinding us, making us gasp for breath. The cotton padding of our uniforms was poor protection against the penetrating cold. Our bodies were completely devoid of warmth.

Because of our rapid pace, we left the horse and mule transport section carrying our food supplies far behind. For three days we hadn't eaten a single full meal. The men kept tightening their belts. Whenever their hunger grew too unbearable they scooped up a handful of snow and stuffed it into their mouths.

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Some of the men's feet became frost-bitten, and were swollen so painfully that they couldn't wear shoes. But they silently wrapped their feet with strips of blanket and continued to march. No matter how quickly we advanced, we couldn't convince them to drop out.

I saw one young soldier hobbling along, obviously on badly frost-bitten feet. I told him to halt and wait for the Casualty Section to catch up. He raised his head and glared at me angrily.

"I came here to fight, not to take scenic tours with the Casualty Section!" he snapped.

What could I say? I had no right to stand in the way of the young man's fighting determination.

Marching 60 kilometres a night, finally, on the night of December 6, we arrived at our destination — Tosu Hill.

We had got ahead of the vanguard of the First U.S. Marine Division, which was fleeing south. Our task was to block their retreat to give brother units a chance to surround and annihilate them.

The platoon leaders and I quickly looked over the terrain and immediately ordered the men to dig in. Pickaxes and shovels rang against the earth, frozen hard as a rock. At first the pickaxes made only white scars on the ground. But the men,

disregarding the blisters they raised on their hands, persisted for three hours and dug a line of foxholes.

At dawn, I stood on our emplacement and gazed north. I could see a white mist over the frozen Changjin Reservoir and the undulating mountains beside it. At our feet, the road twisted north and disappeared into the valley. Except for the noise of our men building fortifications, all was quiet.

The silence puzzled me. Had the enemy already passed? Surely our forced march had not been in vain?

" . . . Rat-tat-tat. . . ." A burst of machine-gun bullets zipped over my head and kicked up a spray of snow on the slope behind me. Twelve Mustang pursuit planes, flying low, roared across the ridge, and in the twinkling of an eye

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let loose a host of bombs on the slopes and the sides all the road.

I felt as if a great weight had been lifted from my heart. The planes informed me that the enemy had not escaped, they might appear any minute. These Mustangs were their vanguard.

I ordered the platoons to take up their positions. The men were delighted when they heard that we had headed off the enemy.

At eight o'clock a drone of motors came from the north. Shortly after, a large enemy force emerged from the northern valley. We could see with our field-glasses that they were preceded by several dozen tanks. These were followed by a long line of trucks loaded with infantrymen. There must have been a few hundred of the vehicles.

I analysed the situation with my second in command, Comrade Li Hsueh-ming. We had only 62 men in our company, in a lightly fortified emplacement. Our heavy weapons still hadn't caught up with us. The only "heavy" pieces we had were 60-millimetre mortars. If we relied solely on trying to hold our position, we'd be sure to suffer. We therefore decided to adopt the alternative plan previously worked out in battalion headquarters. We wouldn't wait for the enemy to fan out in battle formation. We would take the initiative and attack — blockade them on the highway, fight for time. . . .

Comrade Li and some twenty men of the First Platoon went out to launch the initial assault.

Enemy tanks came rolling down the highway, never dreaming that a squad of our

men was hiding in holes beside the road. They were taken completely by surprise when the first of our fighters jumped up and threw a bunch of grenades into one of the tank tracks. The grenades exploded and the tank ground to a halt.

"Charge!"

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At this stirring cry the men of the First Platoon went tearing down the snowy slope behind Comrade Li like an avalanche. Machine-guns, rifles, tommy-guns, hand-grenades poured fire into the soldier-laden trucks. The enemy infantrymen were frightened witless by this sudden assault. They had no idea what size our force was. They jumped off the trucks and crawled underneath, firing at us wildly.

To give First Platoon cover, I ordered our mortars to open up. Our gunners lobbed shells where the enemy concentrations were thickest.

Comrade Li and his men charged onto the road and the enemy retreated pell-mell to the north, leaving a flaming tank and five burning trucks.

Our men were joyously happy. But I knew it was too early to rejoice. Our victory marked only the beginning of the battle. The bitterest fighting was yet to come.

Sure enough, the enemy quickly spread out in battle formation and, under cover of their tank guns, swept forward fiercely. First Platoon occupied only a narrow strip and their positions were soon surrounded by the enemy.

"Second Platoon, come with me!" I could see that Comrade Li and his men were in for trouble. I immediately led Second Platoon charging down the mountain.

The flurried enemy turned their guns towards us. Some of our men fell, but we never paused. Dashing directly onto the highway we destroyed two tanks and four trucks in rapid succession. As I was about to toss a grenade against still another truck, the dozen or so U.S. soldiers in it, waiting with fear, frantically raised their rifles over their heads. I had to laugh. The First Marine Division certainly deserved its reputation as one of the United States' "crack" divisions. Its men had been perfectly trained, even in the proper gesture of surrender.

We had cut the counter-assaulting enemy into two sections. One of them fled south, with Comrade Li and the First Platoon in hot pursuit.

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The enemy soon came at us again. Taking up positions on the western side of the road, we met their charge. Gradually, there were less and less men at my side.

The enemy were closing in on us under cover of superior fire-power. Two of them had crawled to only twenty metres away, and were firing at us from behind a truck.

The volume of our fire grew increasingly thinner. I had only eight soldiers left in my platoon now; some were down to their last grenade. Enemy machine-guns chattered like mad. A large detachment of U.S. soldiers came swarming at us along the highway.

I looked around. The men were watching me silently.

"Fix bayonets!" The bayonets had long since been fixed, but I shouted the command to show our fighters my determination.

Suddenly, to the east there was intensive firing. The attacking enemy scattered and ran. Through the smoke of exploding hand-grenades, over 40 Volunteers hurtled towards us from the railway east of the highway. The commander, in the lead, carried an automatic. I recognized him by his robust agile movements immediately. He was the famous combat hero of our battalion — Comrade Liu Chin-tso, Commander of Company Two.

With excited and grateful tears in my eyes, I hurried to greet him, and warmly grasped both his hands.

"Old Liu! You fellows have come just at the right time!"

Comrade Liu told me that our company's delaying action had given the battalion time to dig in. It now would be difficult for the enemy to get through here. He next ordered his men to share some of their ammunition with us and told everyone to build fortifications to meet the enemy's next desperate attempt.

No sooner had we finished than the enemy launched another assault — the largest so far. It was spearheaded by five tanks, followed by masses of infantrymen.

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We had to knock out those tanks first, and deprive the foot soldiers of their cover.

We sent out four men with explosives, but they were mowed down before they could reach the tanks. The tanks rumbled towards us, spitting fire, their thunderous roars shaking the ground.

Comrade Liu gazed at them steadily. When our fourth demolition man was killed, he turned to me and said, "You take command, Old Li. I'm going after them!" Clutching a packet of dynamite, he rushed at the tanks.

I shall never forget his courage. With uncanny agility he dashed in among them and, in an instant, destroyed three tanks. Just as he was climbing on the fourth, machine-gun fire from the fifth tank cut him down.

Comrade Liu Chin-tso gloriously gave his life on the battleground near Changjin Reservoir.

Stirred by Comrade Liu's action, every one of our men was consumed with bitterness and rage. They struck back at the enemy like a storm. Fighter Chang Yung-tso was hit in the leg by three bullets, but continued to throw grenades. Comrade Chen Yao-yung, our company's cultural officer who had never been in battle before, picked up a wounded comrade's tommy-gun and fired angrily at the enemy. After twenty minutes of hard fighting, we finally smashed the enemy assault.

I reorganized the men of our combined companies. There were only twenty of us left. I divided the men into two squads and appointed squad leaders.

Although we had suffered heavy losses, we were confident that we could continue blocking the road, because it was now cluttered with the charred remains of dozens of tanks and trucks and strewn with the bodies of U.S. soldiers.

The enemy's final try was launched in co-ordination with ten or twelve planes. After these bombed and strafed our position heavily, a huge enemy force fanned out and came at us under cover of artillery fire.

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Concealing ourselves behind the destroyed tanks and trucks, we pumped lead into the enemy's advancing ranks. We were almost all armed with American weapons now. I myself was firing from atop a tank with a U.S. machine-gun.

The enemy were frantic as cornered rats. In spite of enormous casualties, they pushed towards us like a flock of stampeding sheep.

"Comrades! Give 'em your bayonets!" I cried. I leaped down from the tank and hit an enemy soldier with the butt of the machine-gun.

"Charge!" roared the fighters. They dashed forward with gleaming bayonets.

In an instant, the sound of shooting died. All that could be heard were grunts, the clash of metal, our fighters' shouts and the dismal howls of the enemy.

I crushed the skulls of two enemy soldiers with the butt of my machine-gun. As I

was wheeling towards a third, something boomed in the back of my head. The sky revolved; I fell unconscious to the ground.

When I came to I was lying on a stretcher. In a stretcher beside me was Comrade Chen, our cultural officer. Seeing that I had revived, he cried happily, "You're alive, Commander! We finished the job! Our brother units have all arrived!"

Excited, I sat up abruptly. A stab of pain nearly knocked me out again. A stretcher bearer warned me gently, "You'd better lie still. A bullet's knicked a chip of bone off your skull !"

As I was being transported from the battalion first-aid station to the rear, there was still intense firing near Changjin Reservoir. Our main force was dealing an annihilating blow to the First U.S. Marine Division!

## **TWO MEN ON HEIGHT 1282**

### **CHEN CHUNG-HSIEN**

*Squad Leader, Hero Second Class*

In the afternoon the enemy attacked Height 1282 for the seventh time, and for the seventh time they were repelled. The shooting on the front began to die down. From the murky sky snow fell in great flakes fluffy as down, and soon the blackened shell holes were blanketed in white. I fetched a cotton-padded coat to put on the heavy machine-gun and then crawled out of the battered trench. I stretched my legs a bit, drew a deep breath and shook the dirt and snow off my clothes. Looking about me I saw the battle-field littered with the bodies of American soldiers shrouded in snow. White-mantled rolling mountain masses merged with the distant Changjin Reservoir, appearing as foam-crested waves upon surging seas. This height of 1,282 metres stood like a pinnacled tower dominating all the surrounding hills. To the right were a highway and the railway leading to Hamhung. On the lower slope was Yutam-ri, occupied by the First Division of the U.S. Marines.

We had captured the height the previous night. Our company and battalion commanders told us that it was the strategic point leading to Yutam-ri. "As long as it is in our hands," they said, "the enemy will be pinned down where they'll be annihilated by our brother units. You must hold it even to the last man !"

We were determined to carry out the order. The day's battle had been a stiff one. The battleground was pockmarked with craters and shell holes. Old pine and Mongolian

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oak trees lay in splinters all about. The whole top of the mountain had been burned with napalm. Our trench-work had crumbled. Our ammunition was running low and our casualties were very high. Only Huang Chi-shan, the gun-feeder, and I survived. Still the enemy was poised for renewed counter-assaults. We were indeed in dire straits but firm as steel.

I went up to Huang and told him to keep an eye on the enemy. Then I turned back and with a pick started repairing our trench-work. I removed the layer of soil cast up by the concussions but the earth underneath was frozen hard so that my pick only made white scars on the surface. I had not worked long before a wound on my palm burst open and blood streamed down the pick handle.

"What's the matter with your hand, Squad Leader?" inquired Huang, staring at me in concern.

"Nothing much. Just a scratch," I said and went on digging.

How my hands had got hurt was an old story by now. It happened during our attack on the height the night before. After we had moved up the slopes to within some 60 metres of the enemy's trench line, the shock-platoon of the Second Company flanked out, ready to plunge forward. We were to cover them with our heavy machine-gun. I immediately removed the cotton-padded quilt from the gun (we had the gun wrapped to protect it from freezing) and opened up. But after one round of shooting the water in the radiator was frozen. Our comrades were held back in the snow, and would certainly be stiff with cold in another half hour if not caught in the enemy fire. I was greatly vexed and tried to unscrew the muzzle. But the moment I gripped the icy metal my hands stuck fast to it and the skin was ripped clean off. However I finally succeeded in unscrewing the muzzle and successfully covered the advance of our shock-troops.

Now, the enemy entrenched on the hill opposite again concentrated his machine-gun fire upon our position, while those on the slopes below us were clambering up in the whirling

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snow. But as in their previous attempts, the prowlers were beaten off by our machine-gun fire before they could scramble up a bare 40 to 50 metres.

Finally the counter-attacks dwindled and there was a lull in the fighting. But our

ammunition was about spent too. All the morning we had been drawing upon what supplies we could collect from the bodies of our own dead and now this source was completely exhausted. On the other hand, the toughest combat still lay ahead of us, and we certainly couldn't go on fighting without ammunition.

"Squad Leader," cried Huang, suddenly running up to me, "you watch here; I'll go. . . ." Then pointing to the enemy corpses scattered over the slopes, he continued, "See those dead pigs? They must have plenty of bullets and grenades on them. Why not help ourselves?"

Quite right. Not only were we to avenge our dead with their own unused ammunition but we'd kill the foe with his own bullets too. But as I was examining the slopes below the machine-guns on the opposite height opened up again. Huang, I thought, was only a raw recruit. It would be too risky to send him down in the thick of fire so I decided to go myself.

"Huang," I turned to him, "keep your gun at the ready; I'll go down. . . ."

But without waiting to hear me out he had wriggled out of the trench and was down the slope. I had to crawl to get over to the machine-gun and load on our last cartridge belt to give him the necessary cover. But in a twinkling he was back, with a big duffle bag on his back.

Now that we had secured something of an arsenal, my heart was lighter. We hastened to refill the empty cartridge belts, load to full capacity several carbines and arrange the grenades along the wall of our trench.

It was getting dark. Snow was falling thick and fast. The enemy intensified his fire, portent of another counter-assault. By now Huang and I had got everything ready, and we posted

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ourselves separately. The tanks on the road below began to storm our position while the enemy's chemical mortars also went into action. This combined onslaught immediately brought us under smoke and fire and a hailstorm of shell fragments, rocks, sand, snow and ice, which nearly smothered us. My eyes were smarting and watering. I rubbed them open again and again so as not to lose tabs on the enemy's moves.

Massed enemy troops began to break up and flank out into innumerable dark splotches. Soon human figures loomed large and then a flag-waving band could be seen climbing up the slope, slowing down as the ascent sharpened. About half way they stopped and craned their necks to look up. They looked so comical I couldn't help laughing. "What on earth are you rascals peeping at?" I wanted to say to

them, "I'm right here waiting for you!"

I trained my gun upon them, ready to shoot when they got nearer.

"Squad Leader!" cried Huang in great excitement, "Look! They're up already on the left!"

Turning to look I caught sight of a band of four or five drawing near with bayonets fixed.

"Huang, watch this bunch in the centre!" I said and slipped over to greet the party with a spray of slugs, sending them sliding back down the hill without so much as a sound. But while I was busy with them another batch groped their way up on the right. It was obvious that the enemy had changed his tactics. The frontal move was a feint, while their main forces were coming up on either wing. "You cunning beasts," I thought aloud. "so you're trying a pincer move this time. I'll show you!" I ran over immediately and started firing. In this way I shuttled back and forth and beat off the intruders from both left and right as they repeatedly attempted to gain a footing. Having been foiled in their plan, the enemy lurked halfway on the slopes and hurled up grenades at us. One grenade landed near our heavy machine-gun and

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that was bad. But I rushed over and managed to toss it back down the hill in the nick of time; and what's more, it went off in the midst of the enemy. Before I could turn back another grenade already sputtering fumes had landed near Huang. There was no time to get rid of this one so I grabbed a U.S. sleeping-bag and threw it over the grenade. Then I pushed Huang down into a shell-hole. Almost instantly we heard a loud clap and the sky was filled with goose down. My helmet was blown off too.

"Huang, are you all right?" I turned to him anxiously.

"I'm fine," he said, beaming as he popped his head out. He was tickled over how the sleeping-bag had worked and said, "If they toss over another one like that, just give me a quilt and I'll handle it myself."

"It's no laughing matter," I said curtly. "Now, put on your helmet!"

At the same time we were hurling our own hand-grenades at the enemy hidden midway on the hill. While they were being forced a storm of missiles blasted over from the opposite height. Huang got a pretty bad hit, leaving me the only fit one on the hill.

With another wave of heavy fire the enemy troops in the centre finally surged up. I went to the heavy machine-gun, took deliberate aim and fired, while Huang, lying over the edge of the trench, continued to hurl down hand-grenades. In the heat of this engagement, a string of scarlet flare signals suddenly flashed across the sky to our left. I couldn't help leaping up and shouting for joy, "Huang, our brother troops have opened their drive on Yutam-ri!"

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## **FORCED CROSSING OF THE CHONGCHON RIVER**

**CHANG YUNG-TAO**

*Director, Regimental Political Department*

At dusk I finally caught up with the men of the Third Battalion which had been designated by Regimental Headquarters as the left wing in our operation of crossing the river. They were marching double time along the ravine, the rocks of which, washed by the current of the stream in the warmer hours of the day, were now coated with ice and awfully slippery under foot. Now and then someone would lose his balance and slip, then regain his footing with one more bruise on hand or foot. However, the men seemed to take no heed of the difficult terrain but kept right on marching double quick. Earlier, the battalion's Seventh Company had, in the course of their advance, wiped out an enemy reinforced company near the river, thus ensuring the arrival on schedule of our unit at the riverside.

Accompanied by Chang Feng-yu, Commander of the Third Battalion, I surveyed the river once again in the dimness of nightfall. A stiff northwester was roaring above, and the Chongchon River had just begun to freeze. Beyond the broad sandy beach a thin sheet of ice had already formed over the river's surface except at midstream where the current rushed the water along in turbulent eddies.. On the opposite bank ashen ridges cloaked in ice stood out behind the sandy beach; and farther in the distance was the dark outline of hills. Now and then we could see the fire of enemy heavy artillery spitting out from those distant hills and this would be followed by the

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whiz of shells over our heads. They were aimed at the path along which we had just come.

As a result of our scouting the past few days, we knew that facing us across the river there was approximately one regiment of enemy troops, comprised largely of tank and artillery units. This showed that the enemy, seeing no bridge over this part of the river, was relying on the icy stream as a natural barrier, never suspecting that our men would brave the biting cold to ford the river. We took advantage of this opportunity, and with our regiment columned off into three, planned to force a crossing and take the enemy unawares. Once across the river, we would immediately take control of the highway and railroad along its south bank, thereby cutting off the main force of the U.S. Second Division from its rear. Then, in co-operation with our brother units, we would annihilate it.

Our fighters were everywhere making preparations for the crossing; some were digging machine-gun or artillery emplacements-while others continued to edge forward. It was then that the enemy suddenly shifted the entire force of his artillery barrage to the river bank, turning the area at once into a maelstrom of smoke and fire with shrapnels and ice splinters dancing side by side in a pall of dust.

We had tried to conceal our movements, but as there was only a river between us and the enemy, that was pretty hard to do. They had detected us and now we must take the initiative. A moment's delay would cost us heavily. So I ordered the Third Battalion:

"Ford the river! We've no time to lose!"

Battalion Commander Chang Feng-yu was the first to plunge into the icy torrent. The other fighters, poised at the river bank, shot like arrows into the stream at the order, many still with their cotton-padded coats on.

I waded along with a shock-platoon of the Eighth Company. It wasn't long till the icy water had soaked through my cotton

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padded shoes and trousers and finally poured right in through my collar, making of my cotton-padded suit a water-logged bag with me well ballasted down in it. None of us, however, thought of fatigue or cold; the growing numbness of Our bodies only made us all the more anxious to get across. Lin Tien-yu, Leader of the Shock-Platoon, shoved the floating ice blocks out of our way while shouting lustily to the fighters:

"Come on, Comrades! To cross this is to gain victory!"

As we advanced the river-bed became stonier, and the stones, washed by the

rushing current, were very slippery. Whoever stepped on one would have to do all the balancing he could to keep his footing. The short fighter in front of me, Chin Wen-ho, suddenly found himself swept into a whirlpool from which he was unable to extricate himself. A fighter rushed to his rescue, pulling him clear of the eddy. Chin wiped the water from his rifle and pushed on.

The enemy were now trying ever more frantically to blockade the river with their artillery barrage. Shells exploded in the water one after another, throwing up large spouts of water into the air. Their machine-gun fire swept the stream tying it up in ropes of flame. But our fighters pressed on, shooting back as they pushed through the icy, swirling waters.

I made for a rock jutting out in the middle of the river and tried to catch my breath while leaning against it. But I found myself freezing to it and had to move on in haste.

Then a powerful wave suddenly washed me into an eddy. No sooner had young Sun, my orderly, pulled me out than another wave swept me off my feet before I had managed to steady myself after the first. I grasped the shoulder of a fighter nearby and pushed on with his help. It was then that I heard Wei Fu-chien of the Eighth Squad ordering at the top of his voice:

"Comrades, charge now! We're hitting land!"

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Hurry!" The joyous shouts of the fighters rose and fell, drowning out the noisy roar of the torrent and the blasts of the artillery.

Seeing the fighters around me pressing forward amid loud cheers gave me a sudden and immense strength — with fighters like these, what enemy on earth could we not defeat? In spite of the enemy's curtain of flame over the river we had forded it. With a powerful sweep of his right hand Battalion Commander Chang Feng-yu shouted to his men:

"Charge!"

The fighters of the shock-platoon dashed ashore but had run only a few steps when they discovered their cotton-padded trousers had frozen into ice slabs so that they seemed to be running with their legs in splints. To break these ice "splints" the fighters crouched down and there were snapping noises as the ice cracked. Some got pebbles frozen onto their shoe soles, and to remove these they stooped down and struck them off with their bayonets. Some simply discarded their stiff cotton-padded trousers and dashed ahead unimpeded. The attack had begun; fighters kept coming up to dash along at my side and

charge into the massed enemy artillery and tanks which kept firing into the river. The enemy was baffled and by the time they shifted their fire to the south bank it was already too late. Like a raging torrent our troops swept ashore, the enemy running in confusion for their lives.

When our troops needed to use their rifles against the enemy, they found the barrels solid with ice and the bolts stuck. They didn't, however, let this stop them but charged on into the midst of the enemy with only their levelled bayonets. Some warmed their gun barrels against their own chests till the ice melted and then continued shooting. Meanwhile our hand-grenades and hand mines were exploding among the enemy's artillery emplacements and tanks.

Fires raged everywhere in the enemy's defence line as red flames shot up into the night sky further darkened with dense smoke.

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The enemy were yelling and running helter-skelter as our guns roared an accompaniment. Some, who tried to get away by motor vehicle honked their horns desperately, but nonetheless the vehicles soon got in a jam and rolled down together into a ditch with the motors still humming miserably.

In compliance with instructions the fighters of the shock-platoon wiped out the enemy along the riverside and then proceeded swiftly and noiselessly towards Height 388. Shortly afterwards they completely occupied this vantage point and when I arrived on the height to look around, the rattle of gunfire was already abating. Darkness covered the river; the highway and railroad alongside it were already behind us. To my right, explosions still sounded now and then from among the trucks and tanks deserted by the enemy while along the riverside red flames were still licking away. And I wondered to myself how many more of our troops had by now forded the Chongchon River.

## **COMPLETE ANNIHILATION OF THE ENEMY TANKS**

**CHIN KE-CHIH**

*Deputy Platoon Leader, Hero Second Class*

It was the second night after our break-through across the Chongchon River. We

had just overtaken the fleeing troops of the American aggressors and occupied the hill adjacent to the left of Won-ni. I ordered Tsui Hsi-ming, deputy leader of the Third Squad, to survey the situation around the highway at the foot of the hill. He came back running and reported to me that there were enemy tanks and infantry in the ravine below. Though his voice was steady and low, I could see from his quick, uneven breathing that this calm, experienced veteran fighter was now on his toes at the prospect of his first tank bursting operation.

Even I couldn't repress my excitement. "So, after the long chase tonight we've finally got hold of the enemy, and their tanks too!" I said to myself. We didn't know as yet how many enemy troops we had to deal with or how many tanks they had. So I told the machine-gunner to take up his position on the hilltop from where he could cover us as well as keep contact with the units behind; then together with four dynamiters, we picked our way down the hill quickly and without so much as rustling a twig. At the foot of the hill we discovered a little ditch about a metre deep which was just the hiding place we wanted. Concealed inside we began to take stock of our environment.

By the light of the stars and the gleam of the fresh snow We could make out the lay of the land within a radius of

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scores of metres. We scanned the snow-laden kaoliang field in front of us and saw two dark objects in the shadow of the shrubbery on the hillside just opposite. There we saw outline more than a dozen men milling about. Their mumbling as well as the snapping noise they made kicking at the dry kaoliang stalks, were all clearly audible to us. I drew the conclusion that there in front of us were not only an infantry squad but two enemy tanks!

"Look, there's another tank!" said Tsui Hsi-ming who was crouched at my side nudging me and pointing to the mouth of the ravine some sixty metres to our left. Near the tank which he had discovered were a few more moving figures.

"There's another!" spoke up Liu Han-lai in a low voice; but before he had finished, Wang Yao-fu, who was also crouched nearby, indicated another spot on the slope opposite us and asked:

"Deputy Platoon Leader, isn't that also a tank?"

I looked and saw another tank half hidden in the brush on the slope of the hillside behind our first two discoveries. But for the long barrel of its gun protruding above the bushes it was well concealed.

I never dreamed we would run into so many enemy tanks in one place. From the

scurrying about of the figures around the tanks we figured the enemy were about to resume their flight to the south under cover of night. We must strike at once and destroy their tanks in a surprise attack before they should start moving! But there were only six of us; and should we fail to organize the attack well the enemy would certainly find a way of escape, to say nothing of the losses we might incur.

"The ability to make prompt decisions as the situation requires is a prerequisite for any commander" I suddenly remembered what our company commander had said at our briefing on the assignment: "To deal with an enemy which is armed with up-to-date equipment, you'll need not only courage but also quick wits. . . ." Right! My mind was

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made up: we would wipe out the infantry first and then smash the tanks! I whispered the order to the men: "Ready for combat!"

Du-du-du, ta-ta-ta. . . . Following the sound of my carbine the fighters all started shooting with their tommy-guns, each aiming at his specified target. Then we heard the welcome rattle of several light machine-guns from the hilltop. This meant that our platoon leader had arrived with the rest of the men, which gave me strength and assurance of success in the encounter.

The enemy were stupefied at our sudden attack; several of them collapsed on the hillside and lay like so many logs while others sprawled in the kaoliang field and screamed. Some ran desperately southward along the highway, and these we pursued with our gunfire. The motors of the enemy tanks started up in the commotion and the tank guns, which were pointed southward all along, now began to spurt fire without any of the befuddled enemy even so much as bothering to change the direction of their muzzles. Meanwhile strings of shimmering tracers flew by to our left. Enemy machine-guns also began to sputter nervously at us from upon the slope. In a moment the gully was in a turmoil of gunfire, the roar of motors and the enemy's howling.

The enemy tank crews obviously could see no route of escape, for though their motors were rumbling wildly they did not start up but just kept firing at us blindly, hoping to scare us off.

"We must act quickly and not let this opportunity slip by," I thought. But which one to tackle first? I took another look at the different positions of the tanks. The one at the left was conveniently at the mouth of the ravine; with that out of action the others wouldn't get away so easily. Ho! We would smash that one to block the others and then take care of them.

"Tsui Hsi-ming, go and get it!" I shouted, my eyes fixed on the tank as if to pin it

down.

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Tsui handed his tommy-gun to Liu Han-lai and leaped out of the ditch. With a hand mine under one arm he bent forward and dashed towards the tank. The path to the mouth of the ravine was covered by machine-gun barrage from the enemy tanks. Fortunately their aim was a little high; still streams of tracers flew so close to Tsui's head that one clipped off his cotton-padded cap. But Tsui dashed on without even looking back. In excitement I thought: "Now, if only you knock this one out, we'll surely win the battle!"

But when he was only four or five metres from his objective, he fell. "Confound it! He's hit!" I was about to call another dynamiter when Tsui suddenly leaped up and continued his charge on the tank. We could see him quickly fling something at the tail of the tank and then dash off some twenty metres to cover. An explosion shook the earth and a cloud of dense smoke rose to the sky; the tank motor had stopped its rumbling and its guns became dumb.

"Well done, Comrade, the hand mines really come in useful!" The dynamiters were all encouraged by the success. I immediately ordered Liu Han-lai to go and blow up the second tank.

"Deputy Platoon Leader, I'll go and blow up the third one," volunteered Wang Yao-fu, dashing out before I had finished giving the order. This young squad leader's resolute voice brought to my mind what he had said time and again, that he simply must become good at destroying tanks and pass his experience on to the whole squad.

"Go ahead, but be careful," I agreed.

Wang leaped out of the ditch almost at the same time as Liu; and together they ran towards the tanks, their bodies bent over their torpedoes. Wang made a dash of scores of metres which landed him quite near the tank. In the shadows of the night this tank loomed huge beside him as his head hardly reached the top of the caterpillar belt. "This one looks like no easy nut to crack!" I was thinking as I saw Wang bend and rush up behind the iron monster. Imagine how proud

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and elated I was to see the boy execute so calmly and skilfully the technique he had learned!

The second and third tanks were blasted almost simultaneously. The flames leaped several metres high from the third tank as Wang had succeeded in hitting

the fuel chamber. Shells kept bursting from within the tank and the flames lit up the gully as bright as day. The dead bodies of the enemy, the white stars on the demolished tanks and, most important, the gun turret of the fourth tank hidden in the brush on the slope were all revealed clearly in the blaze. In the glare too, I saw Wang and Liu rushing back and I shouted at them at the top of my voice: "Watch out! Take cover!"

But the blaze had exposed us, and now the enemy was concentrating all that remained of his fire power upon us. The tank at our right suddenly started up, violently strafing us with its machine-gun. Fire also came from the tank on the slope opposite, its shells and bullets pounding the sides of the gully and throwing up piles of dust and earth over us. I was just going to order Yu Kuei-yung to go and blow that one up when a string of bullets whizzed by my ear. Wang Yaofu, who had just run back, dropped and rolled into the ditch. I tugged at him but he didn't move. "Alas!" My head throbbed and all my veins seemed to swell. I called to the men in a loud voice:

"Hurry and demolish it! Avenge our Third Squad Leader!" Yu Kuei-yung jumped up immediately, but I grabbed him before he could leap out of the ditch.

"Watch out! Move along the ditch and take it from behind."

I pressed my head tight against the edge of the ditch in the face of enemy machine-gun fire and followed Yu's movements. Avoiding the gunfire from the tank, he approached the tank from behind as I said, but when he had finally managed to plant the hand mine on the tank and step back, it rolled off and began fizzing on the ground. "Oh! What a mishap!" I was filled with anxiety. Then Yu rushed back, picked up the fizzing mine and rammed it into the cater-

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pillar. In an instant there was a loud explosion and the fourth enemy tank was out of action and enveloped in smoke.

Presently the one remaining enemy tank galvanized into action and suddenly turned around with its motor rumbling in panic and all its guns firing crazily. Quite clearly, it was trying to escape; and we had exhausted our supply of hand mines!

"What was to be done?" I paced up and down the ditch in burning anxiety. The tank had already started moving. Dashing out of the gully, it by-passed the wreck of another tank and rumbled towards the highway. The answer came just at the crucial moment. The company commander, sensing our plight, had sent his orderly down to us with two more hand mines! I ran half way to meet our rescuer and, without even greeting him, snatched the mines and dashed straight after the tank, determined to catch it.

The tank was speeding along the highway above and I was running after it along the dried-up ditch below. How many times I stumbled over the stones in the ditch I don't know, but I kept running as hard as I could for fear of losing my prize. I chased it for some three hundred metres to the side of a little bridge where it suddenly stopped, probably because the crew now felt secure. I overtook it in one stride. Then I saw the turret lid fly open and a man cautiously poke his head out and peep towards the hilltops on either side of the road. I dropped into the ditch instantly lest the enemy should spot me, then began slowly to crawl up towards the road, all the while watching closely the man in the turret. When I had almost reached the road the fellow suddenly looked down and saw me. He must have taken fright for he at once drew back into the turret, banging the lid with a clang after him. Then the motor began to rumble again. I got onto the road in a couple of strides, came upon the tank and grabbed onto it for it was already beginning to move. At the same time I pulled the safety catch from a hand mine. No time to undo the two mines which were bound together

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in a bundle so I threw the whole thing onto the rear deck of the tank and rolled down off the road. The mines began to sputter and fizz and before I had landed back in the ditch, two deafening reports broke over my head just like two missiles from a howitzer, leaving me reeling and my ears buzzing. But one thing was very clear to me: all the enemy tanks were now out of action! None had got away!

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## **HOT PURSUIT TOWARDS KUNU-NI**

**CHANG FU-KUEI**

*Deputy Platoon Leader*

After a night of intense fighting part of the remnants of the U.S. troops we had engaged fell back towards Kunu-ni.

The sun was just peeping out from over the hilltop when our company received the instruction: "Take advantage of the enemy's retreat, pursue and wipe them out; penetrate into Kunu-ni."

It was truly exhilarating, marching in broad daylight. Our spearhead platoon,

which I headed, clambered quickly over the few hills and finally emerged atop a ridge directly overlooking the plain leading straight into Kunu-ni. Beneath the ridge ran a highway along which was a clutter of drab objects. We looked more carefully. Ho! So these were the retreating enemy sleeping cozily in their down-filled sleeping-bags, with only their heads sticking out! They were lying all over the place, in the dried-up ditches as well as in the grass on both sides of the road. Besides the sleepers, there was another bunch of several hundred of them huddled around a brick kiln by the hillside, trying to warm themselves. It looked as though the enemy, sure of their aerial and artillery protection and the Chinese People's Volunteers' preference for fighting at night, had assumed we would never pursue them in the daytime. But this time they were mistaken.

A wave of excitement swept over us as we waited (in the ridge. Fighters grew impatient under cover; each loaded his gun, pulled back the bolt and kept urging:

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"Come on, Deputy Platoon Leader, let's go!"

"Let's open up on them now."

"Why don't we shoot?"

"Be patient; wait for the company commander's order," said I, holding them back and forbidding any shooting.

Once the company commander's order was given, however, we leaped out instantly and dashed upon the enemy from above, charging wherever they were thickest and at the same time showering them with bullets, grenades and rapid machine-gun fire. The enemy were really caught napping that time and began yelling and running in wild confusion; those who hadn't managed to wiggle out of their sleeping-bags rolled and crawled like bagged game. Our grenades blew the feathers in their sleeping-bags high and thick in the air. Many of the enemy never awoke from their dreams.

In utter disorder the enemy jammed the road leading south, running for their lives, with us following closely on their heels. Soon enemy planes came screaming onto the scene, circling and diving over our heads, now strafing, now dropping napalm bombs, which caused great fires to break out all along the highway. Enveloped in smoke and fire, we could now see only so much of the ground as was directly under our feet. The enemy were apparently trying to lay a curtain of flame behind them to cut off our pursuit.

The intense flame and smoke now really impeded our advance; we were worried lest our pace be slowed down when we heard the company commander's

resounding voice:

"Throw off your camouflage and infiltrate the enemy rear!"

His words immediately brought us back to our senses. In the heat of the fighting, we had forgotten to remove our awkward camouflaging. Throwing it off on the run, we dashed through the smoke and fire to link up with the enemy rear.

Soon we had completely insinuated ourselves into their ranks.

Their planes, unable to pick out our men from their own, could now only zoom round in circles overhead, not daring to bomb or strafe.

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We chased them without respite, and flock after flock of enemy troops collapsed. We jumped over the corpses of enemy soldiers lying across the road and kicked their clanging helmets and canteens into the ditch. The enemy, now concerned only for their lives, shed their weapons and shoes as they ran, cursing themselves for having only one pair of legs. But no matter how they ran, there was no escape for them from our pursuit. One was a pretty big American running with one foot bare. I called out "Hello" and the man turned, but when he saw I was a C.P.V., he started howling and his legs quivered under him. I gave him a pat on the shoulder but that only made him shake more violently as if he had a sudden attack of malaria. It wasn't until I pointed out to him the place for P.O.W.'s to gather that he finally made a hasty sign of the cross upon his chest and fell in line, still trembling with fear. All along the way we kept shouting the only English phrase we knew, "Hands up! Hands up!" Though our pronunciation might not have been quite accurate, quite a few American soldiers fell to their knees before us, hands above their heads and mumbling something unintelligible, the gist of which could have been none other than: "Yes, I'll lay down my arms, only please don't kill me."

Not bothering ourselves with the enemy soldiers we overtook on the way, whether surrendered or pretending to be dead, we kept up our pursuit, throwing up a pall of dust behind us. Suddenly we saw ahead the Gaichon River gleaming in the brilliant sunshine. The water at both banks was already frozen solid, but in midstream little blocks of ice still floated on the surface. The fleeing enemy at the head of the whole bunch had by now waded into midstream. Enemy planes had also followed and were dropping napalm bombs along our side of the river. Now and then the enemy's artillery would also fire upon us from the other side, throwing up countless pillars of water and blasting the rocky river bank, great boulders dancing side by side with the shrapnels in the air. This time the enemy had succeeded in putting up a curtain

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of fire which separated us from the rearguard of our company; so standing at the riverside we were faced with enemy fire from both front and back. This was no time for hesitation and I shouted to the men:

"Charge across and don't let the enemy get away!"

Thirty or more fighters followed me into the water in dispersed formation, shooting their way across the river.

We got a number of enemy soldiers, and these fell into the water stiff like logs and were immediately washed downstream. The air was filled with the roar of enemy guns, the shrieks of their planes and the howling of their soldiers in hellish medley. But when we approached them, their artillery barrage became useless and even those men who had finally floundered across the river didn't dare fire back at us but plunged directly south in their desperation, dragging their guns behind them.

We lost no time getting across the river, but on reaching the other side we found our cotton-padded trousers as heavy as lead; and again they were freezing into solid ice! But we could not let anything hinder our pursuit so we stamped one foot and then the other while running to break up the ice. Fighters who were actually dragged down by their leaden trousers took advantage of their prone position to snipe at the enemy.

By now the long chase had set our hearts beating so that they seemed to be in our throats and we had to gasp for breath. But action soon drove away fatigue and our vigour mounted. In desperation the enemy kept running and in equal relentlessness we kept up our pursuit. I shot down one enemy who refused to halt and his dead body would have fallen right into my arms had I not jumped aside. One fighter who had no time to pull the bolt of his gun ran with his bayonet levelled, cutting down the enemy in his way. Another, Li Chen-fang, having exhausted his ammunition, charged barehanded into an enemy grabbing hold of his collar. The man collapsed like a piece of timber, then Li snatched his carbine and dashed ahead. We saw one enemy

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in officers' gear so nervous as he shot at us while fleeing for his life that all his shots went wild in the air. I fired a round at him with my tommy-gun and that laid him stiff on the road. Many of the enemy, now utterly exhausted, had given up their flight and either sat down on the road or tossed their weapons on the road and threw themselves in the ditch waiting to be taken prisoner. We just left them there and kept up our pursuit.

The fleeing enemy had dwindled to a small flock when from my side Li Chen-fang suddenly shouted panting:

"Quick work! Imagine! We've chased the enemy fifteen *li* already!"

I took a look ahead and could not help calling out: "Hurry up, Comrades! That's Kunu-ni there!"

## THE "DAM" OF RYONGWON-NI

**CHANG YU-HSI**

*Company Commander*

We marched towards Ryongwon-ni all through the night without pausing once on the way and by daybreak had covered more than 70 kilometres. Though everyone's legs were sore and we were weary, we kept increasing our pace till our whole column were simply racing ahead.

And yet I felt we moved too slowly; so quickening my own steps, I kept urging the men:

. "Pass the word on: Move along quickly !"

"Pass the word on: Double time and catch up!"

I knew that our fighters were tired, but the task of our whole company was uppermost in my mind for we were racing with the Second Division of the U.S. Eighth Army fleeing southward from Samsu-ni — our legs versus their motors. Moreover, they travelled by the highway while we trudged along the hill paths. That was why I was worried. If we did not reach Ryongwon-ni before dawn the enemy would certainly slip through our hands.

But after scaling the foothills of Ryongwon-ni we came upon the glaring headlights of a motorcade speeding along the high- way from the north.

"Whoa! We've stopped them! So we've got them!" the fighters shouted for joy.

But then my heart sank; for a closer look told me this was only a short string of trucks. I looked into the distance but saw no glimmer of any kind except the shimmering stars in

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the dimness of the night sky. So this was just a lopped-off tail left behind by the fleeing enemy; we were late after all!

Nonetheless, "catch as catch can!" So thinking I ordered the First Platoon to make the seizure. The fighting was soon over and fifteen trucks all became our booty, while of the whole platoon of enemy troops in them none escaped. Our fighters brought back fifteen captives. A considerable number of the enemy had been killed in the action.

This little victory was a great encouragement to the fighters and everyone got busy unloading the ammunition and supplies from the trucks. I was the most excited of all, not because of the capture of fifteen enemy vehicles but something of much greater importance that we learned from the P.O.W.s — that the U.S. Second Division had not slipped away; on the contrary, its main force was still lagging behind. We were not too late after all!

Nevertheless my responsibility was still very heavy. I knew the forthcoming battle would be an ordeal for our company; for we would have to face not only the frenzied attack of an enemy force from the north far superior to us in numbers and equipment but at the same time the assault of enemy reinforcements from the south. The outcome of the entire operation depended on whether we could hold out under such a converging attack.

I called the platoon leaders together to survey the terrain and deploy the men. The First Platoon led by the deputy company commander was to deal with the enemy's reinforcements from the south. Our plan defined, fighters got started right away constructing defence works, their picks and spades clanging busily.

By sunrise our defence works were completed but the enemy had not yet shown up. We made use of the surcease for a little party right there and then got out some of the canned food and beer we had seized from the enemy and had quite a fine time of it indeed.

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The sun was already high but still there was nothing on the road. Fighters kept asking whenever they saw me: ..What's the matter with the enemy, Company Commander?

Why don't they show up?"

"Maybe that P.O.W. lied!"

Indeed! Or else why hadn't they come? Wondering thus to myself, I started towards the position of the Third Platoon when all of a sudden I heard the rumble of motors from the north. Ah, there they were! I bounded up a hill and from there saw rolling through clouds of dust three tanks coming towards us along the highway and behind them countless More trucks and tanks. I estimated at least some eight hundred vehicles, all the trucks fully loaded with men and trailing artillery pieces behind. So! The enemy were coming upon us in full-dress array!

"We've got to knock out the tanks first, then the trucks will be an easy matter," I thought. But, armed with only rifles and hand-grenades, we had nothing for tackling tanks —nothing but our indomitable courage. I had supreme confidence in my fighters.

Enemy tanks moved up speedily along the road and were quickly approaching our position. Immediately I called to the Third Platoon, who were guarding the forward position:

"Comrades! Now is the time for heroic feats! Who's going to blow up the tanks?"

"Company Commander, I'll go!"

Nearly all the fighters rose to their feet. Machine-gunner Tang Yung-hsiang, throwing off his quilted coat, grabbed a few grenades, ready for action. The mounting morale of our fighters further encouraged me. Since there were only three tanks at the head of the enemy column, I ordered Hsu Han-min and two other fighters to go. From what I knew of Hsu, he was not only a courageous fighter but also sharp-witted.

With grenades packed all around their bodies the three of them dashed towards the enemy tanks. When they had detoured around the damaged trucks on the road, I ordered

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our light and heavy machine-guns to open up simultaneously on the enemy vehicles and infantrymen behind the tanks, thus cutting them off from our targets with concentrated fire. list, had made his way through enemy machine-gun fire to the first tank and rammed a bundle of grenades into its caterpillar belt. There was a sudden explosion and the tank stopped.

"Wonderful!" I almost shouted out loud in my excitement. Everyone of us was overjoyed at Hsu Han-min's success.

But after an instant the blasted tank started rumbling again and, swerving around,

it soon followed the other tanks crawling off in reverse. In the meantime the fighter who had set out to blow up the third tank had been wounded.

"Damn it! Why couldn't they knock out at least one of them!" I swore to myself in the depths of disappointment as I watched the tanks crawling away.

But just then I saw Hsu Han-min had again caught up with the tanks and jumped onto one of them. With Hsu on it the tank kept moving and was fast approaching the concentration of enemy vehicles; then all at once the enemy infantry opened fire. Our eyes were focussed on Hsu Han-min in breathless anxiety. Such a man of nerve was Hsu that in a hail of bullets he could lie calmly on an enemy tank as though searching for a flaw in it! Suddenly he rolled off onto the ground and immediately there was a huge explosion. By the time the dense smoke had cleared the enemy tank lay cold and silent on the road like a corpse.

Two enemy jeeps which had rushed up to rescue the tanks also went up in a blaze under our fire, blocking the road with the destroyed tank. Now we opened up with furious fire on the enemy. In confusion the enemy soldiers jumped out of their trucks and sought cover behind the tanks. But the tank crews themselves were stricken with fear and in no humour to afford protection to the infantry. In forcing their own escape they rammed into the burning vehicles blocking the road, shoving them down into the ditch and rolling

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over the bodies of their own men, some of whom were still alive. Desperate though they were, they didn't get away after all for the bridge on the road ahead had been destroyed by our First Platoon.

We had the enemy bottled up all right, but could scarcely expect them to sit by awaiting their doom. In desperation they were apt to go to extremes; so we must be prepared for a bitter fight.

Just as we expected, when the enemy eventually awoke from their shock, they launched a counter-attack under cover of concentrated artillery barrage and some 24 planes. After we had repulsed two such attacks, the enemy threw a whole battalion against our position at each assault, swarming around us in droves.

Our fighters fought bravely, beating back wave after wave of the enemy. Then the enemy resumed their aerial and artillery bombardment of our Third Platoon's position. Sizing up the situation, I was running towards the Third Platoon when with a loud burst, two napalm bombs exploded right before me, throwing me to the ground. When I raised myself my clothing was on fire. I rolled on the ground several times but failed to put out the flames. So with a violent jerk I tore off my coat and flung it away. A machine-gunner, seeing my plight, leaped from his

emplacement and, catching up with me, threw an American woollen topcoat over my shoulders.

I found the Third Platoon's position quite in disorder as a result of the enemy's bombardment. Shattered trees and clumps of earth lay scattered about, while shell craters were so close together as to be almost continuous. Most of their defence works were destroyed and there were some casualties, but the men who were still living held on firmly to their position. Before each of them were a few hand-grenades with the caps open and a large pile of stones.

The fighters had not much ammunition left, that was obvious; yet they were determined to defend their position to the very end.

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The leader and deputy leader of the Seventh Squad had been killed in action. Now I appointed Hsu Han-min to be the acting leader. In this competent fighter of medium build, who had lately distinguished himself in the demolition of an enemy tank, I now had complete confidence. And he didn't fail me either; for though wounded in action himself, he led the squad throughout the battle in successfully defending their position and repulsing the overwhelmingly superior force of the attacking enemy.

The number of wounded mounted but none of them withdrew from combat. Finally Hu Chiu-tsai, the medical orderly, was himself wounded. This youthful fighter, however, did not pause in his work but kept on treating other wounded comrades-in-arms, using his teeth to help tie bandages, for his arm was broken.

The sun was slowly slipping towards the west when suddenly the sound of fierce shooting blurted out from the south. An orderly came running with a message from the deputy company commander: "A battalion of enemy troops has come from the direction of Sunchon under the cover of six tanks. They've probably come to the aid of the enemy we've bottled up to the north. Our First Platoon has already opened fire." Since our deputy company commander was holding the place with the First Platoon, I felt quite assured and had nothing to say except: "All right, I understand. But tell the deputy commander to go easy on the ammunition!"

But soon another report came from the First Platoon that the deputy company commander was badly wounded and the enemy had approached our front position. This at once roused me from my complacency and I rushed to the scene. But when I got there, our First Platoon had already beaten back the enemy attack and our young fighter Chuang Wen was fiddling with a pistol which he had found on the body of an enemy officer.

From then on and throughout the whole afternoon our position was under heavy attack from both north and

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south. In their desperate attempt to break through the enemy eventually massed some forty planes to strafe our position from the air, while their artillery and tank guns bombarded us continually on the ground. As a result our position was literally turned upside down. Finally we had less than fifty fighters left. Nonetheless we stood our ground firmly throughout like an impregnable dam, blocking the ferocious onrush of the Americans. Though only a few kilometres stood between the enemy troops fleeing southward and those who had come to rescue them from the south, they were like flood waters separated by a dam so that they could never join up.

Our main force struck out at the enemy that night. In the face of our powerful onslaught the enemy troops now collapsed completely, their soldiers running for their lives in chaos. I led the fighters along the highway in search of enemy soldiers unaccounted for. We found abandoned enemy trucks, tanks, weapons, supplies and dead bodies cluttered all along the highway, leaving us almost no passage through. In one of the enemy command cars the radio was still humming away, but its owner had long since departed for the nether regions!

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## **THE NAKED SOUL OF THE U. S. INVADERS**

**TAI CHING-SHAN**

*Cultural Instructor*

The sound of firing gradually faded into the distance as our front lines pushed south. Late that night I went through a snowstorm with an escort team to a height east of Kunu-ni to take over a batch of captives who had just been sent back from the front. They were being temporarily kept in an air-raid shelter in the mountainside.

As we approached the entrance, two guards came up and told us laughingly, "This is an exhibition hall of invading armies. We've got not only Syngman Rhee puppets, but Americans, Englishmen, Canadians and Turks. It's really a complete assortment!"

"Yes, indeed," another soldier grinned. "Yesterday MacArthur ordered them to drive across the Yalu River, but they've come to spend Christmas here instead. How disobedient of them! What a pity we don't have Christmas on our calendar."

We all laughed.

Still smiling, I entered the cave with Lao Ho, our English interpreter. Several hundred metres long, it was jammed with seated prisoners. There was barely room to walk. After pushing out a little space for ourselves, we turned on all our flashlights and began recording the names and nationalities of the captives.

While we were registering the Americans, Englishmen and Canadians, one prisoner only stared, speechless, and shook his head. Another prisoner beside the wall stood up and said:

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"He's a Turk. He doesn't understand English." And he added with a proud smile, "I am an interpreter of the Turkish Brigade. If you gentlemen wish, I can translate for you." Lao Ho looked at me and laughed. "Truman is certainly thoughtful. He even sends us a Turkish translator."

After a half hour, the air in the cave was becoming rather stuffy. We let the prisoners go out for walks, in groups. The second group contained an American major. As he emerged from the cave he said to Lao Ho, "You ought to let whites out first. That's the usual rule."

We treat all prisoners alike, regardless of their nationality or colour," Lao Ho replied evenly.

"But in the United States, white men always get preference," the tactless major argued. "Negroes are born inferior. Their blood. . ."

"Shut your mouth!" snapped Lao Ho. "This isn't the United States. You'll kindly refrain from slandering the Negro people. It's only under a regime of Wall Street buccaneers that racial discrimination is preached as a cultural and moral virtue!"

The stupid major, apparently realizing his new status at last, silently hung his head and walked away.

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Treading carefully on the hard-packed slippery snow, we escorted the prisoners

towards the rear. They made a long snaking line on the highway; from where I was, neither its head nor its tail could be seen. One of our guards was spaced between every ten prisoners. Because I understood a little English I was put in charge of twelve enemy officers.

No sooner was the order to rest passed down the line than the captives immediately stretched out indolently on the ground. Hands clasped behind my back, I gazed off at distant artillery flashes in the night sky. How I wished we could deliver the prisoners quickly, so that I could catch up with our forces fighting their way south.

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As I stood lost in thought, something hard and cold was thrust into my hand. I pulled away in surprise, and a shiny wrist-watch dropped to the snowy road. A U. S. captain standing beside me grinned ingratiatingly.

"What are you up to?" I demanded sternly.

"There are no other Chinese around." He picked up the watch and slyly proffered it to me.

I couldn't control my revulsion. Pointing my finger at him I said, "Listen to what I'm saying — I don't want your dirty bribe!"

He stared at me uncomprehendingly. "That's the sixth one who wouldn't take my watch," he muttered. "They're a strange crowd!"

"The seventh won't take it either," I told him. "Your American way of life doesn't work here."

"War gives men a chance to get rich," he assured me solemnly. "We all made money in Germany during World War II."

"We're not Hitler's Nazi army," I reminded him. "And we're not one of your money-mad armies from a capitalist country either. We are the Chinese People's Volunteers. Never forget that."

He slumped to the ground like a deflated balloon. Holding his precious watch, he gazed at it thoughtfully.

Shortly before dawn, we assembled all the prisoners on a river bank.

Peering through the night mists, I could see the river — a hundred and more metres wide — swirling rapidly between the mountains flanking it on both sides. I

could clearly hear the thud of blocks of ice colliding in midstream. There was a temporary bridge, but it was very narrow. Only one man could cross at a time.

Just then, a large body of our forces began agilely crossing the bridge, heading south. Waiting troops stretched in a long

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line. I thought to myself: We've got quite a big batch of prisoners who have to be sent north. If we use the bridge we'll hold up the troop movement. But if we wait, it will be daylight before we can deliver the prisoners to their destination. . . I was growing very anxious when our escort commander called:

"We'll ford the river. Let our people go across first, then the prisoners."

As we took off our clothes and walked down to the river's edge, the prisoners stood on the bank and looked fearfully at the flowing chunks of ice. Persuasion, urging — nothing could induce them to move. The sight of the frigid water chilled their invaders' swagger.

What could we do? Finally, we talked the matter over with the commander of one of the waiting battalions. He agreed to order three of his companies to ford the river together with our escort guards, and let the prisoners use the bridge in their place.

The northwest wind howled through the river gorge. Step by step we waded forward. The frigid December water ate into our bones. Our teeth chattered; floating slabs of ice stabbed us like knives. In the middle, the river grew deeper. Waves threatened to knock us off our feet. Retaining our balance only with the greatest effort, we pushed on and reached the opposite shore.

We dressed and ran up and down the bank to get warm. The prisoners came slowly across the bridge. They looked at us with surprise and respect. The U.S. captain who had tried to bribe me held up his thumb in a gesture of admiration.

"Your treatment of prisoners is certainly the humanest in the world," he cried. "God will bless you!"

"And God may even let a little light creep into that dirty soul of yours!" I thought contemptuously.

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# EVIDENCE OF THE MURDERERS' CRIMES

— As witnessed along the road to Pyongyang

## I

Throughout the night our unit moved hurriedly along the highway from Anchju to Pyongyang in pursuit of enemy troops; then by daybreak we paused at a village by the river, awaiting further instructions.

I went to the east end of the village and located the house where our squad was to rest. At the doorway I stopped and called: "Yaopao!" (Korean for "hello") When after calling again still without answer, I gently pushed the door open thinking that the hosts were probably in hiding. The moment I entered, however, I knew something was wrong — it was ghastly inside. I drew back, then bent down to inspect the house carefully. Alas! There was the family lying haphazard over the kang and the mat was soaked with blood — they had all been bayoneted! Here was another of the crimes committed by the bestial American soldiers. A tremor passed through my body as my heart was suddenly gripped with horror, and then such a feeling of mixed wrath and grief seized me as I had never experienced before. Closing the door behind me. I left the house and walked in silence towards the ravine at the north of the village, intent on finding a place in the air-raid shelters where our comrades might rest.

Scarcely had I approached one of the caves when another horrible sight took my breath away. At the cave entrance were the corpses of two Korean children with a blood-encrusted iron rod at their feet. Farther inside the cave, on some

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bags of corn lay the bodies of a white-haired old couple whose blood still dripped down into the matting bags. I couldn't bear to look further but went to seek shelter elsewhere. I looked into three more caves in succession and they were likewise all filled with the corpses of victims of all ages, from babes-in-arms to hoary old folk. I counted over 80 people dead in the caves, all of whom were peaceful inhabitants of Korea without a single weapon among them.

Now the American murderers who had butchered these innocent Korean people had escaped but not without leaving a 'bloody trail of evidence behind. Standing in front of the cave, my eyes brimming with hot tears and my heart burning in anguish, I took a silent oath before the victims of the American butchers:

"We pledge to avenge you!"

Mao Kuo-chen  
*Squad Leader, Hero Second Class*

## II

We quickened our steps when we learned that Pyongyang was immediately ahead. After we had passed a small railway station and scaled two hills, however, our column started slowing down and finally came to a stop. Our men were mumbling curses:

Damned miserable sight !"

Hell . . . another four!"

"The American bandits are less than beasts!"

I pushed my way up front dragging Yang Jui-ching, an orderly, along with me. We saw there the corpses of four little children and two grown-ups lying in an air-raided shelter at the foot of the hill, while blank carbine cartridges littered the ground. Then we started towards a little pine tree which was surrounded by a crowd. Hurrying there, we ran into our bugler cursing the enemy roundly:

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"The heaviest punishment conceivable is too good for those American bandits!"

I was dumbfounded when I joined the crowd around the little pine to see a Korean girl lying there dead. She wore the typical Korean short white blouse, but hers was torn open revealing the great wounds where her breasts had been cut off, her blood having already congealed in a dark purplish mass. Her skirt was thrust up over her thighs, exposing the naked lower part of her body. Her face was strained and ashen, the mouth half open as though she would speak, while her sightless eyes stared into space with a horrible light in them.

Her body lay no more than a dozen or so paces from the mouth of another cave before which sprawled the corpse of a young man, his fists clenched tightly and the profile of his face distorted in fury. It was very dark inside the cave, but in the beam of a flashlight we saw the corpses of a white-haired old couple lying side by side, their arms extended as though reaching out for succour. The bodies of two

boys around eight or nine lay close by the wall, one of them still holding a brass spoon in his hand. Another, a middle-aged woman, clasping a baby in her arms, lay motionless near the earthen wall with her head feebly tilted to one side, blood streaking her breast and the baby's back. The table in the middle of the *kang* was overturned and chopsticks, broken bowls, and the remnants of a family's meal were scattered over the floor. . . .

Stupefied, we stood there trembling in grief and rage. Never before had I shed tears, but now my eyes overflowed with them. I can't remember walking out of the cave; I only knew I kept repeating to myself: "The American bandits have got to pay for this!" until it was drumming in my head. Finally I saw the bugler come out of another cave sighing: "Imagine killing such a lot of people! Corpses in piles everywhere!" Then he saw Yang Jui-ching sobbing, and called to him in a stern voice: "What are you crying for? Revenge! We must avenge the Korean people."

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Our political instructor mounted an air-raid shelter. "Comrades," he began in a voice deep with emotion, "ever since we crossed the Yalu River, we have time and again seen with our own eyes the atrocities of the American bandits. It is quite clear to us now that we've got to wipe out these blood-thirsty murderers and avenge the Korean people!"

"We'll stab the bandits a hundred times when we lay hands on them!" they shouted their indignation.

It snowed that night, but the driving snow no longer chilled us; on the contrary the heat of intense feeling seethed within us. Our hearts burning with wrath, we braved the storm and marched towards enemy-occupied Pyongyang.

Wang Wen-sheng  
*Medical Orderly*

III

Walking through the deserted streets of Pyongyang I was startled to hear a baby's cry quite near. For a while I thought I was mistaken; for how could there be a baby in all the heaps of rubble there? Nevertheless I stopped to listen carefully ; now it sounded ever so real and the baby was choking too.

I ran quickly towards the cries, and there at the doorway of a bombed-out house I

saw a little child sprawling on the ground, his little face covered with grime and dust while he clung with his tiny hands to the woman lying at his side. She was dead, her head having been mangled by the bomb. Pinned under the smoking rafters of the ruined house was another body, that of a man of whom only a part of the head was visible.

Although tragic scenes like this were common in Pyongyang I could not at the moment repress my anger and indignation. Nobody in this world, I thought, though his heart be hard as stone, could control his feelings under the circumstances. With trembling hands I lifted the child over my shoulders and tied

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him to my back in a blood-stained blanket that I took from the hand of his dead mother. Thus I started back to Camp in silence. The baby cried rather lustily for a while then fell asleep on my back.

Back at camp I was immediately surrounded by curious comrades who, however, walked silently away on learning the orphan's story. Then the fellows began crushing their biscuit to a pap and feeding the child one mouthful after another; some brought their shirts to fold up for the baby to wear. Then the squad leader took the child from me, kissed his cheek and whispered: "In Korea how many babies like this have become orphans? For them and their dead parents we should . . ." there he broke off with a sob. But we understood him perfectly — we must wipe out the enemy as soon as possible to avenge the orphaned babies and their murdered parents.

Yang Chin-fu  
*Fighter*

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## **IN THE NEW YEAR OFFENSIVE**

**CHANG FENG**  
*Deputy Divisional Commander*

After repeated defeats in two consecutive campaigns the enemy retreated to the 38th Parallel where, on the basis of old fortifications and the natural barrier of the Imjin River, they built up a new line of defence with which they hoped to check

our advance and at the same time win for themselves a breathing space. It was said that in the United Nations General Assembly, in which the United States held sway, a so-called "Three-man Cease-fire Committee" resolution had been adopted; but this formula which G. C. Marshall once prescribed for the Chiang Kai-shek clique was no new gimmick to us; their "Committee of Three" — "Cease-fire on the Spot" — "Peace Talks" — added up to all-out attack on us!

In order to completely shatter the enemy's intrigue we decided to break through the Imjin River line on New Year's Eve of 1950 and thereby deal the American aggressors a severe blow. In this operation the superior command had assigned to our division the task of cracking the main defences on this line.

The task confronting us was a grave one. The Imjin's current was especially swift at the point where our right-flank regiment would be operating, and that regiment would have to ford a 200-metre-wide-channel choked with rushing ice blocks in the face of cruel cold and enemy barrage. Along the line where our left-flank regiment would break through, though the water had frozen over, the river was at least 300 metres wide while its sandy beach had been thickly mined by

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the enemy. Once over, our comrades would be faced with a steep wall of rock jutting up more than ten metres which they would have to scale under enemy fire. The cruelty and ferocity of this battle, therefore, could well be imagined.

Detailed and at the same time thorough preparations must be made in order to accomplish the gigantic task of breakthrough.

Before the operation I went to the regiment on our left flank to check on their preparations and saw that the fighters had readied ladders, hemp ropes, straw, mine-sweepers, straw sandals, water-proof socks and even lard, all of which constituted their cold-proofing and scaling equipment. Day and night they braved biting cold to practise mountain-climbing and skating. In addition they made repeated secret trips to the Imjin River by night, probing the freezing condition of the river. During one of these trips one of our fighters managed to bring back from under the very nose of the enemy a good thick block of ice which became the fighters' prized object of study. With such thorough preparation and high fighting spirit our fighters' advance could never be stopped however formidable the obstacles in their path!

During the night of December 30, 1950 our troops moved noiselessly to the bank of the Imjin River and after a whole night of hard work all our men and equipment went underground. By dawn the next day our network of approach trenches was completely camouflaged with ice and snow, harmonizing perfectly with the

boundless sea of snow-covered plains.

Though the troops were now well concealed, I was still in a state of suspense. We had amassed so many men on a position only one and a half kilometres in width and two and a half kilometres in depth for a whole day. Would we be able to keep their presence from the knowledge of the enemy? This was a great burden on my mind. Sitting with the commander of the left-flank regiment in an underground shelter, we kept looking at our watches. Though both our watches

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kept good time we would keep asking each other: "What time is it now?"

Minutes seemed endless and waiting was so hard to endure! When we saw the enemy clearly looking at us from the opposite bank, or when enemy planes circled low over the Imjin River, we would check again and again on the concealment of our units. Repeatedly I phoned the various battalions: "By no means must we build any fires! Nobody must come out from cover no matter how cold he is; for the sake of victory we must persevere . . . !"

By noon the river was shrouded in a white mist as it began to snow again. Our position was receiving another coat of natural camouflage! Standing outside the shelter with snowflakes caressing my cheek, I shouted out in spite of myself:

"Good! The enemy will have a hard time discovering us now!"

At dusk there was a telephone call from the divisional command post. Taking up the receiver, I heard the calm voice of our divisional commander:

"How well have you prepared?" His calmness at once eased my acute tension.

"Preparations all made; only awaiting your order!"

Then the divisional commander told me that our artillery were also ready and that we should start observation.

The instant the regimental commander and I came out of our bunker with the staff officers our artillery opened fire, thundering bursts shaking our shelter till it seemed to be jumping up and down. A storm of shells shrieked over us to explode on the opposite bank. Fighters ran out of their bunkers shouting their applause.

"Good! Well done!"

The regimental commander was on the lookout in the observation post:

"Enemy mines detonating!"

"Enemy strong points at the break-through destroyed, one . . . two ... three.. ."

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"Bang! The enemy machine-gun that was firing at position 17 silenced! Wonderful! Such an accurate shot!"

I reported by telephone to the divisional command post on the daring and accurate shooting of our artillery which had paved the way for the attack of our infantry.

In an instant the phone was ringing again in short urgent bursts; it was again the divisional commander.

"Only three minutes till the final charge," said he. "Get ready !"

Immediately the dozen or more telephones as well as the radio transmitter in our bunker all got busy; orders were forwarded to every unit almost simultaneously. Once again I asked the different commanders:

"What position has your unit moved into now?"

"Is the approach to your break-through cleared yet?"

The answer was the same from all the commanders:

"Everything completed; we are awaiting your orders." We were all of one mind. I told them to hold the phone.

Three minutes after 17:00 hours, the command post gave the signal of attack as three green flares rose in the sky; at the same time 250 rounds of red tracers were discharged into the air in cross-fire by heavy machine-guns.

"Charge!"

The very moment I put down the receiver thousands of fighters leaped out of the approach trenches and dashed towards the river.

Hurriedly I walked out of my bunker and from atop a little hill watched the magnificent onrush of our troops. Fire flashed between the dark cliffs on both banks of the Imjin River. By the light of the barrage of red tracers from our machine-guns and the flashing bursts of enemy artillery shells I could just make out in the dimness of dusk the profile of our fighters, their rifles levelled, dashing forward while communicating with each other in shouts. In wedge formation the whole body of

our troops advanced straight towards the sector designated for break-through, braving the heavy barrage of enemy fire. "

At my side were the political commissar of the left-flank regiment and the chief of staff of our fellow artillery regiment. We stood silent, however, not wanting to say a word as we watched, completely enrapt, the grand scene developing before us at this moment of decision.

At this crucial hour I felt tense but also assured of victory, for we had done our utmost to prepare for this operation and had skilfully managed to take the enemy by complete surprise; moreover I had confidence in our men's ability to accomplish the task assigned to them and emerge from the battle triumphant.

Suddenly there were flashes and explosions followed by columns of smoke on the sandy beach of the opposite bank. The mines in the path of our left-wing company were going off. I realized that a necessary cost was being paid by men of that company for the cause of final victory. Mine explosions continued in rapid succession from north to south. I saw figures falling, yet the men behind were not deterred but kept up their swift advance.

After the detonations in the mine field had died down, figures could be seen busily moving about under the steep cliff on the opposite bank. So the fighters were setting up the ladders now! Then from across the river came the sudden reports of exploding hand-grenades which were immediately followed by more rapid bursts of grenades and tommy-gun fire. The first echelon of our fighters had climbed up the opposite bank and were engaging the enemy in hand-to-hand fighting.

"Well partner, it's done!" The political commissar of the left- flank regiment said excitedly to the chief of staff of our fellow artillery regiment.

"We've broken through! Nothing to worry about now!" I was almost shouting with delight.

After a short but fierce encounter three red flares rose in the sky from the south bank of the river. Their glow seemed to be reflected in the depths of my heart. I rushed into the bunker and rang up the divisional commander:

"We have occupied the enemy's first line of defence on the south bank! . . ."

# THE CONQUEST OF MOUNT HWA-AK

**KU YUAN-HSUN**

*Deputy Regimental Commander*

On December 24, 1950, accompanied by the chief of the reconnaissance section — a staff officer of our regiment — I came to Sukmir-ri at the foot of Mount Hwa-ak in compliance with instructions, bringing a scouting company with me. From there we were to collect important information for the Party committee of the regiment to consider at their conference on our next operation. According to the Divisional Chief of Staff, Chin, who had arrived much earlier with a company of scouts from the division, the prisoners they had captured around Mount Hwa-ak had disclosed that the enemy, relying on its precipitousness and isolation, were boasting a lot about the impregnability of their defence.

One of the prisoners went so far as to say that it was such an invincible stronghold that "a single man on the defence can ward off the attack of ten thousand!"

"So you see obstacles are not few here!" remarked Chief of Staff Chin in explaining the situation to me; then pointing to the highest peak confronting us, a majestic pinnacle towering above a chain of hills, he said: "That is Mount Hwa-ak."

I scanned the peak which I had found marked on the map as more than 1,400 metres in height. It could truly be called the "father" of that mountain range for it alone pierced the clouds and mist that veiled its many foothills. Viewed from afar, the snowdrifts on this lofty mountain seemed to have joined hands with the white clouds drifting about its peak.

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To us, however, the altitude of the peak posed less threat than the precipitousness of the northern face of the mountain, which did place us at great disadvantage. During one of our talks with the local inhabitants an elderly villager had told us that one could scale the south side of the mountain, where the incline was gradual, without too much difficulty but that the northern ascent was another thing. There the pass between Chungbong and Sokryong Hills, which was the only way to get to the peak on that side, was so narrow that men could ascend only in single file, and that with difficulty. Further, since it was along this very pass that our scouts had captured our "tongue" several days before we could hardly expect

the tricky enemy not to seal off that route with all the fire power at his command, whereas we could by no means fully display our force of arms or men from below. In these circumstances, Chief of Staff Chin ordered that every effort be made to find a new route, while at the same time our scouts were to clear the narrow pass in case we should have to break through there.

That night, carefully studying the map I discovered a narrow ridge stretching north straight into the enemy's frontal position on Chungbong Hill. An idea suddenly flashed across my mind: if this ridge indeed led to Chungbong Hill, we could thereby manoeuvre ourselves up into the enemy's position without exposure to their fire. Whether this ridge afforded such a path, however, would have to be ascertained by scouting.

Early next morning the company of the chief of reconnaissance section, a staff officer, four scouts and I climbed up the ridge to investigate.

Snow overspread the entire crest of the towering ridge, exposing only the tangled briars and scrub which we clung onto while feeling our way step by step through the knee-deep drifts. Actually no traversable path could be found up there even if it were not for the snow. We climbed single file, standing on each other's shoulders to scale the cliffs. With



Marching across the snowy mountains on the 38th Parallel

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each step we had to feel about for a solid footing underneath. The danger was even greater when we had to make our way along the precipice overlooking the deep dark ravine below; we were gripped with apprehension each time a foot slipped.

"Aiya!" someone up ahead suddenly yelled. We looked and saw only an opening in the snow but no source of the yell. The scouts ran over and called out anxiously: "Shove your gun up!" and soon a "snow man" was dragged out of the drift. It was none other than one of our own scouts who had missed his footing and slipped down into a hollow.

It was already four o'clock in the afternoon when we climbed onto the first of four similar humps on the ridge. There was yet a distance of 3,000 metres to Chungbong Hill, which still looked quite hazy through my binoculars.

It was getting dark and I ordered our contingent to return to base. In spite of all our painstaking efforts we seemed to have achieved little that day.

When we arrived back at the base we were really exhausted. However I couldn't go to sleep that night for thinking that there were only four or five days at most till our general offensive and we had taken up the greater part of one of them scaling only one of the minor hilltops, without seeing anything much either. As I tossed about on my *kang* I thought we just couldn't go on at that rate! But before I got to thinking of any way out I heard Staff Officer Cheng ask anxiously from beside me:

"How are we going to face the others if we don't .beat the enemy in this fight?"

"Don't worry," I consoled him, "we'll beat them if we work with all our might."

I waited for his answer but none came; then I turned to him. and saw he was sound asleep. My thoughts went on from there and I recalled many things. I remembered what a battalion commander said to me when he stopped me as I was leaving on this assignment: "Deputy Regimental Commander, remember to give the toughest job to us after you've

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finished the reconnaissance." He further told me that the fighters, hoping to win an "international merit" in the fight and offer it to Chairman Mao as a New Year present, were all asking for assignments.

As commander of the regiment, however, I had to think not only of these heroic offers but the more important question of how to attain the greatest victory at least cost. I thought of the hateful narrow pass sealed up by concentrated enemy fire and that it was unfortunately the only path we could launch our attack from. And I thought how even if we should push through it eventually, how many of our class brothers might fall! I would have to find another way up the mountain no matter how difficult that might be; I would not give up the idea of there being a passable route on the seemingly hopeless ridge we had climbed that morning! The place where there was no path was the spot the enemy would most likely neglect; so I made up my mind we would scale the ridge again next morning, no matter how great the difficulties might be!

Before daybreak on December 26 we climbed up the ridge we had scaled the day

before with climbing sticks and ropes. Today we moved much faster, and by noon had climbed onto the second hump, leaving only two more humps between us and the fore position of the enemy at Chungbong Hill. Exhausted, we were about to relax a little when all of a sudden the enemy opened up from the hilltop with all their machine-guns. I hastily scanned the position with my binoculars and saw the enemy concentrating the fire of six machine-guns plus four mortars upon the gorge. They had obviously discovered our scouting company there clearing a path.

"Look! Deputy Regimental Commander," the chief of our reconnaissance section pointed out to me with his hand. "all the loopholes on the enemy's pillboxes are faced towards the gorge; they're certainly over-confident in the impregnability of their natural barrier!"

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His words expressed my views too and further strengthened my determination. Inasmuch as the enemy were not at all worried about the ridge, we would hardly be detected if we climbed up this way. Besides, we would be in a much more favourable position than down in the gorge in the event they should discover us, for we could move freely along either the right or left side of the ridge to avoid enemy fire on either side. Moreover, the sharp and narrow strip of ridge did not appear such an easy target for the enemy's mortar shells, which, when aimed a little off the mark, would surely drop into the ravine below. Another advantage was that our firearms could be exploited to the full from the higher ground here. Now, it all depended on whether this ridge led to Chungbong Hill.

Everyone of us was itching to see this exploration to the end and would not rest a minute more. However the higher we climbed the more precipitous the ridge became till we were literally crawling upward on all fours. At places the cliff was so steep that we couldn't get up even by climbing upon another man's shoulders; then we had to shove a man up with the butt of a gun and be pulled up one by one after him. The wind got fiercer as we ascended and snow, driven in the whistling gale, pierced our exposed cheeks like razor blades. As we climbed higher, the temperature dropped till even our words seemed to hang frozen in mid-air. In the meantime, however, we were perspiring so profusely that our sweat soaked through several layers of clothing, freezing into a thin coating of ice on the outside and crackling at every movement of our limbs. Staff Officer Cheng remarked with his ready wit:

"Look at us, all dressed up in bullet-proof armour!"

The moment the men's warm breath was exhaled it formed beads of ice that clung white to their brows and whiskers.

I joked with the scouts:

"Ho! How you fellows have aged! I'd swear you'd taken on a good fifty years in the past few minutes!"

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"You'd better take a look at your own white beard, Chief, before poking fun at others!" retorted a scout, causing an uproar of mirth among the men.

The invincible spirit and the optimistic humour of our scouts further strengthened my confidence. They were always ahead of us probing and preparing the way. Nobody knows how many times they fell from those steep cliffs and how many times they climbed up again. But I'm sure that a place even ten times more precipitous could not have stopped them; at times I felt I was not leading them but was instead being led by them.

We had eventually climbed onto the fourth hump from where I discovered through my binoculars that our ridge stretched all the way into the first ring of the enemy's barbed-wire entanglement; not only could we move up to it from here, but there was enough room in front of the barbed-wire entanglement for the deployment of one or even two platoons of our troops.

That night back at camp we were too excited by our discovery to sleep. Meetings of small groups were immediately called and the men all agreed that in spite of the ridge being without path or track of any kind our attacking force could manoeuvre along it — especially since it was a loophole in the enemy's defence. So long as we could overcome the obstacles on the way we were certain to surprise the enemy and have them defeated before they knew what was going on.

As the matter was thus solved in the main we were all in high spirits. The commander of the scouting company sought my instructions as to whether or not the repair work along the narrow pass should be continued. I was most resolute in my reply:

"By all means, yes! And the work shall continue under the cover of two machine-guns; we want the enemy to think we're busy fixing up the only route of attack!"

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"We have a name for that stratagem too. It's called 'repairing the plank road over the pass openly while fording the stream at the bottom of the gorge in secret!'" observed Staff Officer Cheng humorously from beside me.

On the 27th we continued our probing activity along the ridge to Chungbong Hill

so as to further acquaint ourselves with the lay of the land. At the same time a scouting contingent was sent out to steal its way up from the gorge to the left side of the hill as a divertive action. At dusk Regimental Commander Huang and Political Commissar Chang went to the front for a final survey; then after a thorough study of the situation the Party committee of the regiment adopted the plan of operation.

Our forces launched the powerful New Year offensive on the last afternoon of 1950. Under cover of a blinding snowstorm our fighters climbed to the top of an untrodden ridge and struggled over one precipice after another, their heroic slogan being "one step higher, one step nearer victory!" At six o'clock that evening our mine-sweepers began detonating the mines laid by the enemy who, astonished, at once opened fire from their pillboxes, their tracers streaking straight for the gorge. Enemy artillery in the distant rear also fired in frenzy at their pre-determined target, the gorge. Exhilarated, our fighters quickened their pace along the ridge. I heard a fighter chuckling to himself while climbing up:

"Shoot in the gorge to your heart's content! You missed your guess this time; we're coming around this way!"

While the enemy were sealing the pass, where in their words "a single man on the defence can ward off the attack of ten thousand," with barrage after barrage of intense fire, our shock troops suddenly emerged right beside them and before they had time to turn their barrels around, our fighters had knocked them out completely with hand-grenades. The enemy were now running helter-skelter in utter confusion

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from their frontal position. Having occupied Chungbong Hill at one stroke, our forces speedily launched an all-out attack upon our main objective.

The first sunrise of 1951 found us already atop Mount Hwaak!

## **ROUTING THE BRITISH ROYAL TANK BATTALION**

**LI KUANG-LU**

*Deputy Squad Leader, Meritorious Fighter Special Class*

It was already getting dark. The enemy's long-range artillery was firing only sparsely, their shells flashing now and then in the distant night sky. Enemy planes droned blindly overhead like headless flies.

All through the day we had marched southward along a desolate footpath; we lost count of the hills we climbed and the streams we forded. By nightfall the men thought we would be moving onto the highway, but we continued to trudge along in the waist-high bushes and briars which became more and more a nuisance to us.

"Maybe we've taken the wrong route; this doesn't look like a road at all!" grumbled someone in the file.

"There's nothing wrong at all; the commanders have it all figured out. The enemy are running away along the highway in motor vehicles ; if we chase them also by the highway all we'd catch would be the fumes from their exhaust — we'd never catch them that way!" It sounded like the voice of Liu Fan-yi.

Comrade Liu Fan-yi's estimate was correct. Since our break-through of the 38th Parallel we had completely shattered the enemy's defence, while the spearhead of our counteroffensive continued to drive southward. This was more than the American generals could cope with, so in haste they brought up the British Royal Tank Battalion to stem our advance.

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In the meantime the American troops took to their heels under cover of their junior ally, leaving the British lads to fend for themselves. Probably realizing their disadvantage, the Britishers presently also turned on their heels and, relying on the speed of their motorized vehicles, attempted to leave our pursuing units far behind. Therefore our quick march along this footpath, which ran at a tangent to the highway, was in fact a race with the south-bound British Royal Tank Battalion fleeing by the road. It was a race of our legs versus wheels and caterpillars.

We marched at a pretty good clip along the deserted hilly paths not pausing even to remove our shoes to ford streams. When my jacket was soaked with sweat I unbuttoned it and marched on with the cool breeze on my chest.

A mine suddenly exploded not far ahead sending a flash to the sky and tensing the nerves of the tired men. The distant thunder of the guns sounded clearer now; and at the "double quick" order which was passed on to us verbally from the men at the van we started running forward in the pitch-dark wilderness. I stumbled on, my eyes fixed on the undulating shoulders of the man in front of me lest I should drop out of file, all the while sweating profusely under the weight of the machine-

gun on my shoulder.

As we made the turn of the hill, we saw flames leaping up on the hilltop opposite while the explosion of artillery fire resounded in the valley. It looked as though our vanguard had engaged the enemy.

Orders came in rapid succession from the political instructor at the van:

"Pass on to the rear: Have the bangalore torpedoes ready!"

"Pass on to the rear: Have the dynamite ready!"

"Pass on to the rear: Dynamiters forward at the double!"

My heart throbbed with unspeakable joy when I heard that dynamiters were wanted at the front, for I had been appointed as one of the dynamiters of our company. Handing the machine-gun to a fighter in our squad, I rushed to the van of

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our file where I saw our platoon leader organizing the dynamiting teams and he immediately assigned me as leader of our team of three — Yang Hou-chao, Liu Feng-chi and myself. All the time our column kept up a running pace so our organizing for combat was carried out on the run.

We climbed over a minor hilltop and came in view of a spacious valley on the snow-covered plains of which two dark lines stretched all the way from the hills at the north into the hills at the south. This was without doubt the highway to Pamiji.

Flames flashed crimson on the northern hill; occasional tracers whizzed by from the ridge above streaking in arched curves into the night sky. The heavy rumble of motors now pounded in our ears from the northern reaches of the valley.

In great haste we dashed to the left flank of the highway and there lay in ambush. Having no time to entrench ourselves, we turned our cotton-padded coats inside out and sprawled in the snow-covered rice field. Lying motionless, we were hardly perceptible, as the muslin lining of our coats blended into the whiteness of the snow around us. By the gleam of the snow I examined the fuses of the dynamite packs and put them alongside me in a neat row.

Our pursuit had been southward, but now we about-faced and turned north. A stiff northwester pressed like a dull blade against our cheeks. My sweat-soaked cotton-padded coat now froze into a hard icy shell about me making me very uncomfortable in any position. My throat burned with thirst while my stomach

yelled for food. I stood up, tightened my belt a little and thrust a handful of snow into my mouth.

Yang Hou-chao edged nearer to me and asked in a whisper: "Deputy Squad Leader, it seems we've got ahead of the `mechanized'!"

"You're darn right about it!"

In the meantime dark shadows of our men rushed past us, one file heading to the right of the highway while another moved southward along the road. The entire force of our

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company had arrived so we were now simply waiting for the enemy to roll into the pocket we had prepared for them!

The deafening rumble of motors drew nearer and nearer; we could already smell their offensive exhaust fumes in the wind. Another instant and two dazzling headlights peeped out from the north end of the valley followed immediately by a long string of pale lights. For all the world like a pack of ferocious monsters with glaring eyes, the long column of enemy tanks came towards us, shaking the whole valley with their rumbling.

Suddenly there was a series of hand-grenade explosions and an enemy command car at the head of the column went ablaze. So our comrades-in-arms at the front had scored! Following the explosions the string of lights went out all at once as if controlled by a single switch. In a split second machine-gun bullets, artillery shells and fire from flame-throwers all gushed out from the mouths of the frenzied steel monsters. Shells exploded along the road throwing up torrents of frozen earth and snow which then crashed upon us in an avalanche; the valley was shrouded with smoke and dust.

"How are you doing, Liu Feng-chi?" I called to the comrade-in-arms beside me as I clasped the dynamite in my arms more tightly.

"I'm all right."

"Keep under cover, and watch the ammunition!"

In the glare of the flames a whole column of massive tanks by-passed the burning command car and dashed ferociously towards us, guns blazing.

Though I had volunteered before the operation to become a dynamiter and was assigned the task of tank demolition, this was my first encounter with the things

and my heart was all a-tremor; I guess I was pretty nervous. Our Second Platoon at the right flank of the highway opened up with machine-gun fire but the bullets clattered loudly on the armour of the enemy tank while the tank kept moving, only faster.

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Before I could make a move it had rumbled away along the road.

"Confound it!" I gave my head an angry knock for being so slow, letting the tank slip through my fingers. But just then there was a terrific explosion; the tank that had got by was on fire!

"Comrades," our instructor called out loudly from beside the road, "Chou Shih-chieh, Third Squad Leader, has already destroyed an enemy tank; let us all look to him as our example!"

The call of our instructor was all the further stimulation I needed. Turning to the comrade-in-arms beside me I exclaimed: "No matter what happens we'll never let another enemy tank get by!"

The second enemy tank, seeing things not so good for it, slowed down, pausing now and then as if to sniff the air, all the time strafing frantically with its machine-gun.

Before the tank got anywhere near us. Yang Hou-chao jumped up and dashed towards it taking a short cut through a rice field. All excitement, I followed him with my eyes. By the time he reached the highway the tank was right there in front of him. In the glow of the fire I could see him trying desperately to climb up onto the roadbed which was almost two metres above the ground level. Time and again he slipped back down the steep slope; then taking a long run for it from the rice field, he finally made it. Watching him thrust the bangalore torpedo into the caterpillar belt of the tank with such deftness I couldn't help admiring the courage of this brave comrade from the depth of my heart. "Bravo, my lad!" said I and waited all attention for the triumphant bang of the explosion.

However, the torpedo evidently had not been placed securely enough for it was soon flung down from the road by the grinding ahead of the tank and the explosion took place in the field. Confound it! Then I caught sight of a dark figure dashing towards the tank. It was Liu Feng-chi. He leaped

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nimbly upon the road with five kilogrammes of dynamite under his arm. The tank rolled over the dynamite the very moment he had laid it on the road, but the fuse

was apparently too long for the explosion came only after the tank had already rolled by.

Although our first two dynamiters had failed their experience provided valuable lessons for me. Immediately I jumped up onto the roadside and lay there with my eyes fixed on the tank, calculating how long it would take for the fuse to burn as against the speed of the tank. It had twice escaped destruction by sheer luck and should not get away again! When it came within a suitable distance I pushed the dynamite pack onto the middle of the road and myself rolled down to the rice field below. In a split second I was shaken by the concussion of a terrific explosion and then lost consciousness.

I felt a stabbing pain in my chest when I came back to my senses. I felt very weak; sparks danced before my eyes as I spat out two mouthfuls of blood. I put my mouth to the ground and munched some snow which made me feel a little better. Then I opened my eyes and saw the valley enveloped in flame; dense smoke billowed over the ground while the air was heavy with the mingled odour of explosive and gasoline. With a jerk I sat up and looked towards the highway. Ha! The one I had hit had plunged off the road and lay silent. Besides that, two more tanks had been destroyed and were burning away.

Pamiji was turned into a sea of flame and the whole valley was in chaos. Enemy tanks had been thrown into complete confusion and were running wild on the road as well as in the rice field; now and then they would crash loudly into each other. The whole place from hill to hill resounded with the clash of arms.

After Liu Feng-chi had demolished still another tank our team's store of torpedoes and dynamite was exhausted so I hurried off to look for some more T.N.T. At the battalion command post I ran into Instructor Chao who beamed his

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flashlight into my face and cried out: "Oh! You're wounded." Then to the medical orderly he called, "Hsiao Wang, quick! Bandage his wound!" Hsiao Wang ran over immediately with his first-aid kit and, with his arm adeptly across my mouth so that I couldn't say a word, got busy bandaging my wound.

Struggling to get away, I shouted: "Let go of me, I've got to get back to those tanks!"

Gripping me tightly in the vise of his two hands, he said: "I'll let you go after the bandaging is done. There're still plenty of tanks to be destroyed!"

At this juncture I heard the battalion commander remark abruptly: "Ai, what a whopper!" and I peeped out from under Hsiao Wang's armpit. Gosh! It was indeed

the biggest of them all, moving towards us slowly like a small hill, all the while belching flame which caught the thatched huts by the roadside and had them consumed in an instant.

What was more, this huge tank had a loudspeaker which kept howling out in Chinese: ". . . we are here to save the Koreans . . . surrender at once, all Chinese! . . ." as arrogant as it was ridiculous. So there really existed such devilish blunder-busses as to be dreaming in the face of death!

I extricated myself from Hsiao Wang's clutches, picked up a dynamite pack and a few hand-grenades from the ground and hurried towards the flame-throwing tank.

When I got right in front of it, however, I was in a momentary quandary: would two and a half kilogrammes of dynamite suffice to knock out this colossus? But never mind, if it wouldn't work underneath it might do on top. At once I leaped upon its steel fender; the intense heat of the flame jet scorched my cheeks and hands while the tank rocked so violently that I was very near to being thrown off it several times. Braving the searing heat I hung on tightly with one hand while pressing the dynamite to it with the other. I pulled out the detonating cap with my teeth then jumped off with all my strength, rolling over on the ground a few times and then lying still. The tank exploded

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like a thunderbolt, throwing out flames from its vitals — a true "flame-thrower" now!

As my last bag I succeeded in destroying another small tank, which, however, turned out to be a fuel tank for the gasoline spilled all over me and immediately caught fire. In an instant the heavy wadding of my coat was completely burned through, the fire scorching my skin painfully. I tried beating the flames down with my hands but they only leaped higher. Finally, at the shouts of my comrades, I lay down and rolled in the snow and that put the fire out. Nothing was left of my cotton-wadded uniform however but smouldering rags.

The fighting had ended. Along the highway and in the rice fields of Pamiji fires raged everywhere as the tanks of the British co-aggressors burned on. Thus the British Royal Heavy Tank Battalion had fulfilled its role of dying on behalf of its elder ally, the Americans.

We, the Chinese People's Volunteers, had once again hung up a startling record in world history.

In covering the distance our two legs had been more than a match for the caterpillars of the British tanks!

In tank demolition the steel armour plate of the heavy British tanks had not been able to withstand our bare hands!

## **ALONG THE TRACK OF THE "BEASTS"**

**CHU LIU**

*Chief of the Education Department*

It was afternoon of January 7, 1951. I had fulfilled my field duty and was hurrying back to the army command post at Dongduchon together with two other comrades.

It was pretty rough going along the slippery road in the rain that was falling; however we felt it good to be able to travel in broad daylight for a change. We had covered some twenty *li* of a hilly path from Chasa-ri when we came upon a broad ravine. Earthworks dotted the range of hills on either side, the brown earth of the trenches standing out in sharp contrast to the white ridge of snow-capped hills. A highway was jammed with deserted trucks, jeeps, motorcycles and all sorts of artillery pieces, all bearing the white star. The chaos reminded me that today we would be passing the enemy's previous defence zone stretching some 70 kilometres near the 38th Parallel along a road by which most of the U.S. and Syngman Rhee bandit troops had taken flight. Fires still blazed here and there and we heard occasional rifle reports from enemy spies and snipers.

We proceeded northward along a road skirting a hill towards the first village on our route and in which we hoped to find a place to rest. But on entering the village we saw three Koreans lying dead at the foot of the hill on our left. One was a young woman dressed in white, still bound in ropes; across her body lay a village elder, his face turned skyward, and at the elderly man's feet was a youth. They too were trussed up in ropes. They obviously had been

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bound up in a row and killed one after another. In the rice field at the left of the highway lay the body of another Korean, who with his dark uniform and short hair looked like a student. He could not have been more than twenty. All about lay grisly evidence of strafing from planes and he had doubtlessly been hit from behind.

We had witnessed many such sights during our pursuit of the enemy, yet our

hearts were no, less heavy each time the ghastly scenes were repeated. While trying to picture in our minds how these victims met their death, we walked on into the village. But try as we might we could not find even one habitable cottage. Only heaps of rubble met our eyes while a choking, nauseous odour hung in the air. Our hearts sank to the depths.

"Shall we stop for a rest now?" asked Hsu Chen-sheng as we trudged along.

"No, let's go on," I answered without slackening my steps.

After we had passed through the village the sky suddenly became overcast; dark clouds and then snow hastened the fall of night. Scattered shots could still be heard all around us as we walked gingerly on, hugging the foot of the hill at our left. The snow formed ice on my overcoat, rustling as I moved. It was still some distance to Dongduchon and we all needed a break in our long journey, but none of us felt like stopping for we couldn't rest for thinking of what we had just seen.

We had been along this route before and I knew we should be entering another village, Sanpuk-ri. It was a village straddling the highway so we could not miss it. To our surprise, a single house was left standing after the conflagration.

"Oh, for a respite!" I said under my breath.

We went up to the cottage and cautiously beamed our flashlight around the room from outside the doorway. What we saw were a wardrobe overturned, tattered clothing thrown over the *kanq*, a blood-stained white blouse showing signs of recent wear by some Korean woman and broken

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candle-sticks and mirrors all jumbled together with the empty tin cans and ammunition boxes abandoned by the U.S.-syngman Rhee bandit troops on their bloody sweep through. Then we looked around the kitchen and saw even the cooking pot was broken, while the cooking oil and pepper had been poured into the straw.

Unable to bring ourselves to step into a desecrated home like this, we just stood under the eaves without saying a word. Then suddenly Hsu Chen-sheng dashed cut stamping his feet in fury. This was indeed not to be our resting place!

"Shall we go?"

"Let's go!" they replied in unison.

The sky was entirely dark now and the snowfall had become so heavy that our

flashlight beam seemed to strike a solid white wall. We could see no more than two paces ahead. Hsu Chen-sheng and Hsiao Chao stepped out in front to pick the way and I followed in their tracks. Ruthless, the blizzard whipped at our faces while melting snow streaked down our necks. We slipped at almost every step and our legs quivered from the strain of repeated falls; but still we struggled on, our teeth clenched.

We proceeded along for some time before suddenly discovering that we were off our route. Anxious moments followed before we caught sight of a lone cottage at the foot of a hill. I decided we should stop there a moment to get our bearings. We got out our pistols, but after directing our flashlight in and about the empty house without finding anything suspicious we put them back in their holsters. We then shook the snow off our clothes and sat down on the threshold.

"Is there any firewood to build a fire with?" I asked.

At this both Hsiao Chao and Hsu Chen-sheng went to look in the kitchen and behind the house. Suddenly Hsu called out; "A child! A dead child!"

I got to my feet immediately and directed my flashlight on the place Hsu Chen-sheng indicated with his hand. There I saw a boy who couldn't have been yet ten lying at the kitchen

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door, his torn garments so saturated with dirt that one could hardly believe they had been white. Blood had formed ice in his tousled hair, and his features were scarcely discernible for bloodstains. Here was the young host of this home, but what about the others? His parents would certainly not have run away and abandoned their son; the probability was that they had also been murdered!

"Beasts! They kill even the children!" Hsiao Chao observed indignantly.

We covered the boy's body with straw, giving up our idea of building a fire and, after consulting our map, proceeded on our way. Before us should have been a long wooden bridge but that too had been destroyed by the enemy so we had to make a detour under the bridge wreckage. We consulted our map and learned that the bridge lay less than five kilometres from Dongduchon. Hsiao Chao, indicating a settlement on the left, remarked:

"Look, such a lot of houses! Maybe we have already reached Dongduchon."

"Not yet," I replied, "but let's go over and take a look around anyway; maybe we'll find some of our troops there." As I was speaking, we walked up to the group of houses next to the hill, feeling quite sure that we weren't far from the army

command post. There was a shadowy mass in front of the houses, quite obscure in the darkness. I approached it slowly and snapped on my flashlight. There a horrible sight met our eyes. Hsiao Chao shrank back in alarm, and Hsu Chen-sheng exclaimed in horror: "They were human beings!"

These were the remains of men, a dozen or more in number. who had been burned to death, their darkened, contorted forms which the fire had reduced to no more than a metre in length, scarcely retaining any semblance of human bodies. However there were bits of skin that had blistered and burst in the intense heat still clinging to the bodies, and the remains gave off the typical repulsive stench of burnt flesh.

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Dumbfounded, the three of us stood as though nailed to the ground, for some time not saying a word to each other. My mind was blank; I was filled with the one simple all-pervading feeling that we were witnessing the work of beasts! Less than beasts!

It was sunrise when we reached Dongduchon. Our troops were all out on the hills, whence came the resounding of picks and spades. They were busy burying the remains of many Korean people who had been slain mercilessly by the U.S.-Syngman Rhee bandits and were found lying on those hills.

## **THE ADVANCE TO SEOUL**

— Excerpts from the reminiscences of men  
who took part in the liberation of Seoul

There was an immediate bustle among the fighters when the order was announced that our unit was going to take part in the liberation of Seoul. In high glee every man began to pack his kit.

Chen Yung, the gunner, patted the shiny barrel of his well-polished gun, saying:

"Well, m'lad! We're going to strike straight at Syngman Rhee's den this time!"

Chiang Wei

The wind whistled about the hills, and the footpath was now completely hidden from the moonlight by the thick pines growing alongside. There was still a coat of thin ice underfoot, and each man was gingerly following the steps of the man ahead of him for fear of slipping and coming a cropper. Suddenly I heard a thump and looked back to see Chang Chin-piao sprawling across the path. Before I could reach him to give him a hand, he was on his feet again. He said to me:

"Hurry on, Deputy Squad Leader! The rest of them are far ahead, we mustn't drop behind!"

"We're on the main road now," remarked someone presently in a subdued voice.

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Indeed, stretching out before us was the main trunk road leading to Seoul. We could see clearly in the moonlight men and artillery already swarming along it like a tidal wave.

As soon as our unit reached the road, we formed up into a column of fours and set off.

"Chang Chin-piao, pass over your machine-gun to me! Look how you're swaying under the load!" I called out to the young fighter panting along beside me. He was about done up. In fact, Chang had been wounded in the foot only a few days before. Although he was ordered to the rear to rest, he had stubbornly refused to do so and had insisted on coming along and taking part in the liberation of Seoul. Now he was limping worse than ever.

"I'm all right!" he answered, cheerfully enough. "Don't you worry about me. I can catch up with the enemy's lorries even with my lame foot!"

When dawn came, our unit stopped to camp at a village by the road. Just outside it we discovered three anti-tank guns left behind by the enemy, with their barrels still pointing to the north. The guns were quite intact, a sure sign that the enemy had abandoned them in confusion. Inside the village empty food cans and dying camp-fires could be seen everywhere.

"It seems we're hot on their heels!" called out Chen Yukuang in glee.

We stopped in the village for a spell. After we had gone into a house, Chang Chin-piao found that the blood-soaked bandage on his wounded foot had frozen tightly to his shoe. While struggling to take off his shoe, he asked an old Korean in the room in the native language:

"How far are we from Seoul now?"

The old man stuck out a hand with fingers outstretched and answered: "Fifty *li*." Chang then turned to me with a smile: "I travelled eighty *li* last night on my lame foot. An-

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other fifty *li* and I'll be limping into Seoul. We've caught the enemy by his tail at last!"

Chang Chuan-tao  
*Deputy Squad Leader*

Trucks and gun carriages had just passed us, and our marching formation changed back from a column of twos to one of eights again. The men were not walking but simply running forward, and calls for "keep up!" were heard from time to time.

An army cook with a big, blackened cooking-pan on his back was trying to get ahead of the marching men. "Make way! Here comes the black pan. Mind your backs, there!" he kept shouting. However, none seemed to hear or made way for him. "All right!" he grumbled. "In a hurry to get to Seoul eh, but who's going to cook for you there?"

After dawn, we saw countless empty cartridge cases of artillery shells and wires abandoned all over the field, while tanks bearing the white-star sign with their caterpillar belt blasted to shreds, could be seen here and there straddled across the road. All these indicated that our spearhead unit had just had an encounter here. so we were not far from the enemy after all.

Further ahead, along the highway there were road-signs now and then pointing to Seoul. A fighter looked at one of them and shouted: "Hurry up, comrades! We're only twenty *li* from Seoul!"

Li Tso-chou  
*Cultural Officer*

Several bits of good news came to us as we marched ahead: "The Second Battalion has gone into action!"

"We have the British Royal Tank Battalion completely trapped !"

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As soon as the order for double time was passed to the file, the entire column started to run as though blown along by a gale. Before long we were sweating all over and gasping for breath.

When we halted for a short rest, one man crawled down from the road and began drinking from the little brook below. "Is it O.K. to drink?" someone asked him.

"Oh, sure! Like iced soda-water!"

Hearing this the other man also flopped down upon his belly and started drinking from the same brook. What a man would refuse to drink in ordinary times now even tasted sweet, the men were so thirsty.

By now the road was busier as a column of threes came in to join the column of fours already there. In the moonlight the shiny golden insignia worn by the newcomers' officers on their shoulders as well as the bayonets attached to the rifles carried by the fighters could be seen clearly. Dragging their heavy machine-guns along on wheels, these soldiers kept shouting in Korean:

"Hurry!" "Hurry!"

"It's the Korean People's Army!"

"Oh! So here comes the Korean People's Army!" "Comrades!" I called out to them in the few Korean words I'd just learned. "You've done a good job!"

"Comrades, you've not done so badly yourselves!" answered quite a few short, stout lads in broken Chinese.

Then the trucks and gun carriages came along again; we were pushed off the highway for the second time and had to march on through the deserted paddy fields.

Suddenly a string of bright flares appeared in the distant sky ahead, making the whole scene as light as day.

Another moment, then happy cheers broke out among the men before us:

"Seoul is liberated !"

Li Chun  
*Army Orderly*

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## **NIGHT ATTACK ON SUWON**

**TAI JU-CHI**  
*Deputy Battalion Commander*

The day had just dawned and the mist was still quite heavy when enemy planes began circling over our positions at Mount Paekun; soon afterwards our anti-air raid observer reported that an enemy plane had landed on the Suwon airfield. All this seemed to indicate a possible change in the enemy's tactics and necessitated my going to the front for first-hand observation.

By the time we had climbed the face of Uisangdong Hill the morning mist had already dispersed. From the observation post the two of us — Deputy Platoon Leader Wu Liang and myself — got a clear view of the situation at the foot of the hill through our binoculars. Indeed the enemy had changed their scheme; for those enemy troops who had been fleeing southward had now turned about-face and were making for the north. Along the winding highway a number of infantrymen were moving gingerly towards the city of Suwon under cover of three tanks. They would pause now and then in watchful caution, faced with only the empty town they themselves had abandoned the night before. Nevertheless they put up the usual flurry of gunfire as they entered.

Witnessing this comical "entry ceremony," Wu Liang asked me in amusement: "Deputy Battalion Commander, wasn't the town empty? Then what are they firing at?" I broke into laughter too, saying: "That's the famous tactic of U.S. troops called 'probing in force,' which boils down to nothing more than whistling in the graveyard."

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The gunfire had finally abated and some forty or more U.S. soldiers sneaked out of the town, probing in the direction of the gully where our men were posted.

At once I asked Wu Liang to order the Second Platoon to get ready for combat, warning them not to expose themselves in any way until the enemy was upon us.

The enemy came nearer and nearer to the mouth of the gully. Our young fighter Li

Chun-cheng was getting impatient. Pointing to a little pile of beans beside him, he said to me: "Deputy Battalion Commander, give the firing order now! Look at this pile of beans, there is one for each enemy soldier that has popped out. There are now forty-five of them in all; give the order now and I'll finish them all off just like this pile of beans!"

The enemy got to the mouth of the gully and suddenly stopped. They fired a few shots, took a few peeps inside, then turned on their heels and traipsed home merrily along the same route they had come.

Things immediately livened up at our position; everyone was asking for combat assignments. One fighter remarked: "We can't let the meat slip from between our teeth." Another said: "All the time we've been chasing them, now that we've caught them let's have it out with them!" To tell the truth, I also longed for a showdown; however, our task here was to probe the activity of the enemy in co-ordination with the combat operations of our fellow units. Inasmuch as the enemy hadn't discovered us, better not expose ourselves prematurely.

We reported to regimental headquarters what we had observed of the enemy's moves. And by evening we had the following order from them:

"Storm the enemy tonight before they have time to consolidate their position; and further, seize some prisoners of war to obtain more information." The order suited us just fine!

The sky had darkened; and with nightfall a strong gale set in from the northwest. There was neither moon nor stars

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in the gloomy sky. Thus our little vanguard of heroes of the Eighth Company went downhill noiselessly and moved quietly along the road towards Suwon.

It was pitch dark on the quiet highway; the northwester whistled through the valley drowning out our footfalls. The white towels worn on the arms of those up ahead of us could be seen vaguely like little white spots jogging up and down in the darkness. In a short while the parapets of the walled town appeared before us in shadowy outline. Suddenly we heard people chattering and at once I signalled the men to lie flat upon the roadside. It was a narrow squeak! Two more paces and we would have bumped right into the enemy! We held our breath and waited; there were two little crimson glows where the sounds came from — the two enemy sentries were smoking. I whispered to the men: "It's all right, run straight ahead along the roadside." In this way, we crossed the first enemy sentry post.

"Hello! . . ." the enemy's second line sentry now asked us for the password but we paid no attention. The fellow then began ranting and raving and Ni Yu-cheng, our

machine-gunner, was about to open fire when I stopped him, saying: "Take no notice, proceed!" We ambled along so nonchalantly that the enemy probably thought we were some of their own men and soon stopped shouting. Thus we crossed the second line. But the enemy finally pricked up his ears as we were approaching the main street of the town. Seized by sudden panic, they yelled and shouted as though they were on a hot stove. Bah-bah . . . carbine bullets whizzed past our faces and lead poured from a light machine-gun hidden in a little house to the left blocking the road in front of us. It was pretty hot all around and we could see this was no place to linger.

"Chen Yu-chih, hurry and put that machine-gun out of action!" I said.

Chen was a boy with plenty of spunk and brains; with a grenade in each hand, he was across the highway at one

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There was a flash followed immediately by two terrific bangs, and the enemy machine-gun was silent. I jumped up and shouted: "Comrades, follow me! Charge!" Like a sharp wedge we drove straight into the town.

We got only as far as the main street when gunfire began once again to rattle fiercely from behind. I turned and saw all the enemy's fortified points along the street had opened fire at once with fire spurting from more than a dozen heavy and light machine-guns simultaneously. Our unit was cut right in two, the main force of our company held off outside the town. Fire also started up from machine-guns hidden in dark corners on both sides of the street; now we were entirely exposed to the enemy's barrage and I realized at a glance we could not afford to delay another second. Nor was there any possibility of our turning back and linking up with our men at the rear; therefore I ordered the fighters resolutely to follow me and we then dashed on deep into the street.

We got to the cross-roads at the centre of the town. There to the right of the intersection was a big building completely surrounded with shrubbery and barbed wire. Dazzling lights lit up the courtyard of the building, from where we heard the clamour of men and motors of several jeeps; obviously the enemy here had fallen into a panic. We knew at first sight that the building was some sort of enemy headquarters, the very thing we had been looking for. I began to prepare for immediate attack but when I counted our men I was a little taken aback. Only eighteen of us had broken into the town, all the rest being held off outside by enemy fire. Were eighteen men too few? Of course we were not so many, but the question facing us now was not so much the matter of numbers as the fact that we must fulfil our assignment. I had confidence in my fighters; in a crisis they could beat the enemy one to a hundred.

"Ni Yu-cheng, your squad is to blockade the street; Liao Chung-Jiang, your squad must bar all entrance to the courtyard; the rest of you charge in with me!" The word "charge"

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had barely left my lips when hand-grenades and tommy-gun and light machine-gun fire blasted into the courtyard like a hurricane. Stunned by the sudden blow, the enemy fell into utter confusion, breaking into yells and screams; some headed for the house, others crept under the motor vehicles. One enemy jeep roared up with headlights glaring in an attempt to get away, but it merely crashed thunderously into another jeep and was still. Li Chun-cheng, our kid fighter, shouted in glee at the sight of the enemy in commotion blundering blindly like headless grasshoppers.

Finally the enemy were forced into the house; I led our fighters into the courtyard. One of the men charged towards the house and was wounded; Li Chun-cheng leaped onto the window-sill as deftly as a cat and threw a couple of grenades inside while Chen Yu-chih blocked the door with his tommy-gun. But the enemy were still shooting desperately at us from both the windows and stairways, barring our entry into the house. At this crucial moment Wu Liang and Wang Hungpei arrived with three fighters and a light machine-gun. I ordered Wang to cut all the telephone wires to the house with his bayonet; then I ordered Wu Liang's squad to take the house.

Wu Liang charged right in but immediately jumped out holding his right hand, blood dripping from his sleeve. I asked: "Are you all right, Wu Liang?" "Quite all right," said he; then he dashed in again, biting his lower lip. Soon he was out dragging with him an American soldier who still had a carbine slung around his neck. Wu's right arm was now entirely bathed in blood but he paid no attention to it and in another instant had again vanished through the door of the building.

Out in the courtyard I discovered by the headlights of the cars that the P.O.W. was wearing an armband marked "M.P." Instantly I shouted out in excitement, "Let's charge in, Comrades! This is the enemy's command post for we have caught one of their Military Police!" Fighters dashed into

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the house with mounting spirit; the building shook with the thunder of explosions and the men's shouts.

Fighting was now also raging on the streets, where Ni Yu-cheng's squad had heroically intercepted the enemy's reinforcements.

Red tracers pierced the night sky; around us intense gunfire continued to rattle, but fighting was already over in the building. Wang Hung-pei and Chen Yu-chih had brought four prisoners down from the second floor, one of them an interpreter for the puppet Syngman Rhee army. When I asked this man whether there were any more enemy left in the building, he answered with a wretched face: "No more! No more! They are all dead!" I was telling the fighters to find out if there were any enemy officers killed or wounded in the house when Li Chun-cheng called out from a corner of the main room: "There are three dead ones here. . . ." I rushed over to see. Li was just reaching down to examine these "dead" officers' insignia when the three sat up as if on springs, sticking up their hands in fright. In the light of this experience we hunted down quite a few more American M.P.s who had been playing dead under motor vehicles and in garbage dumps.

Encouraged by this victory, the fighters all wanted to strike further into the town. However it was getting late, and as our task had been accomplished, I ordered all the motor vehicles and supplies that we couldn't take away to be destroyed by fire. This done, we charged out of the town by the east gate, bringing the P.O.W.s with us.

Climbing up on a hill, we looked back and saw flames soaring up from the town, where guns continued their rat-a-tat amid the dense smoke.

"What are they shooting at now?" asked a fighter. "Probably themselves!" returned another. And the clear sounds of our laughter wafted on the morning breeze.

## **COUNTER-ENCIRCLEMENT OFF THE HAN RIVER**

**HSING TSE**

*Regimental Political Commissar*

Fighting had lasted into the tenth day, yet all the enemy could do was to peep at our position through their telescope.

At eleven o'clock on February 3, 1951 the 19th Regiment of the U.S. 24th Division manoeuvred along the river to the rear of our division and occupied the heights in the vicinity of Chungsan-ri in an attempt to force us to fall back north of the Han

River. As a result of the enemy move, not only had our divisional headquarters fallen into the enemy's encirclement but our entire beach-head was seriously menaced.

The telephones in our regimental command post rang constantly; the divisional command called for details of the enemy's movements while all the battalions were calling for combat assignments, the request of everyone being: "Give the assignment to us: we'll hit hard and surely shatter the enemy's encirclement."

All through the day we made preparations for the fighting; then that night the order was received from divisional headquarters to go into action. Enemy night patrol planes circled round and round overhead and the highway was lit up bright as day by flares so we had to approach the enemy's rear by mountain passes. The hills were steep and the path narrow and slippery; the going was hard. I cut through the file and noted the fighters' expressions; everyone was pressing ahead calmly. But I knew they were seething with excitement. I knew also that they, like myself, were aware of the tough and cruel fighting ahead. For the enemy had occupied

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the heights near Chungsan-ni early that morning, indicating that their operation had been well prepared. We were to deal with a technically modern-equipped enemy force with only hand-grenades and rifles. Undaunted, however, our fighters and commanders had determined to wipe out every enemy that had penetrated our rear.

Lost in thought I was hurrying on when I suddenly stumbled and fell into a big snow drift almost up to my ears. This at once broke the silence; fighters hurried over to drag me out and the deputy regimental commander rushed up to help me beat the snow off my clothes while remarking in jest: "Hey, the enemy hasn't fired a shot yet, what did you plunge into that hole for?" Everybody laughed.

At the next hilltop Wang Tsung-li, Deputy Commander of the Third Battalion, reported that there was still no trace of enemy movement though our first and Third Battalions had already penetrated into the flank and rear of Heights 133 and 141. Indeed there was dead silence all around but for the humming of the enemy's night patrol planes in the distance.

When we had finally arrived at Sinhung-ni, the command post of our regiment was set up in an isolated house. I looked at the luminous dial of my watch; it was twelve o'clock; why wasn't there any sign of action? Could it be that the enemy had already crossed the Han River? Seized with anxiety, the deputy regimental commander now ran out of the house to listen. The rest of us gathered around a

small oil lamp in the house. anxiously waiting.

At one hour past midnight there was a sudden burst of gunfire and the explosions of hand-grenades nearby. Our deputy commander shouted excitedly: "It's begun! This is it!" I looked at my watch; my heart was at once much lighter and even the air seemed more fresh.

Severe fighting continued throughout the night. At dawn the Third Battalion reported that they had taken Height 141; subsequently the First Battalion reported that they had occupied Height 133 and cut off the retreat of the enemy on

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Heights 395 and 636. When I asked the First Battalion commander about the fighting morale of the men he said: "Their morale was never so high!" This commander, who was well known for his pride in his own fighters, continued, almost shouting over the phone: "You remember Chu Hsing-yuan! He charged before anybody else, and when he had rushed up to the middle of the hill, two American soldiers suddenly leaped out from behind a rock. He set upon them single-handed, crushing one with the butt of his gun and kicking the other down with his foot — well, how d'you like that? . . ."

I was still chatting with the First Battalion commander over the phone when the radio operator shouted mirthfully from behind my back: "Third Battalion reports that they've seized a batch of enemy canned goods!"

"Who told Third Battalion to report such a thing!" rebuked the deputy regimental commander sternly.

By daybreak we had completely occupied Heights 133 and 141. The enemy would not give in, however, but launched a counter-attack. In a dense morning mist we hastily moved our regimental command post to Height "X," to the north of Height 303, from which we could watch the movements of the enemy and direct the fighting of our own men accordingly.

Every one of us, fighter and commander alike, realized that with the enemy having cut into our line and further our having penetrated into the enemy position, it was to be a battle of endurance. Whoever held out the longer would emerge the victor.

Fighting grew more intense about ten o'clock in the morning when the enemy deployed more than a dozen planes. scores of big guns and many tanks in a frenzied aerial and artillery bombardment of our position. Soaring flames enveloped our entire line, while broken rock danced amid the smoke overhead and the white snow was turned under the black earth. However, behind the barrier

built of canned goods boxes, sleeping bags and corpses deserted by the enemy, our fighters sat in their crude defence works and beat back

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wave after wave of enemy soldiers. Those fighters who hadn't time to entrench themselves took cover in holes and continued fighting. The political instructor of the Third Battalion reported that one of their telephone operators who had been thrice buried under lumps of earth and had had several fingers broken during the enemy bombardment kept the telephone line open. He forgot his pain and connected broken wires, crawling in and out of the enemy's artillery barrage. Unable to repress his joy, he went on happily: "You know what, Comrade Commander? Our Eighth Company and the Guards Company have challenged each other to a contest. Can you imagine what their terms are? Whoever lets the enemy get the closest and then kills the most is the winner!"

"Well," I said, "note well the names and deeds of these heroes; we shall have an account of their merits after the battle."

At one o'clock that afternoon Comrade Tsui Ying, our observer, reported to me: "The enemy at Sewor-ri, about a battalion strong, have launched an attack on Heights 131 and 141 under the cover of eight tanks; the enemy troops within our encirclement are busy moving off their dead and wounded. . . ."

It was our immediate conclusion that the enemy had wavered in their will to hold out and were preparing to break away; therefore, we should attack at once. The regimental command informed Comrade Hu Kuang, the regimental chief of staff then commanding the First Battalion, of this decision.

Fighting mounted in intensity as our attack progressed. The number of enemy planes bombing and strafing our position in a mad frenzy had increased to more than twenty, while enemy artillery fired upon us in blind fury. But our fighters knew full well that the moment we drew near enough to engage the enemy their superior fire power would be futile. Through my binoculars I watched our fighters. their hand-

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grenades and guns held firm, brave the bursting fire and set themselves upon the enemy.

Soon the U.S. 19th Regiment, which had attempted to outflank us, were themselves bagged. Our Sixth and Ninth Companies charged shoulder to shoulder direct from the main front on Height 303. In the meantime our Third Company blocked the enemy's escape on one hand and checked the advance of their

reinforcements on the other. In engaging the enemy at both front and rear, they had indeed taken the brunt of the fighting upon their shoulders. Blocking the frenzied onslaught of a desperate enemy, far superior numerically, they closed the gap in the encirclement tight as a drum. After their ammunition was exhausted the men fought on with their bayonets and rifle-butts and held out until our attacking units had penetrated deep into the enemy's line, disrupting their deployment.

By sunset we had scored another great victory. Scattered in the valley and on the hilltop for 4 or 5 kilometres lay enemy corpses, weapons and vehicles in and among the numerous shell craters. . . . Napalm bombs were still ablaze.

## **THE FOURTH BLOW**

**PENG CHUNG-TAO**

*Regimental Political Commissar*

The enemy, who had taken to their heels after withering under our devastating blows near the Imjin River, gathered together what was left of their troops, some 100,000 or so men, and attempted to recoup their losses in northern Korea through a comeback.

To counter this the Chinese People's Volunteers launched their Fourth Campaign, in which our regiment had the honour of taking part.

On a gloomy evening in February 1951, when Korea was in the grip of her coldest season, we set out on our march.

We proceeded along a rugged footpath in a valley faced with steep mountains on both sides. The wind began whistling in from the north around midnight, and snow that had melted under the sun now froze into a hard and slippery plank of ice which was immediately covered with a new layer of snow making it all the more treacherous under foot. Men were tumbling out of file one after another, and everyone was well coated in ice and snow. Our pack horses, which were overdue for a shoeing, moved with much difficulty over the ice, their legs so taut that they seemed to be made of wood. The stable orderlies looked like opera actors in the role of groom, their legs wide apart, both hands gripping the reins and their bodies shifting tensely to the movements of the horses as they slipped and slid.

After nights of strenuous quick marching through mountains and rivers along a path we had blazed with our own

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hands, we were finally in a position to penetrate the depths of the enemy's rear. According to the directives of the superior command, we were to cut through the enemy line and drive on to a point between Upper and Lower Kapi-ri and Hwakok-ri to the north of Hoengsong, there to stem the retreat south of the U.S. Second and the puppet Rhee Eighth Divisions.

The landscape was swallowed up in the darkness of night and the sky was shrouded in clouds. Having driven away the enemy's patrol party, we struck straight into their rear with lightning speed.

Another four hours and we were within 50 li of our destination. Quickening our steps, we rounded the hillside and traversed the snow-covered wilderness. All of a sudden we heard the sound of voices from the pine woods to our left, then to our surprise out sauntered a bunch of men.

"They could be the enemy," suggested a staff officer.

"No, they wouldn't be moving about in such a free-and-easy way!" another staff officer answered.

The regimental commander riveted his eyes upon this bunch of men, then concluded resolutely: "We mustn't relax our attention, they are very likely an enemy patrol party."

In a matter of minutes we had wiped out or rounded up more than twenty enemy soldiers. From the captives, however, we learned that the enemy were already retreating southward from Upper and Lower Mu-ni.

It was barely daybreak when our unit arrived in the vicinity of Upper and Lower Kapi-ri. In front of us lay the highway to Hoengsong with mountains ranging in a continuous stretch along either side. To cut off the enemy's retreat we would have to occupy all the heights directly overlooking the highway.

Our fighters had been bursting with energy for days, so at the order of the regimental commander the quiet valley was drowned in the thunder of furious gunfire, tracers streaking high like red ribbons in the misty morning air. The fight

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was over in a couple of hours; the enemy had completely collapsed and were running madly for their lives all over the wilderness. While taking prisoners into custody by the drove our fighters gained control of all the hilltops along both sides of the highway.

The sun was high in the east, and in the bright sunshine the fog had gradually dispersed. Now we could clearly see the enemy hordes streaming down along the highway from the north, their trucks and tanks running into a jam on the road. We were filled with excitement, for after nights of strenuous marching we had eventually succeeded in cutting off the enemy's retreat. The tasks yet to be fulfilled were to hold the enemy there, engage them until our main force should arrive and then annihilate them completely.

Half an hour later the enemy, about two companies strong, began their attack on the three hilltops of Upper Kapi-ri. Machine-guns rattled like mad while artillery shells shrieked and exploded thunderously, throwing up a pall of smoke and dust over the hillside. The enemy were already crawling up from the foot of the hill, but our men had not yet fired a shot. The regimental commander and I watched the movements of our First and Third Companies from the command post; we were concerned about them but at the same time proud of the lads' coolness. The enemy swarmed up en masse and were drawing quite near our hilltop positions when our fighters opened fire with everything they had from above and frustrated the attackers at one stroke.

The enemy attacked six times in succession and were repulsed each time, the dead bodies of their soldiers dotting the snowy hillside. Then they launched their seventh attack. More than a battalion strong, they charged towards the position of our Third Company in massed formation. The bursts of fire went on furiously while the smoke, swirling in the wind, enveloped the whole hilltop. After prolonged fighting the hilltops were suddenly quiet. What could have happened?

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Had the enemy withdrawn from the engagement or had they seized our position? If our position there had indeed fallen to the enemy then the whole battle would have been lost to us on the eve of final victory. We looked through our binoculars again and again but were unable to make out anything through the thick pall of smoke.

A telephone call came and relieved our minds. The situation was this: At the height of the fighting the Third Company had suddenly run out of ammunition. Comrade Yu Chan-ho, the Third Platoon leader, however, had retained his composure and thought of a plan. At his order the fighters had hidden themselves and pelted the enemy, who had charged up the hill, with stones from all sides.

Finally, when the enemy were thrown into panic by the sudden avalanche of stones, Yu called to the men:

"Level your bayonets; charge!" The fighters had leaped out from their hiding places and rushed upon the enemy with bayonets gleaming. That was how those of the enemy that had got to the top of the hill met their death and how our position was rescued.

The sun was already sinking with a pale glow in the west when two large enemy planes came and circled over the battle ground. Our fighters' remark was: "This must be some enemy 'big shots' coming to cook up some way out for their confounded soldiers!" Our fighters' guess proved right; for it was learned afterwards that the planes carried none other than the commander of the puppet Rhee Eighth Division and his American advisers.

The two planes had circled overhead but twice when the enemy ground forces began mustering towards the highway. The regimental commander and I concluded there was great possibility that the enemy would attempt a breakthrough along the highway between the hills. So we immediately warned the Fourth and Seventh Companies, stationed along the highway, to close that vital bottleneck by all means.

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Just as we expected the U.S. and Syngman Rhee bandit troops all rushed onto their trucks and began rolling slowly southward under cover of their tanks, which in turn swung their turrets about and began firing like mad upon our positions along both sides of the highway. Thus protected, the enemy trucks picked up speed and dashed southward as though they had discovered a break-through. They may have had clever tricks up their sleeves but they failed to take into account the stubbornness of our fighters in the face of bombardment. When enemy trucks approached the gap between the hills our light and heavy guns opened fire; palls of dense smoke swirled around the trucks and several of them roared up in flames. One of the enemy tanks was left lying on its side in front of the trucks.

Enemy soldiers jumped off the trucks helter-skelter and began running about with their heads in their hands. Our machine-guns followed them relentlessly and mowed them down one by one in the rice fields at the side of the road.

It was already evening. Three red flares rose into the night sky signalling the beginning of the long-awaited general offensive.

Our powerful fellow units, encircling the rear flank of the enemy, formed a steel-like ring around the entire enemy force in co-ordination with the units of our

division. The fighters of our regiment also charged down from the hilltops, cutting up the enemy line and throwing it into confusion.

All along the highway between Hail-li and Hwakok-ri as well as in the valley of Upper and Lower Kapi-ri torrential gunfire thundered on. Enemy planes circled high above, dropping string after string of brilliant flares, which along with the flames fanned up from the burning vehicles by a furious wind, lit up the whole battle ground as bright as day.

By about nine o'clock that night the gunfire had abated. A regiment of the puppet Eighth Division as well as two infantry and one howitzer battalions of the U.S. Second Division plus some 280 trucks and scores of tanks had been completely

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annihilated or destroyed by our forces. By now, in spite of the prolonged strenuous march and subsequent severe fighting they had gone through, our fighters did not look a bit tired. With two or three newly seized carbines apiece slung over their shoulders, they chattered and roared with laughter as they went along.

## **AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE**

**LIU HAN-SHENG**

*Platoon Leader*

The fighting had been going on all the morning on the top of Kwamang Hill; I could not even keep track of how many times we had beaten back the enemy's attack. But we had killed such a lot of them that their corpses strewed the hillside and the earth was now stained a slimy dirty red with their blood. But still they stubbornly refused to call off their attack, even resorting to crawling over the heaps of their own dead to charge up the hill.

When we got the deputy company commander's order to withdraw, a platoon of American soldiers had just charged up. We would be putting ourselves at great disadvantage if we abandoned our position in face of the enemy's attack, so I relayed the following order: "Attention! As soon as we have beaten back this wave of the enemy, seize the opportunity and withdraw to the new position."

The enemy had been beaten back and our fighters pulled out swiftly as planned. When the last fighter was leaving and he saw that I was left on the hill alone, he said: "You leave first, Platoon Leader, I'll cover you from the rear." But I shouted sternly at him: "Nothing doing! Hurry along yourself! That's an order!" With nothing more to say the fighter withdrew.

Alone on the position, I moved a few paces ahead, fired a few shots in one direction with my carbine, then from several paces back hurled a few hand-grenades in another; thus for fully half an hour I went on fooling the enemy.

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Then seeing the comrades had advanced quite a distance, I withdrew swiftly to the second hilltop.

By that time the enemy had already seized the main Peak of Kwamang Hill and their heavy machine-guns were strafing frantically in my direction. Suddenly I felt a stabbing pain in my left leg and collapsed on the hilltop. A lot of enemy soldiers came at me ferociously, obviously intending to capture me alive as they could see I was the only one left on the hilltop, and wounded at that.

"You rascals! If you think you can bully a Chinese People's Volunteer you've got another guess coming!" I thought as I noted that the hill ended in a cliff behind me. So throwing a hand-grenade at the enemy, I suddenly jerked backwards and rolled all the way down.

When I regained consciousness I was lying in a tangle of undergrowth at the foot of the hill, sore all over. Next I heard a loud uproar intermingled with the rasping sound of arrogant laughter from the hilltop. I looked up and saw the sun's rays already slanting from the west, while the enemy were romping on the top of the hill.

It flashed across my mind that the place where I had landed was too much in the open and I was by no means safe from discovery by the enemy. I looked about me and found a small cave well concealed in the undergrowth of the hillside, and I crawled painfully towards it. The cave was just big enough for one man to squeeze in, and as soon as I had crept inside with my wounded leg left extended on some brush outside the cave, I began to bind up my wounds as best I could with bandage from my first-aid kit. The wound hurt pretty badly but I clenched my teeth and went on with the dressing. I had barely finished when something landed near me from the cliff above with a hollow metallic clang. Tense with alarm, I withdrew instantly, took out my last hand-grenade and opened the cap, waiting for the worst to happen. Fifteen minutes passed and no enemy had shown up, while from the hilltop above the noises of the enemy continued ---

now the lazy sound of digging trenches. Again something rolled down the cliff and landed with a loud clatter; then into my cave dropped a tin can. So this was what had given me such a start! At once my whole frame relaxed, but immediately there was an unbearable pain in my wounds and I fell back in the cave in a dead faint.

When I came to the second time it was very dark in the cave. I poked my head out to see the sky decked with glittering stars. I listened intently but it was quiet all around. I lay on my back in the cave with my eyes closed, thinking to myself: "It won't do to lie here for ever, I ought to get back to my unit before daylight. If I run into the enemy, then I'll just have a showdown with them!" My mind made up, I started crawling forward, supporting myself on my right elbow and dragging my wounded leg after me. I had moved ahead only a few paces when my wound gave a stab of pain, stars danced before my eyes and I again fainted away.

When I became conscious my left leg was so heavy and numb that I could not move it at all. I supported myself against a little tree beside me and managed to stand up on my right leg; then I tried extending my wounded leg but it pained unbearably at the slightest movement. Patiently I kept on with the flexing exercise until I could move it. Then I broke a branch from a tree and with that as a cane managed to get down the hillside through the scrub. I knew the enemy wouldn't dare venture out at night so I wasn't worried about them. What did worry me however was the wound in my leg which pained so severely every time I bumped into a sharp twig or rock that I broke out in a cold sweat.

After a number of pauses for breath I had almost reached the foot of the hill when I saw before me a rapid-flowing stream some two metres in width. Ordinarily I could have taken it at a leap, but now with only one good leg, it certainly presented an obstacle. The only way seemed to be to wade across it, yet I could not make up my mind to put my leg into

the water. But how could a fighter of the Chinese People's Volunteers let himself be stopped by a stream as narrow as this? No! I must ford it! I thrust my stick into the pebbles at the bottom, leaned upon it to balance myself, then moved my right leg a step forward; after I had steadied myself on my right leg, I reinserted my stick a little farther ahead. . .

The stones in the water were overgrown with slippery moss, and I had to balance carefully to keep upright. I managed to keep steady until the opposite bank was almost within reach; then an uncontrollable joy made me lose my grip on myself

and my foot slipped. The pain was terrific, but I managed to leap forward and, though I missed falling in the stream, I landed on the opposite bank flat on my face. Again the intense pain of my wound blotted out my consciousness.

When my mind had cleared a bit I opened my eyes to try to see the way ahead. But my heart sank once more as I saw, instead of a level plain, a good-sized hill looming before me.

Even with two good legs it would have been a trying job to get over that hill after not having eaten anything for a whole day and having lost so much blood! I thought I was done for, that there was no hope of returning to my beloved company and meeting all my dear chiefs and comrades. These thoughts so agitated me that I wanted to shout out all that throbbed in my heart:

"Dear Motherland, dear Party! Farewell now! You must know that your faithful son did not succumb to the enemy but fought to the last breath. . . ."

But had I fought to the last breath? Was that true? Had I indeed exerted every ounce of my strength? Could I not go another step? Was I not wrong to have had such a notion in the first place? The thought cheered me. True, it would be difficult to get over the hill in my condition, but I should be able to stand such a test; a Communist should overcome such trifling obstacles!

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I struggled to my feet and climbed up step by step, clinging to the scrub on the hillside. When exhaustion prevented me from moving any farther, I leaned against the branches and lay my head in my arms for a moment's respite before pressing on.

I kept no count of how many times I rested or how many times I fainted getting over that hill, but eventually I reached the crest and then descended onto the plains on the other side with less trouble than I expected.

There was already a pale glow in the east and the hills and trees were shrouded in the dense fog of dawn, making the wilderness a boundless expanse when I began to wonder where I was. I became the more perplexed as I tried to get my bearings; hunger and cold had made my movements more and more difficult, and I felt numb and weak all over.

By the time the sun had risen overhead I had come in sight of a highway, completely deserted. Silence reigned supreme. Where were our troops? . . . Then suddenly I heard shots ring out from my right rear telling me that the enemy had not yet reached this sector. At the same time I had found on the road the fresh hoof-prints of horses as well as fresh marks of men's rubber-soled shoes. Our men

could not be far off. Excitement drowned my pain, fatigue and hunger; and with renewed vigour I crept ahead.

The sun was already in the west when three men with rifles emerged from a little gorge between the hills. At once I rolled into the undergrowth, drew out my hand-grenade and waited. But they had already discovered me and shouted in peremptory voices:

"Who goes there? Stick 'em up!" I was mad with joy to hear them speak in Chinese and I shouted back just as positively:

"I'm a platoon leader of the Third Company, Xth Regiment, crawling back wounded. . ."

"Oh! so you Platoon Leader Liu, just the man we've been looking for! Do you know we've been in search of you

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for the last twenty-four hours?" A tall, excited comrade rushed up and gripped my hand, indicating that I should climb on his back. "Come on up, Platoon Leader Liu," he said. "We're scouts of the divisional command; the divisional commander has been waiting for you to turn up for a whole day!"

The torrent of my feeling suddenly became uncontrollable; large tears cropped from my blurry eyes and fell on the back of my comrade, the scout.

## **TAI YUNG, STRETCHER-BEARER**

**LI HUNG-LIANG**

*Staff Worker*

Our stretcher corps started out in the evening.

It was exceedingly cold in the early spring as night drew on; and here :a the valley, the icy air simply burned the skin. I pulled down the flaps of my cap to cover my ears, then stuck my hands into the sleeves of my cotton-padded jacket; yet still :he freezing wind chilled me through and through.

Presently I looked up along the column of the stretcher-bearers and noticed they had all fastened their dog-skin caps tightly over their heads as they marched ahead in the teeth of the wind. However, I was astonished to discover one of them, carrying a stretcher at the head of the column, trudging along in his shirt-sleeves. How could he stand the cold? I wondered.

Quickening my steps, I caught up with the man and recognized him as Uncle Tai Yung, an old peasant who, with the help of another fellow, was now carrying a badly-wounded soldier upon his stretcher. At a glance I realized that Tai Yung had taken off his warm overcoat to cover the wounded man, and stuck his cotton-padded jacket under the man's head for a pillow. That was why he was wearing but a thin shirt himself. Indeed, this man loved the wounded men as though they were his own children. I remembered now how he had devoted all his spare time that day, when the rest of the fellows had gone to rest, to fix up the stretcher, tightening the belt here and adding a knot there so that nothing would go wrong with it later on the road. How could

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I stand by and let him go on without even a cotton-padded jacket?

"Put this coat on right now, old chap!" I ordered, offering him my army coat. However, he pushed me away, saying:

"Comrade, please don't waste time! I feel quite warm on the march like this!"

Then when I asked him to let me carry his end of the stretcher for a while, he laughed as he replied:

"Don't let yourself be fooled by the few grey hairs on my head for I'm only forty-five, that's not old at all!" While he went on chuckling to himself, my thoughts drifted back to the story he'd told me earlier that day about how he had been elected a model worker of Chaotung County, how he had gone before the others to volunteer as a stretcher-bearer in the war to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea. He had twice distinguished himself in service in Korea. How respected and loved this elderly man was!

Ahead of us lay the Choyang River. Over its width of more than a hundred metres, blocks of ice rolled in the rapid current and there was no bridge. We had no choice but to wade across.

We took off our padded trousers in the cold wind and stepped into the river. The further we walked, the stronger the current rushed against us and the water rapidly grew deeper. By the time we had reached midstream the ice-cold water was waist-deep, and our legs were completely numb, so that we felt nothing even

when the blocks of ice struck us in the water. Besides, from time to time we clumsily stepped on the pebbles on the river-bed which were very slippery. We worried about what would happen to our wounded if any of the bearers slipped and went under the water. . . .

Suddenly someone cried out in front of us, "One of them's over!"

I rushed over immediately and saw one end of the stretcher tip towards the water as the stretcher-bearer stumbled and his head was hidden by the rolling waves. Nevertheless,

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the stretcher was still held well above water in an iron grip of two hands already purple with cold, and the wounded man was lying safely upon it. Hastily I took over the stretcher while Comrade Liu Wan-jen helped the fallen stretcher-bearer to his feet. Who was it but Uncle Tai Yung!

"Oh, it's you! Are . . . are you hurt?" I was so deeply moved that I could hardly know just what to say.

"Bah! What a clumsy fool I am!" and instead of complaining he now laid the blame upon himself. Then while spitting the water from his mouth, he reached out to touch the wounded man on his stretcher, saying, "Sorry to have shaken you up, comrade!"

I wanted to carry the stretcher across the river for him but he would have none of it. Stubborn as ever, he said, "This is my job, and I'll do it myself!" Then he took the stretcher over from my hands and once more began to cross the river, pushing against the angry current.

## **THE LAST THREE MEN**

**CHAO HSING-WANG**

*Squad Leader, Hero Second Class*

Since the previous morning the enemy who crossed the Han River had carried on an uninterrupted all-out attack against our squad's position as well as those held by our fellow units on either flank. They were trying first to seize this hilltop from us; then, by manoeuvring along the highway at the left of the hill, attack our main position. Severe fighting lasted till evening when not a patch of snow was left on the hilltop. Every bit of it had been turned under during the bombardment. There

were then only three men left in our squad, and of these one was wounded. Nevertheless the position remained in our hands.

At midnight the company commander came to the hilltop, bringing with him a small pouch of parched flour and a handful of tobacco. Young fighter Yin Yung-hua took the flour and started right in eating it; Chen Kuo-hsing, our ammunition-man, who had a minor wound on his left arm, at once rolled himself a cigarette. The company commander held my hand and said: "Second Squad Leader, you men here will have to prepare yourselves for an even more severe test; our company are all engaged in action and cannot provide you with the necessary support. You three will have to hold out till sunset; until then you must not let a single enemy pass by the highway!" Before I could answer, however, the boyish Yin had already put in: "Don't worry, Company Commander; one is enough to stop a thousand when it's Chinese People's Volunteers defending the hill!" Chen Kuo

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hsing also asked to remain on the battle front and fight till the last.

The company commander had just left when the sun began to creep up from behind the hill. Just as we had finished moving all the ammunition — carbines and hand-grenades that we had found on the enemy dead — into our trench, the enemy artillery opened fire.

In compliance with the instructions of the company commander I stationed Yin Yung-hua on the right flank and had Chen Kuo-hsing guard the centre front while I myself blocked the highway at the left of the hill with a machine-gun. Before we separated I gave half the roasted flour to young Yin, asking him as I poured it out:

"Yin Yung-hua, do you still remember what the Company Commander said to us?"

"Certainly, we must hold out until sunset!"

Young Yin ran off to his position while Chen Kuo-hsing and I crept into our shell-shelter. Barrage after barrage of artillery fire fell upon our camouflaged defence work on the hilltop. Let the enemy waste more of their munitions, thought I gladly; but Chen Kuo-hsing remained silent, his face drawn into a tight frown. He was drawing hard on his cigarette. Concerned for him I asked:

"How's your wound, Chen?"

"My wound? Oh, I wasn't thinking of my wound. What I keep thinking is that we've got to stop the enemy here and not let them get to our position no matter what; we can't let our chief down!"

While we were talking, four enemy planes emerged over-head and began circling above us; enemy shells were also kicking up the dust around our shelter. Chen and I crept out and leaped into the trench; then we saw a long double file of U.S. soldiers moving slowly through the gully towards us under the cover of artillery barrage. I was just going to tell Chen to get ready for the fight when a pall of smoke soared up from where he was entrenched followed by a thun-

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derous explosion, and both Chen Kuo-hsing and his foxhole vanished.

I rushed over but had quite a time finding him in the dense black smoke. When I finally located him, he was buried to his waist in clods of frozen earth, blood streaming crimson across his purpled face from a wound in his temple. I tossed away the clods from about him then tore a strip of cloth and some of the wadding from my padded coat and with these dressed his wound. Just then young Yin called out to me: "Watch out, Squad Leader, the enemy are coming up!" The word "enemy" threw me into instant fury, for never did my hatred of the enemy burn more keenly than when a comrade was wounded before my eyes. I laid Chen Kuo-hsing down on the ground and hastily set up my machine-gun. The enemy, who had already reached the waist of the hill, kept crawling up, their bodies bent and their heads drawn in between their shoulders, all the while cursing among themselves. Aiming at the nearest bunch of them, I poured out a whole round of machine-gun fire. They fell back, but the magazine of my machine-gun was empty. The enemy in the rear got on their feet again, scrambling upwards, while another column of them were also moving towards the hilltop by a circuitous route from the mid-front of the hill. I was just going to call to Chen Kuo-hsing to pass me a cartridge when I suddenly remembered that he had fainted from his wound. I would have to tackle them with hand-grenades! I reached for my hand-grenade pack but just then quite unexpectedly, a fully loaded cartridge was passed over to me from behind; I scooped it up and at once pressed it into the gun. This round of machine-gun bullets supported by the hand-grenades hurled by Yin Yung-hua served to beat back both files of attacking enemy, more than a hundred altogether.

Quickly I turned around to praise my faithful ammunition-man but who could have guessed that his heart had already ceased beating? There he lay dead; the hand with which but

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a minute ago he had passed the cartridge-clip to me remained outstretched, while a smile of contentment such as a fighter often feels at the fulfilment of a task lingered on his dust covered face.

I moved his body to a fairly well-concealed shelter, covered him with an overcoat, then returned to the front position. Alone in the shell-shelter, young Yin had been munching on the roasted flour while cleaning his gun. He asked me to have some flour too, but I could not bring myself to eat; instead I went on feeding bullets into the cartridge-clip left by Chen Kuo-hsing. In his boyish way Yin tried to console me. "Squad Leader, I swear I will follow the example of Comrade Chen Kuo-hsing," he said. "I'll fulfil any assignment you give me." The 19-year-old Yin Yung-hua had always been a favourite of mine but I had never felt so fond of him as at that moment.

At noon, after their attacks on both flanks of our line had been repulsed, the enemy flew into a rage and resorted to pounding our positions along the sector of Poryong-ri with frenzied massed fire, pouring an avalanche of steel over us. Four enemy tanks also joined the bombardment from the foot of the hill, their shrapnel dancing in the air amid particles of snow and clods of earth. Dense smoke soared up blotting out the sky. Our defence work had long since collapsed in the shock of the explosions and young Yin and I kept leaping from one shell-crater to another, finally diving into wrecked shelters. Strange as it may seem, we remained unscathed throughout the bombardment.

The block-headed enemy probably thought we were no longer in the land of the living for they ranged their artillery barrage longer and started crawling up again in double file, about two platoons coming in my direction while scores of enemy soldiers went for Yin Yung-hua's position. I let the enemy come up quite close then opened fire, releasing a storm of avenging bullets which at once sent them reeling down, howling and screaming.

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Firing had also started on Yin's position. He was retaliating with élan, and amid the explosions of hand-grenades I heard his shrill young voice: "Seven, eight, this one is from Chen Kuo-hsing, this one . . . and there he stopped and so did the explosion of the hand-grenades. I became suddenly tense: Could it be? . . . I couldn't bring myself to think of the worst, for there were only the two of us left on the hill. However, sudden howls from the enemy compelled me to rush over to the right corner of the position, and there I saw Yin lying face down over the side of the trench, both arms outstretched and in his right hand a grenade which he hadn't had a chance to hurl. The enemy were only some dozen metres away, giving me no time to think of anything but lifting the machine-gun and firing at them. I gave them a whole round, but they still kept on crawling up. While I was looking around anxiously for more ammunition, young Yin lifted his head suddenly as though waking from a nightmare, his eyes gleaming from a face smeared with blood. With a great effort he lifted his right hand and hurled the grenade, shouting: "And here's another one. . . ." His very last hand-grenade had hit its mark, but he

himself had collapsed in the trench.

Holding him in my arms, I called his name several times; slowly his eyes opened and from his lips words came, one by one, very weakly:

"Squad Leader, is it sunset yet?"

"It'll be sunset soon, Young Yin."

"Squad Leader, I haven't fulfilled my duty; you'll have to . . . alone. . . ." But before he could finish his head drooped and his eyes closed.. . .

I was now alone on the position. But the words of my martyred comrades-in-arms encouraged me, renewing my energy; I would accomplish the task they had had to leave undone. I dressed the scratch on my leg and took a couple of mouthfuls of the dirt-blackened snow to moisten my

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parched throat, then started to give the defence works an overhaul. I set up the machine-gun at the left end of the trench and gathered the hand-grenades up in a pile at the right, then cleaned up the centre. In a short time I had the trench ready to meet another charge of the enemy!

This time a whole enemy battalion charged en masse, crawling upward over the snow-covered hillside in two columns. The hill to the right of our position was rather steep, and the enemy column here moved up at a much slower pace than their other column, which had by now approached their dead of the preceding wave. I opened up on them with my machine-gun, and they dropped down to cover behind the corpses. I hurried over to the right corner and hurled a few hand-grenades down on them then rushed back to the left to give them another dose of machine-gun bullets. The ruthless enemy, however, now began to crawl up step by step, shamelessly using their own dead as bullet-shields. I was breathless and nearly exhausted when heavy machine-guns suddenly began to rattle from somewhere in the distance, sending the enemy topsy-turvy down the hill with bullets whizzing about their ears as they ran. I really didn't know how to express my feelings at this timely support from our fellow units on the neighbouring position. Taking advantage of this opportunity I again rushed over to the right end of the trench and hurled a few more grenades upon the enemy crawling up there; then I saw the whole column of them collapse like a wall in the explosions.

Heedless of the danger of exposing myself to the enemy, I took off my ragged cap and waved to the neighbouring position at my left flank. It was only then that I noticed that half of the sun's disc had already sunk beneath the range of mountains.

Suddenly there was a series of thunderous bangs, then a storm of shells shrieked past us from above and exploded in the gully opposite our hill. So our reinforcements had ar-

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rived! I jumped out of the foxhole, cheering at the top of my voice. At the sight of the utter confusion of the enemy down in the gully, panic-stricken by the intensity of our artillery barrage, tears of happiness started rolling down my cheeks.

## **DRUBBING THE GLOUCESTER REGIMENT**

**HO YUNG-CHING**

*Company Commander*

After an all-night fight we occupied Kumyu — a height commanding the south bank of the Imjin River — shortly before dawn. The British forces which had been entrenched on the hill fled south, when they saw us coming, without firing a single shot, abandoning their arms and equipment.

"They're slow as a tortoise at attacking but quicker than a hare at running," our men said scornfully.

From our position on the summit we could see in the first rays of light only pine- and cypress-covered slopes and thick layers of mist drifting slowly below. Far to the north the Imjin River snaked towards the east. Our troops were crossing south at all fording points. To the south the mountains were like a line of rolling waves sweeping in the direction of Seoul. Along the yellow highway twisting through the mountains the enemy was fleeing in heavy trucks, while from all sides our forces were surging south to cut them off. From Solma-ni in the southwest to Matsa Mountain in the northeast our irresistible attack was grinding forward accompanied by the boom of belching artillery, the chatter of machine-guns and the fierce cries of our men.

Our company was itching for action, the men repeatedly begging for orders to go after the enemy. Only after considerable explanation of the importance of holding Kumyu Mountain was I able to quiet them a bit. We remained there until sunset when a battalion messenger brought an order

directing us to hand the position over to the Fourth Company and go down the mountain to undertake a new task.

It was as hard going down as it had been coming up. The mountain was high, densely wooded and faced with many precipitous cliffs. One mis-step and you'd go tumbling into the chasm! We descended in single file, gripping vines and finding footholes in fissures like monkeys, our uniforms getting badly ripped in the process. It was almost dark by the time we reached the foot of the mountain.

We found the deputy commander of our regiment, Wang Chen, in the southeast sector. He ordered us to attack the village of Gungpangdong, west of Sagimok. We had information that the place was an enemy command post. After a few words of encouragement from the company political instructor, our company set out swiftly along a small road through the mountains in the direction of our target.

We passed Sagimok without incident. Before us was the Pyongyang-Seoul Highway. Once across it, we would have only a short distance to go to Gungpangdong. I ordered the First Platoon to approach from the north, the Second Platoon from the south, while I should take the Third Platoon through the middle. We shot across the highway together like arrows.

Before we had gone very far we suddenly heard the tramping of leather boots ahead, and soon a dozen or more dark forms came slouching along the road. They were in crooked formation and we could hear them talking and see the glow of their cigarettes. Apparently they were a routed band of British soldiers. I was about to give the order to slip by them quietly when they spotted us. I quickly shouted the command to fire and the Third Platoon brought its machine-gun into play. The startled enemy ran north along the road —directly into our First Platoon. There were a few shots but except for two who resisted to the end and were killed, the remaining eleven enemy soldiers neatly dropped to their knees and held their rifles above their heads in surrender.

Leaving them with the First Platoon, I led the Second and Third Platoons hurrying on to complete our mission. We drove directly into Gungpangdong and swept through the village from one end to the other. Our search revealed field telephone lines snaking all over the ground, drums of gasoline and a lot of canned food. But the command post had fled.

After a while, the First Platoon came up with their prisoners. The news that we had captured eleven British soldiers quickly spread through the company. Our men's fatigue and hunger —they had been two days and two nights without food or sleep

— melted away. Everyone crowded around to see these members of the "Royal Infantry."

Our little bugler, Wang Yi-ping, hopped up and demanded in surprise, "How come they've got two insignias on their caps?"

It was only then I noticed that their caps had insignias front and back. That meant they were the famed Gloucester Regiment of Britain. In 1801 this regiment, invading Egypt in a colonial war, had broken out of an encirclement to wrest victory from defeat. For this feat, the regiment had been decorated and was permitted to wear the insignia "Royal Infantry" on both the front and back of their caps.

But that was 150 years ago. Today in the war of aggression against Korea they could no longer exert their power, for in our era death is the only road open to the colonialists.

We couldn't relax just because we had captured a few prisoners. The enemy command post had escaped; we hadn't completed our mission. Our men asked permission to drive on. Their high spirits fitted in exactly with my own ideas. From the firing to the left and to the right of us, it was evident that brother units were attacking the enemy vigorously. Our commanding officers had often told us that the enemy feared nothing more than being surrounded and divided. Why shouldn't our company slash directly into the enemy's heart and cut off their road to retreat?

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After talking the matter over with our political instructor and the company's deputy commander, I sent a small group to escort the prisoners to the rear and report on our situation. Then I led the company forward.

It was broad daylight already. I divided the company into two detachments. Advancing in parallel lines along the mountain ridges, we knifed into enemy territory. As we crossed one large mountain, we were strafed and bombed by enemy planes. The mountain paths were thick with smoke and flame. But we didn't let that stop us.

We soon reached a ravine on the left flank of Solma-ni. The surrounding heights were ringing with the bursts of tommy-gun fire and exploding hand-grenades. One of our units was attacking a height on the right flank. On the Solma Mountain to the left of Solma-ni, another detachment of Volunteers were shouting as they charged; countless enemy troops, running from them, poured down the slope. I hastily ordered the Second Platoon to set up on a hill and stem the enemy's retreating tide. At the same time, I sent the deputy commander with the First

Platoon around to the rear of the hill to help the unit attacking the height on the right.

Just as the Second and Third Platoons had taken their positions on the hill, the enemy soldiers fleeing from Solma Mountain ran towards us through the narrow ravine. First the machine-gun operated by Chang Tse-pao of the Fourth Squad began to bark. The leader of the mortar squad hadn't had time to set his weapon on its carriage; he fired holding it in his hands. Machine-guns, rifles, tommy-guns raked the enemy from all sides. Hand-grenades rained down on them in a deluge.

The enemy was thrown into a complete panic. They milled around and ran wildly in every direction, casting aside their weapons.

"Charge! Get them alive!" cried our fighters, dashing down the slopes, skipping over enemy corpses. Crammed in the ravine, some of the enemy soldiers were paralysed with fear;

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they stood woodenly with their guns in their hands. Others ran crouching, their heads pulled in between their shoulders, firing at random. Some threw themselves face down on the ground, and lay there trembling. Some, empty-handed, rushed off madly into the hills. . . . When a squad of First Platoon, led by the acting squad leader, Liu Chung, charged into the ravine, many of the enemy gave up their arms immediately.

A lively hunt for prisoners began. Our men spread out in pursuit of the fleeing British soldiers. No one was willing to remain behind. Even our young messenger, Wang Li-fa, joined the chase. Before long he returned with two captives trailing behind him — I don't know where he got them. They were both a head taller than he, with bushy golden beards and reluctant blue eyes. It was an incredible sight how in the world had these big British soldiers surrendered to this mere boy? But here he was, proudly reporting to me about their capture. Watching his stern boyish face, my heart warmed towards the brave lad.

Our men were soon bringing back prisoners in batches. No one returned empty-handed. Even the leader of the Ninth Squad, who had an arm broken by a bullet during the charge, brought in well over a dozen captives. An even more interesting incident was this:

When the enemy soldiers fled, our men chased them up hill and down dale. Liu Kuang-tzu, a soldier of the Sixth Squad, slipped off his knapsack and, under cover of machine-gun fire from the Fourth Squad leader, plunged towards the enemy carrying hand-mines and a tommy-gun. Enemy fire ripped his trousers, but he never paused. charging directly at the enemy ranks. He took shelter behind a bluff

and brought his tommy-gun into action.

Suddenly, in the hollow beneath him, another swarm of enemy soldiers appeared. Liu hastily swung his tommy-gun around and pulled the trigger. Nothing happened. He had forgotten to put in a fresh load of ammunition. But there

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was no time for that now. He threw a hand-mine with his left hand. In the confusion of the explosion and smoke that followed, he quickly reloaded his gun, jumped down from the bluff and pointed his gun at the enemy, shouting: "Halt! Give up your weapons and live!"

Terrified, all 63 enemy soldiers dropped to their knees, raising their hands high above their heads. He looked them over as he brought them back: every man wore two insignia on his cap, one in front and one in back. A fine show of valour from the famed Gloucester Regiment!

Of course, when these British soldiers realized that they were only fighting for the interests of the American millionaires, why should they have wanted to die?

## **THE FIRST SCORE OF THE AA GUNS**

**KAO LI-HSIEN**

*Cultural Instructor*

Exhausted after marching for a whole night, our unit encamped just before dawn. How our fighters needed a good sleep! Yet we could not pause to rest for we were the anti-aircraft gun unit. It was our duty to accompany the infantry on the march than to keep an eye on the sky and protect them when they went into encampment.

We started immediately constructing the position. Our AA Artillery Battalion was very suitably positioned with the infantry and artillery units on either side of us, well concealed in the woods.

It was just after daybreak when four enemy planes came over our position. flying low and diving in and out of the ravine between the hills, almost scraping the high-tension electric cables in search of target. Now and then they would strafe blindly even though no objective was in sight. Their whole behaviour showed that these enemy pilots imagined our infantry could do nothing about them, and acted so

insolently that none of us could help being infuriated.

Each standing tense at his post keeping close vigilance on the sky, we awaited orders. Even the muzzles of our guns looked dignified, moving in perfect form.

"Objective! Enemy plane at left foreground!" the battery commander shouted out his first order, at which all the muzzles in the whole battery were at once aimed left front. Hurriedly I adjusted the air speedometer. The four enemy

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planes were diving at low altitude in the direction of our position, little expecting they would encounter anti-aircraft fire. The deafening roar of their motors drowned out all other sounds so that I had to report the results of my observation at the top of my voice:

"Altitude, eight hundred; airspeed. . . ."

However, as the enemy planes came so fast they slipped out of my view-finder every time just as I had barely located them.

"Speed?" asked the battery commander anxiously in a whisper.

" . . . . ."

"Speed, one hundred twenty!" I had finally caught them. ` 'Angle of flight course, one hundred!"

"Two rounds — fire!" the battery commander's voice had scarcely faded out when the guns of the whole battery all thundered in unison, firing their first shots at the enemy. Shells burst into puffs of white smoke around the foremost enemy plane. Obviously this came as quite a surprise to the enemy pilots; for dismayed, they immediately changed their course of flight. We followed them with concentrated massed fire which sent them tailing away in wild panic without semblance of formation.

Though we hadn't brought any down, we were all in high spirits insomuch as this was the very first encounter this infant anti-aircraft gun unit of ours had ever had with any U.S. air bandits; and the fact that the enemy planes had turned tail and fled immediately upon our opening fire showed they figured we were a force to be reckoned with.

Then a phone call came in from the battalion commander, commending us on our action but at the same time, however, warning us not to relax our vigilance but to prepare for the more severe fighting ahead as this was only the beginning.

It was just as the battalion commander had said: no more than five minutes. had elapsed when the air was filled with the deafening rumbling of motors; then swarms of enemy

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planes hurtled over us, darkening the broad expanse of sky.

This was a prodigiously unequal fight — our one battalion pitted against a formation of scores of enemy planes. Our confidence never once flagged however, but each of us remained calm at his post.

The enemy planes formed into groups of four, diving down in rapid succession the instant they came over our emplacement.

Comrades of the Seventh Battery first opened fire and our Eighth Battery followed. The enemy's attack on the Seventh Battery frustrated, their planes regrouped and turned their noses to dive again upon our battery. At this juncture however the Ninth Battery came to our aid with rapid, accurate firing and the enemy were again beaten off.

Presently the concentrated fire of all three of our batteries formed a dense barrage over the entire emplacement; a shell exploded upon the body of one of the enemy planes diving down to attack and blew it into fragments that drifted slowly to the ground. By now the enemy were getting pretty frantic. Relying on their numerical superiority, they launched a series of massive attacks simultaneously upon our entire battalion. Torrents of their machine-gun bullets fell like hailstones all around us, throwing up sputters of dust. They followed this with a few bombs, and the smoke of explosions soon engulfed our positions.

The frenzy of the enemy had however failed to deter our brave gunners; they fought on stubbornly, defying the hail of bullets. Even our wounded comrades went right on fighting. Comrade Tsao Lung-hsing, Squad Leader, had been seriously wounded in the left leg so that he was unable to stand; yet lying over the trench he went on directing his squad, shouting loudly to the men: "Keep on firing! Our own Comrades are all about us; we can't let the enemy strafe just anywhere they want!" Then another enemy plane was caught in the fire and fell, trailing a tail of fiery smoke behind it.

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The fighting lasted some six or seven hours, when the enemy planes finally gave up and fled.

This was our first air battle, in which our young AA gun unit not only successfully withstood a crucial test but also shot down two enemy planes, which went on record as our first "bag."

That evening our infantry and artillery units reappeared untouched on the highway; then we packed up our guns and rejoined the vast column of marching C. P.V.s.

## **THE INVINCIBLE ONES**

**CHAI KUO-LING**

*Squad Leader*

After the victorious conclusion of the Fifth Campaign the main force of our troops began shifting to a new position while our company stayed behind along the Kotaesan sector south of Chorwon in order to cover the movement of our main force and ward off any possible attack by the enemy.

In the afternoon of June 5, 1951 when the sky was overcast and rain was threatening, our anti-tank squad waited for two whole hours by the highway at the fore position for the enemy tanks without a single one turning up. It was getting dark and the rain was coming down in buckets. It streamed down my neck and soon I was soaked, my clothes clinging tightly to my skin and chilling me to the bone. In anxiety, we began to speculate: Would the enemy finally turn up? Fighter Hou Tien-yu suggested: "Squad Leader, if they don't come, why, then let us take the initiative and go to find them."

"Right! We'll go and hunt them out!" answered a voice. I saw that the deputy platoon leader had arrived with Ho Cheng-yu, Tsui Hsueh-tsai, Chang Chiu-chang and Meng Ching-hsiu. He squatted down with the three of us and said: "Now listen, Third Squad Leader and all of you, I've brought you a new assignment — to take the initiative and hunt down the enemy. Our regiment have already moved to the new position and are now laying another snare for them. The higher commander has ordered our company to start moving to the new position tomorrow. In order to mislead the enemy

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and keep the whereabouts of our regiment a mystery to them, it is the company commander's order that we feel our way along tonight to the hill beneath Height 535, and there engage the enemy and cover the withdrawal of the whole

company."

We stretched out into combat formation and had felt our way forward about one /i when we reached the foot of the huge hill specified by the company commander. This hill stood menacing like a wall in front of us; it would be a hard one to climb. It was only after we had rounded the hill to the left that we discovered a precipitous slope densely covered with green pine woods which looked rather dismal in the gloom of night.

Clinging to twigs, we began our climb upward, for we found the slope very slippery underfoot. Lo Chun-cheng stumbled over a stone and fell with a thud. Immediately a burst of fire came from the hilltop. We threw ourselves to the ground and lay quiet until the firing had subsided. Learning thus that there were enemy on the hilltop, we continued our climb upward gingerly, the caps on our hand-grenades open in readiness for combat. But when we had reached the hilltop. there was not an enemy soldier in sight. Bantering, we remarked to Lo Chun-cheng: "Ho, you really accomplished quite a merit with that tumble. Why look! You've scared them all away!" My guess was that the enemy had on the hill only one timid sentry, who, frightened at the thud of Lo Chuncheng's fall, had fired a few shots and skittered off to report to his headquarters; for how otherwise could the enemy have so suddenly vanished?

We accompanied the deputy platoon leader around the hilltop for a survey of the position and found the top of the hill perfectly flat. This "table-top" was more than ten metres wide and some 60 metres long. It was connected to enemy-held Height 535 by a ridge about three /i long, while its main slope directly faced the enemy. In the north and east the hill broke into precipitous cliffs which towered some 20 metres above the ground level. On the hilltop were to be seen only

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a few wrecked foxholes. However we kept stepping into heap after heap of tommy-gun cartridge cases hidden under dry brush. This had obviously been the scene of a battle but none of us knew which it could have been. In view of the strategic usefulness of the position the deputy platoon leader posted Hou Tien-yu, Lo Chun-cheng and me at the left flank of the hilltop where we could keep the highway below under control, ready to demolish any tanks that came along. Chang Chiu-chang, Meng Ching-hsiu and Tsui Hsueh-tsai were to defend the south-west sector and stem the advance of any enemy that might plunge down from Height 535; the deputy platoon leader himself and Ho Cheng-yu were to be posted at the centre of the hilltop from where they could support both flanks with their machine-gun fire.

For the past several days we had been engaged in more than a dozen major or minor clashes with the enemy. Between clashes we were either marching or

digging trenches and had very little time to rest. Therefore the comrades were by now all terribly fatigued; their blood-shot eyes simply refused to stay open. Meng Ching-hsiu dropped while digging a foxhole and was immediately asleep. When I roused him he picked up some cool wet earth from the ground and slapped it onto his forehead, chiding himself: "Who told you to go to sleep?" Exhausted as they were, our comrades understood this was no time for napping, for fighting was certain to begin on the morrow.

By four o'clock next morning the rain had stopped and the sky cleared to a sea of deep blue with a lone morning star twinkling from high above. Our defence works completed, I kept watch on the hilltop and let the others go and catch a little rest so that they might recover a bit from their accumulated physical exhaustion; for indeed even a second's rest was valuable during those days of intense fighting.

They had rested scarcely an hour when we were alerted by a heavy rumbling from the highway. Concealed behind a rock, I watched carefully. More than a dozen tanks rolled

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out from the rear of Height 535. I was just going to report this to the deputy platoon leader when I turned and saw him crouched right beside me, his eyes riveted on the tanks below; needless to say he had not gone to rest at all! I complained to him: "Why, Deputy Platoon Leader, you haven't rested a bit!" At which he only smiled and hurled the question back at me: "Well, you haven't rested yourself, now have you?" Then the smile melted from his face as he remarked sternly: "Third Squad Leader, it's going to be a tough fight today; we must not only hold out until the time set but also wipe out as many of the enemy as possible."

A couple of terrific bangs interrupted our discourse as two enemy smoke bombs fell upon the slope in front of our position; in a split second two bluish columns of smoke soared to the sky. The deputy platoon leader now warned us at the top of his voice: "Comrades, hurry and take cover; enemy artillery are opening fire." His voice had not yet faded out when a hail of enemy shells began to pound us. The artillery bombardment continued for twenty minutes, at the end of which our hilltop was completely swallowed up in the dense smoke of explosions. Then the enemy, about two platoons strong, rushed down from Height 535 and charged towards us in two columns. The deputy platoon leader said emphatically: "Without my order there is to be no firing; we'll open fire as one man the moment the enemy rush up." So there we lay beside our trench with our eyes fixed upon the enemy, waiting, waiting for the order to fire. . .

Finally the enemy began creeping upward, their bodies stooped and their mouths

giving vent to strange exclamations. Now they were only 40 metres from us, but no order had yet come from the deputy platoon leader; I was tense and filled with admiration for his composure. Suddenly the enemy stopped crawling and lifted their heads to look up, probably thinking there was no one on the hilltop after all. At this instant the deputy platoon leader shouted out: "Comrades, fire!" The enemy was immediately caught in the

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fierce cross-fire of our light machine-guns, tommy-guns and hand-grenades. As a result of this five-minute encounter dead bodies of the enemy lay like a carpet all over the hillside while the few left alive rolled back to their line in panic. Comrade Hou Tien-yu shouted for joy: "Wonderful! This is what I call a fight!"

Having learned nothing, the enemy repeated their routine. After an artillery bombardment they attacked with double strength; but in the end they only piled more corpses onto those from their first encounter and were beaten back a second time.

I took stock of my ammunition after the second encounter and discovered that all I had now, apart from less than a score of bullets, was one hand-grenade. I was almost burned up with anxiety when Ho Cheng-yu landed near us in one jump and told the deputy platoon leader: "The machine-gun is out of ammunition!" Then Lo Chun-cheng also spoke up, saying there were only three bullets left in his gun. In short, of the eight men on the hilltop, none had more than fifteen bullets on him. The situation was extremely critical as the enemy had now launched their third attack — this time more than a battalion strong, charging towards us in great array. Their tanks had also moved up directly in front of our hill and started firing at us like hell let loose. In a matter of seconds our position was again shrouded in a pall of dust and smoke.

Ours was fundamentally an anti-tank squad; our ammunition, therefore, consisted mainly of hand-mines and hand-grenades. Each of us carried a few bullets and when our deputy platoon leader and his men joined us, they had given us a share of their ammunition; all this, however, had been exhausted in the two furious encounters with the enemy, whose manpower was scores of times greater than ours.

We were now in a difficult situation; firstly, because the enemy had surrounded us on three sides of the hill with their vast numbers, leaving only the precipitous slope at the north

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open. Any attempt to break through their ring of attack would be futile. Secondly,

all the weapons we had were six tommy-guns plus a rifle, which would be useless in hand-to-hand fighting. The comrades looked pretty tense. At this juncture, I saw the deputy platoon leader take note of the position of the sun in the sky, then turn his head towards our company's rear position, murmuring the while to himself: "It's about time; we've already fulfilled our duty!" This took a load off my mind. The face of the deputy platoon leader, however, was awfully pale; he turned his eyes on us then looked around, scanning the three sides of the hill where the enemy were scurrying upward. Suddenly, in an agitated voice he said to us:

"Comrades, we fighters of the Meritorious Platoon, Tiger Company, of the Steel Battalion are now encircled by the enemy after having fulfilled our duty; but we will never allow ourselves to smirch the glory of our people and our heroic company. We will show the enemy the staunchness of the Chinese people and that the Chinese People's Volunteers are invincible to their last breath!" "Comrades, blast the enemy with your last bullet! Then we'll hurl ourselves over the cliff!"

We all realized that in the circumstances there was no alternative and we answered in high spirits: "Right! We'd rather die than succumb to the enemy!"

The deputy platoon leader rushed over and handed me a hand-mine, then ordered solemnly:

"Comrade Chai Kuo-ling, you are a member of the Communist Party. Now I want you, along with Ho Tien-yu and Lo Chun-cheng, to cover us from behind: you three will be the last to leap over the cliff!" With all my strength I gripped his hand, saying: "Comrade Deputy Platoon Leader, I guarantee that I will fulfil the task given me by the Party!" The enemy were already crawling up to the hilltop from all sides except the cliff on the north, yelling madly as they charged. Then our deputy platoon leader extricated himself

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from the grip I had on his hand, got to his feet and hurled his last hand-mine. He dashed towards the cliff, leading the other comrades. Ho Cheng-yu, member of the Communist Party, was the first to leap. Claspng the machine-gun in his arms, he shouted in a voice wracked with emotion: "For the glory of the motherland, Comrades, leap — !" Another instant and he had jumped down the 16-metre precipice, the echo of his heroic call resounding in the valley.

I had no sorrow: what I had was a burning hatred for the enemy. With a hand-grenade and half a round of tommy-gun fire, I swept down the foremost row of approaching enemy; but there were such a lot of them that for the few who fell at the front more swarmed up from the rear. They were now closing in step by step, pair upon pair of blue eyes riveted on me. A thought suddenly flashed across my

mind: "Damn the rascals! So they want to seize me alive, eh!" In one scoop I grabbed the hand-mine the deputy platoon leader had given me and flung it upon them. It exploded with a loud bang in the midst of the enemy, felling quite a number of them. Lo Chun-cheng thrust an enemy soldier who was grappling with Ho Tien-yu off the hill with his bayonet. In a loud voice I shouted: "Jump!" And all at once the three of us turned around and leaped from the cliff. There was a sudden buzz in my head and then I felt nothing. . . .

When I regained consciousness my body ached all over as though pricked by a thousand needles. Opening my eyes. I saw clusters of pine twigs between me and the open sky. I felt under me and found only emptiness beneath. Then I found that I had fallen upon the branches of an old pine tree and hung suspended some four or five metres off the ground. By listening carefully. I could make out the clang . . . clang of pickaxes upon the rocks of the hilltop, and I hastily felt for my gun. I was satisfied to find it still slung at my back for I remembered there were three bullets left in it.

There I was perched on the branch waiting for dusk to Cover me. Occasionally the enemy would fire a few wild

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shots into the valley from upon the hilltop. But my mind was concerned all the while for the deputy platoon leader, for Ho Tien-yu, Lo Chun-cheng and the rest of the comrades. Were they dead or was there a chance they were still alive? I hoped they had also fallen upon some tree; for as long as we lived to return we would have our chance of revenge.

The moon peeped through the foliage and caught me in its beam. rousing me from my thoughts with a start. "Why! It must have been dark for quite some time; I must get out of this tree!" I listened intently; then finding it perfectly still all around I slowly alighted from the tree, clinging to the branches. There was such an acute pain in my back when I landed on the ground that I lay there on my stomach, unable to rise. I looked about me, wondering that there was not a trace or sound of anyone around. Then on all fours I went for a look around the vicinity, but all I could find were signs of trampling at two different places in the undergrowth and a blood stain on a white rock. Ho Tien-yu and Lo Chuncheng must be alive! They had already left and rejoined the company! That seemed the logical conclusion. Neither must I loiter here any longer. I must get back to my company and avenge my comrades, even if I had to crawl all the way! Supported by this strong determination, I started creeping homeward on all fours, pausing every few moments for breath. Bypassing the enemy's position and crossing the highway, I finally crawled back to out line before dawn.

My return was a joyful surprise to my comrades, for they had all thought I was dead. They clustered around me telling me happily how during the night Lo Chun-cheng and Ho Tien-yu had been discovered making their way home and had been carried back to the company by men of the search party sent out specially to look for us.

I was overjoyed to hear that they were still alive. Beyond that however the dream I had cherished in the old pine tree was shattered when they told me that the deputy platoon leader and the rest of the comrades had died gloriously. I

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quickly averted my eyes to hide the tears that were welling in them. Our political instructor, however, penetrated the depths of my feeling when he placed his hand over mine and said to me:

"Comrade Chai Kuo-ling, when we have lost our dearest comrades-in-arms we are bound to feel sad; yet at the same time we must realize what their sacrifice has gained for us. Our entire company shall learn from the invincible spirit you comrades have displayed!"

## **PART TWO**

## WOUNDED FIGHTERS

### TSUI CHAO-YU

*Medical Orderly, Meritorious Fighter First Class*

I sometimes wonder how we lived through those six days and nights up on Mount Kyo-am — but I still have a pretty clear picture of how we worked to bring in the wounded on the battlefield on October 19. That day, I had just come back from the front and was sorting out the medical supplies, when the company commander sent me to help the Seventh Company save their wounded.

I slung a first-aid kit over my shoulder and ran out of the command post. The first thing I saw on the field where the Seventh Company had been fighting was a badly wounded messenger lying in a bomb crater. I swiftly bound up his wound, but as I was about to lift him onto my back, he stubbornly pushed my hand away, saying:

"Comrade! Don't bother about me; let me crawl down by myself! Hurry to the front and move comrades who are wounded worse than I am! . . ." He licked his dry, cracked lips and spoke in so weak a voice I could barely hear him, while he held his broken right arm with his left hand. On his leg, the blood seeped through the bandage. His face was deathly pale, then livid; I knew he was suffering agonies.

Bending down, I embraced him lightly, longing very much to share his pain. I grasped his hand tightly, and implored him: "Comrade, you must listen to me. First I'll carry you down, then I'll come back for the others." Having succeeded in talking him into it, I carried him on my back to the first

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aid station, then dashed off again towards the battle ground. I had just run up the ridge of a hill, when the enemy's gunfire began; bombs exploded all around me, dust and smoke hid the road. Crawling, then running, I soon made my way back to the positions of the Seventh Company!

In front of a shell-proof shelter, I stopped short at the sound of faint groans. With great pains I cleared away some of the broken wood and fallen dirt from the entrance to the shelter and crawled in, to find several seriously wounded men

lying dazed on the ground, with several uncapped hand-grenades beside them. I called them softly several times. One of them suddenly opened his eyes and reached for a grenade, but on seeing it was one of his own people, a warm smile spread over his pale face.

While bandaging their wounds, I told them how the fighting was going. Several of the wounded who could walk started out, supporting each other. But two fighters who were seriously wounded remained in the shelter, one with an abdominal wound, the other with both legs broken. Just then the firing started up again, as the troops prepared to shift their position. I quickly gathered up the drugs, not knowing which of the wounded to carry first. Both were in a critical condition.

As I hesitated, the soldier with the broken legs called to me softly, "Comrade, hurry! He's badly hurt. Hurry up and carry him away! I can manage myself. . . ." Saying this, he started crawling towards the mouth of the shelter. As I saw him dragging his legs with such difficulty, I felt very bad about it. I rushed over to persuade him to lie down against the wall.

"Good comrade, wait for a while; I'll take him first, then I'll come back for you, don't you fret." I wanted to add a few words of explanation, but to a comrade like this, what could I possibly add? More than anyone else, he understood the true meaning of comradeship. Under whatever difficult and trying circumstances, the thoughts of these men turned

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first to their, comrades, not to themselves. They were truly people of noble character!

Lifting the other soldier onto my back, I quickly crawled out of the shelter. The firing outside became even fiercer. I turned to the one who was left there and said: "Now mind. I'll be back for you, come rain or snow!" Whether my assurance brought him any comfort or not. I couldn't tell.

Four enemy planes were strafing and bombing the hillside. and the enemy artillery was pounding as fiercely as ever. The road had long since been blocked by heaps of rock and sand, and underfoot it was a mess of shell craters. With the wounded soldier on my back, I ran awkwardly over the uneven ground. Strangely enough, although shrapnel whistled past my ears and the smoke often blinded me, I felt no sense of personal danger. My thoughts dwelt on the wounded soldier on my back and the other in the shelter. "Faster! Faster!" I said to myself, for each minute of delay meant added danger for the wounded. The sooner I arrived at the first-aid station, the greater would be the chance of rescuing them.

I quickly cut through the fire and smoke. Although I tried to protect the wounded

man as much as I could, it must have been pretty rough going for him, for we had to pass through flames, and bombs were falling alongside us. There was not a single place on the road free from shelling.

When I returned to the field where the Seventh Company had put up such a good fight, the soldier with the broken legs had already crawled some way out of the shelter. I gasped with astonishment, for I knew how much will-power it takes for a person with broken legs to crawl even a foot!

As I ran to him I shouted: "Comrade, don't move! I'm coming to carry you!" Raising his head, he quickly crawled forward another few inches and, grasping my arm, exclaimed, "You've come back!" Tears fell onto his padded jacket, and to tell the truth, I felt like weeping myself.

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I lifted him gently onto my shoulders, and as I did, I felt the warmth of comradeship flow through me, as though we were long-separated comrades-in-arms now brought together again.

Back at the first-aid station, the battalion commander praised me repeatedly, to my extreme embarrassment. Actually, those who should be praised were the wounded who, in such difficult circumstances, still thought not of themselves but of their comrades.

## **THE TENTH ENCOUNTER**

**LI HUNG-CHIN**

*Deputy Squad Leader*

After repulsing the enemy's ninth counter-attack our situation became more and more tense. Only Yang Kwang-lu and I remained on our position, and the enemy had cut us off from our company headquarters. Furthermore, our ammunition had dwindled till only one hand-mine was left on the trench embankment and a single clip of bullets in each tommy-gun.

What was to be done? Were we to retreat to a position in the rear? But the route had been cut; and besides, to retreat would mean giving up the position to the enemy. "A Communist should be able to stand the test no matter how dire the situation. Steadfast and unflinching, he should be ready to lay down his life for the motherland and Party if necessary." These words from our political instructor's talks with us flashed into my mind, filling my whole being with enthusiasm. The

thought of being admitted to the Party, of becoming a glorious Communist, had been with me day and night. Now the chance of proving myself had come. I must fight like a Communist!

After a moment's consideration I commanded Yang Kwanglu to hold his ground on the left flank so as to prevent the enemy from getting round to our rear. I was to block the oncoming enemy. We decided to search for ammunition on the enemy corpses, using their own ammunition to kill them and thus to hold our post.

With the one hand-mine thrust in my belt and my gun in my left hand, I crawled noiselessly out of the trench. The

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hill slope was littered with enemy corpses, their helmets glistening in the moonlight. The mountain breeze brought with it the stench of dead bodies — so nauseating that it simply overpowered me. I really didn't relish the idea of crawling back and forth among the stinking corpses, but the thought of the badly needed ammunition gave me no choice but to endure it and search the bodies one by one.

Suddenly the machine-guns along the entire enemy front fired simultaneously on our position. Volleys of shells from their cannons followed, sending showers of sparks flashing all around me. Even some of the enemy corpses on the hill slope were hit and thrown dancing in the air. I rolled into a shell hole, thinking: "Too bad! Still no ammunition and the enemy have already come up. How am I to deal with them!" Then taking the hand-mine in my hand, I pressed my face against the ground and listened to the enemy's bombardment, for I must determine whether the range of enemy gunfire had lengthened. If their range was extended to fall on our rear, it would mean their infantry charge was coming, and in that case I must prepare myself for a counter-blow. Shells continued blasting the earth around me. The dust, sand, and dismembered corpses flying in the air and crashing to the ground again nearly buried me. I shook the debris off my head but had no time to get rid of the rubble covering my body. Luckily it did not constitute too heavy a burden; it might even serve as camouflage!

Soon the enemy gunfire penetrated deeper into our position and I heard savage yells from in front of me. Looking up, I saw in the dim light hordes of the enemy stampeding up in droves.

I waited till they came to close quarters, then I suddenly hurled the last mine at them and rushed forward under cover of the smoke. They were dumbfounded, for they never expected a mine to come flying from so far in front of our position. Taken off guard, they turned and fled before me as I rushed into them. I spotted an enemy soldier with a

machine-gun and made a dash for him, but he threw the weapon onto the ground and, turning about, rolled and tumbled down the slope.

When I took over the machine-gun my heart was filled with inexpressible joy. "Now there's no escape for you rogues!" I thought. Then I pulled the trigger, but nothing happened. I opened the cartridge-clip and, to my great disappointment, found not a single bullet in it. I looked further and found peeping out from under a corpse close by a large cartridge bag full of machine-gun clips — the corpse having apparently been a loader for their machine-gunners. Now my quest for ammunition was rewarded! I crouched down quickly to loosen the cartridge belt when lo and behold! the "corpse" came alive, turned over, clutched me tightly with its big, beefy arms and took a nip at my ear with its teeth! I tried several times to jerk free of him but failed. Gathering my wits about me, I drew my foot back and gave him a sound kick in the stomach. He fell back with a groan. I seized the chance to straddle him and quickly throttled him with my hands. He tried hard to raise the alarm but had no breath to make a sound. Just then another enemy soldier rose from the ground and began looking around as if for some weapon to use against me. My heart leaped into my throat as I thought: "Without waiting for me to finish this one off, another rises up. What a predicament!" I took a deep breath, then using all my strength, clutched my adversary's throat, freed my other hand and landed him a telling blow on the head with it. One more blow with my fist and he lay doubled up on the ground. I quickly got my gun and, pressing the muzzle to his temple, shot him through the head.

Wheeling around I saw my second adversary rushing at me with a bayonet gleaming from an automatic rifle. I swerved to the left and he missed me; then before he could turn back I felled him with one shot.

By this time enemy soldiers who had fled were charging back. I hastened to gather the cartridge belts and grenades

from the enemy corpses and, with the machine-gun under my arm, rushed back shouting: "Yang Kwang-lu, hurry up and load the shots for me!"

We set up the machine-gun on the rim of a battered earthwork and I started strafing the enemy, by now only twenty metres away, as hard as I could, shouting as I did so:

"Come on over, you robbers, come and get a taste of your own bullets!"

Thus the enemy's tenth counter-attack was repulsed. Though there were only two fighters on our side, Position 520 on the Kumsong front remained safe in our hands throughout.

## HAMMERS CLANG INSIDE THE MOUNTAIN

Night and day the clang of hammers on rock and the shouts of soldiers at work could be heard on Height 258.3, northwest of Chorwon. The fighters were hard at work digging a tunnel.

One day, when I went to Cave No. 2 to see the progress made, I heard an indistinct pounding. Pressing close to the rock wall, I listened carefully, then called to the young fellows who were hammering, "Come quickly! Listen! What's that noise?"

Everyone dashed over, listened, and then shouted joyfully, "Ah, hammers! hammers! The tunnel will soon be through!"

I ran to Cave No. 3 on the opposite side. I had just entered when Wang Fu-sheng rushed to meet me, saying in excitement, "Company Commander, good news! We can hear the sound of hammers in Cave No. 2!" The men in the tunnel were all jumping and dancing about, and the sound of cheering merged with the clang of the hammers. I felt very elated. We had really gone through something these last three weeks! At first, we did not have even a simple spirit-level; we drove a stick into the top of the mountain, from which three strings of the same length were drawn to the mouths of three caves. In this way we measured distance and position.

The rock was hard. Each stroke of the pick simply raised a cloud of bluish dust and made only a tiny little hole. The further in we dug, the harder the rock seemed to be. New difficulties quickly cropped up. Even in broad daylight, the interior of the tunnels was pitch-black; the soldiers could neither see to use their picks nor carry the dirt away. For light, we burned rubber-coated electric wires captured from

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the enemy. Thick smoke and the stench of burning rubber choked everyone, set our throats on fire and brought tears to our eyes, but no one stopped working. Some fell to the ground, overcome by the smoke, but the next moment they

struggled to their feet and once again began to swing their picks. "By putting up with a bit of hardship we'll bring victory a bit closer!" they said.

And now when the tunnel was nearing completion, the men's spirits rose even higher as the clang of picks resounded throughout the caves. At the end of the day, each tunnel was full of soldiers begging to work overtime. I could find no command to dampen the fervour of these fighters who worked so selflessly. I could but grant them their request.

"Good! Let's get on with it!" they shouted loudly, as the hammers continued clanging on the drills and the wheelbarrows were rushed back and forth, carrying away barrow after barrow of dirt from the tunnel.

A few days later, while I was in Cave No. 2, the sound of the hammering from the opposite side seemed to be receding. I ordered them to stop hammering, and shift the location of blasting to the slab at the lower left corner.

Third Squad Leader Sun Shao-shun led his men in starting to work again. The hammers kept pounding at the steel drills, sparks splashed from the stone slab. Faces and bodies of all soldiers were dripping with sweat, but no one bothered to wipe it away. All swung their hammers with a right good will, clanging and banging away, until the six holes for explosives had been drilled.

Not long afterwards, the roar of explosions thundered through the air, the earth shook, and dense black smoke came pouring from the mouth of the tunnel, bringing with it an orange-coloured gas. As though hearing the bugle for a charge, the soldiers poured into the smoke-filled tunnel.

The smoke gradually thinned. The ground was strewn with gravel and dirt; but in the depths of the tunnel a hole the size of a fist could be seen, through which dim yellow

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lamplight glowed from the other side. "It's through! It's through!" the soldiers shouted as they danced about.

**Yu Chin-sheng**  
*Company Commander*

Hearing the hammering from the opposite side coming nearer and nearer, we all worked with even more enthusiasm.

The air set in motion by the flying picks and hammers caused the oil lamps hanging from the roof of the cave to flicker. Sweat mixed with the rock-dust and dirt. Our eyes stung. I had just wiped the sweat from my face, but as it poured from my body it made my clothes wet as if I had just come out of water. Soon we took off our shirts to speed up the digging. The steam rising from our bodies and the oily smoke from the lamp filled the tunnel with fog.

Just then the platoon leader came over with a pack of cigarettes. "Comrades, have a smoke and rest for a while, then go back to work!"

"We're not tired," I answered, swinging the pick. "We all come from peasant families; we've plenty of energy!"

"Yes!" everyone shouted. "We won't stop till we've finished our work! We won't rest till the tunnel is through!"

As we kept on digging and digging, the sound of the picks digging into the earth on the other side came nearer and nearer. Suddenly my pick went in with a bang, and opened a hole the size of a bowl.

"It's through! It's through!- We all crowded around to shake the hands reaching through the hole from the other side, as cheers and shouts reverberated through the tunnel.

"Hey, hurry and make the hole a little bigger!" those on the other side called.

"All right! Let's get at it!" The hole became larger and larger as picks and hammers flew.

In the twinkling of an eye, shouting loudly, the men in Cave No. 3 crowded into our side through the opening. Like long-

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parted dear ones suddenly reunited, we danced and embraced; indeed, no words could express our happiness. Gusts of cool wind blew through the tunnel, dispelling the smoke and fog. The dim oil lamp suddenly brightened, and shone on our faces as it swung in the breeze. We looked at one another; and our coal-black faces and bloodshot red eyes sent us all into gales of laughter.

**Wang Pei-hsiang**  
*Squad Leader.*

# FIVE DAYS AND NIGHTS UNDERGROUND

**KAO YUN-HO**

*Squad Leader, Hero Second Class*

Height 190.8, which we were defending, was the foremost position of our frontline. We had only a shallow ditch as buffer between us and the enemy.

So long as we held this hillock all enemy frontline movements on Hills 334 and 418 were well under our surveillance. Therefore the enemy relentlessly dropped bombs on us from their planes and pounded us with their heavy artillery, showing their determination to drive us away. Some twenty days before, the enemy had launched two rather strong attacks on our position but had been repulsed both times with more than 130 casualties in all. But we did not lull ourselves into thinking that because the enemy had met with these reverses they would be reconciled to their fate. They would certainly launch further attacks on an even more pretentious scale.

On the morning of June 12 the entire hill area was veiled in dense mist. Then shortly after sunrise the sky resounded with the roar of planes. I crawled to the mouth of our tunnel and looked out but could see nothing at all in the heavy mist. T told the sentry on duty to keep careful tabs on the enemy and report anything he saw. Hardly had the words left my lips when bombs started exploding all over our position and black smoke and flame enveloped us. More than ten enemy planes swooped down, bombing and strafing in the "pea soup" fog as if on familiar ground. Our anti-aircraft guns immediately went into action, sending balls of fire straight up into the sky.

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Covered by eight tanks, wave after wave of enemy infantry rushed towards our hilltop from all directions. Another big battle had begun.

Supported by our artillery we threw back several enemy charges with our fire. But the higher the enemy corpses piled, the thicker they poured in their reinforcements and the tighter our situation became.

The tunnel entrance on the hilltop the Fifth Squad was defending collapsed after repeated bombing by the enemy planes. Left without their earthwork to protect them, most of the men in the squad lost their lives. The few who remained began

moving down to the waist of the hill which we of the Sixth Squad were defending. Soon the enemy artillery had levelled our trenches, reducing them to no more than slopes, and our communication line with the main position of our platoon was cut.

Fierce fighting was still going on at twelve noon.

Suddenly someone raised the alarm: "The enemy have reached our hilltop!" Sure enough, they were already swarming like a hive of bees into our position. Several hand-grenades flew over our heads into our communication trench. Since most of the Fifth Squad had laid down their lives, the enemy was pressing down on us from above, while the force they threw into the battle increased from one battalion to two, threatening us from all directions.

In these circumstances, to encounter the enemy in the open would be very disadvantageous to us. We would have to take cover in the tunnel and kill the enemy from there. I gave the order for the whole squad to go underground.

I kept watch outside while Deputy Squad Leader Jui Chaoshou led the squad into the tunnel. But no sooner were we inside than the enemy rushed to the entrance. There was a violent concussion and earth came sifting down from the tunnel roof — the enemy had dynamited half the tunnel entrance away on the right.

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Deputy Squad Leader Jui Chao-show and I divided up the work. Each of us was to head a small group to guard the two tunnel entrances. I told him we must never allow the enemy to come near us again.

Outside there was a cacophony of enemy shouts as they kept firing and throwing grenades at us. We were also returning fire at any enemy who tried to approach us.

While I stood guard at the entrance I was at the same time turning over in my mind how to keep up our fight from underground. So long as the tunnel remained in our hands the enemy could have no peace and we would then be able to play an important role when the time came for our main force to launch a counter-attack.

From time to time the enemy threw hand-grenades into the tunnel. We filled up empty hand-grenade boxes with earth for throwing up a breastwork at a bend inside, preparing us for a long drawn-out fight.

About ten o'clock that night welcome news came to cheer us. Comrade Li Han-yu, Third Company Commander, had broken through the tight enemy blockade and

arrived with a squad of men and a walkie-talkie set to join us. He had come with instructions to direct our tunnel battle.

What could have given us greater encouragement? Let the enemy gunfire roar overhead! We would pay no more attention to it! We shook hands cordially all around as if we were holding a celebration in the tunnel. Smiles lit up the faces of even our seriously wounded comrades. Commander Li had arrived and had brought with him the solicitude of our leaders as well as their instructions! Our assurance of victory was further strengthened.

I reported our situation in detail to Commander Li and he checked on the number of our fighters and the ammunition. After asking many questions he redistributed our duties and reorganized our fighting force. The squad of seven whom he

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had brought with him were to share with our Sixth Squad the defence duties at either tunnel entrance.

At daybreak Deputy Squad Leader Jui Chao-shou and I, each leading a small column of men, groped our way across the frontline to a trench where the enemy were still asleep. We rained hand-grenades down on them, killing quite a few. Our attack indeed caught them by surprise, for it was beyond their imagination that under the circumstances we would be so bold as to take the offensive.

But it followed as night follows day that as we planned our strategy against the enemy, they also plotted against us.

Around noon there were two sudden explosions of medium intensity at the entrance of the tunnel. The shells gave off a yellow smoke which billowed into the tunnel, irritating our throats so that we couldn't stop coughing. Tears flowed from our eyes even after we had closed them. These were the enemy's gas bombs! I ordered the men to put on their gas masks immediately. Hu Kuo-ching, our medical orderly, hastily added, "Those of you who have no masks quickly cover your noses and mouths with towels soaked in urine."

The yellow smoke kept pouring into our tunnel till its noxious fumes had poisoned Comrade Lu Chang-ming of the bazooka squad to the point where he fainted away.

I quickly directed my comrades to follow me in fanning the fumes out as fast as we could. The yellow smoke gradually dispersed and Lu Chang-ming regained consciousness. In resorting to this inhuman atrocity, the enemy had done us no harm,

Our Company Commander Li was always calm and collected. We never saw him when he was not pondering some problem, weighing and deliberating, for he was

responsible for the welfare of all of us, and the burden on his shoulders was a heavy one. He discovered that on going underground some of the men had adopted the attitude of fighting at all risks. Now with the deterioration in our situation, this sacrificial attitude further developed. It threatened our whole

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fighting effort and must be checked immediately. Therefore, that very afternoon a Party meeting was called upon Company Commander Li's suggestion, with members of the Youth League and non-Party fighters all taking part.

A temporary Party branch was organized with Company Commander Li as secretary. He first explained to us the importance of standing our ground in the tunnel; then he criticized the view of fighting at all risks as erroneous. Finally, the Party branch called upon us to overcome all difficulties, to defeat the enemy and to hold out until the moment of final victory. All the men, both Party and non-Party, spoke at the meeting, expressing their determination to hold out. Even our wounded pledged to keep on fighting and to struggle together with us till final victory.

Our Party! How she warmed the hearts of each one of us and brought us together in close unity! She also filled us with inexhaustible energy. The atmosphere in the tunnel at once became animated as it had never been before.

Finally, Company Commander Li explained what our superiors expected of us and gave us their instructions: We should not remain passive in the face of the enemy's siege and do nothing but accept his blows; we must ourselves strike out against the enemy, launching attacks whenever opportunity arose; we must stand our ground in the tunnel with full confidence, waiting till we should take part in the big counter-offensive by our main force. Only in this way could we hope to annihilate the enemy and let tunnel warfare play its most active role.

That night the enemy again tried to destroy our tunnel. so we organized an onslaught to shatter their scheme.

Again we divided ourselves into two groups and crawled noiselessly across their lines. I opened fire, and before the enemy knew what was up, Jui Chao-shou had rushed out with Chang Cheng-en, Chang Pao-fu and others and fired a volley of shots with tommy-guns and hand-grenades, killing six or seven of them. Then our pronged force proceeded

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along the communication trench hurling hand-grenades, which threw the enemy into utter confusion. The devils on the ridge were yelling and screaming, not

knowing north from south nor east from west. They dived into the communication trench, the first place they could find to hide in. There we attacked them at will with our tommy-guns, hand-mines and hand-grenades. Then, as there was still an enemy machine-gun emplacement on the hilltop, we could not stay there any longer and so returned to our tunnel with considerable booty.

We had captured intact two 60 mm. mortars and unbroken boxes of shells and canned food besides many small weapons. We found out that the enemy had been constructing earthworks around our tunnel entrance for mounting guns to fire on Height 205. But this time their dream had been shattered by our timely onslaught.

Still the road to victory was hard and not without obstacles. Nor was our next difficulty an easy one to overcome we ran out of drinking water.

Our water supply in the tunnel had never been abundant. Later our numbers had increased; and besides, it was summer and we were tormented by thirst. So though we had been nursing our supplies of drinking water from the very beginning, we had now really reached the bottom of the barrel.

On the 14th, our third day underground, the dearth of drinking water became acute. We were sitting around bare-armed, our backs against the damp earth wall, our hand-grenades before us. Some could no longer endure their thirst and began eating tooth paste, while some had begun drinking urine when no one was looking. Still we burned with thirst! Thirst! Thirst!

I had been to the water barrel several times, peering into it and feeling down it, but there was scarcely enough water left to, wet my hand. I turned the barrel upside down and drained what there was into a small bowl. Only after standing

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a long time did the muddy precipitate settle somewhat, leaving half a bowl of turbid water.

I took the half bowl to Company Commander Li and asked him to ease his throat a bit with it. But he waved it away with his hand, asking me to give it to the wounded. The wounded would not drink it either, each of them scarcely wetting his lips and immediately passing it on to the next. The half bowl of turbid water was passed around for quite a while and still it remained a half bowl of turbid water. It was only at the order of the company commander that that half bowl was finally drunk down, mouthful by mouthful by the wounded. As the water soothed their parched throats, I felt my own thirst eased, for such was our unity that we had become like one body, like one man.

That afternoon I heard someone cry out suddenly, "Squad Leader! Squad Leader!" Something had happened. I dashed desperately towards the tunnel entrance with

my tommy-gun. But the comrades at the entrance were leaning towards the inside and I could not see what was the matter. I was ready to burst with frustration. I had to go out and see for myself what was there, no matter what!

Suddenly I felt an unbearable heat that left me gasping. Then I discovered that the timber supporting the tunnel entrance was on fire, the flames soaring till they scorched the hair and eyebrows of some of the fighters.

The wind kept fanning the flames inwards and for a moment we could think of no way to cope with them but simply stood and stared. Some of the comrades took up their guns and asked permission from the company commander to run out and engage the enemy.

"No rushing out!" I heard our company commander shout, his voice very severe. I followed up with: "Come back in! Come back in!" The company commander and I went to the two entrances of the tunnel and, in concerted action, both blocked the entrances with our bodies. Just then Deputy Squad Leader Jui Chao-shou squeezed his way through the crowd

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and, swinging with all his might, heaved a hand-mine into the fire.

The blast of air and the flying earth and mud following the explosion extinguished the flames. I felt so happy I threw in a couple of hand-grenades for good measure. Thus we had again crushed a most atrocious plot of the enemy.

After we had put out the last remaining flames with mud and earth we repaired the damage to our earthwork; only then did we breathe easily.

Several shells fell in succession at our tunnel entrance and we knew this was in response to the request we had made to our higher command by walkie-talkie to cover our position with gunfire. Shells continued dropping near the tunnel entrance at five-minute intervals and the enemy dared not try any more of his tricks in that area.

At dusk that day we heard the voice of our divisional commander over the walkie-talkie. He expressed to our company commander the concern of the Divisional Party Committee and relayed to us their message of encouragement. He said we should hold out in our tunnel and wait for the general counteroffensive by our main force.

Our leaders' instructions and encouragement inspired and stimulated us and the whole tunnel resounded with our excited cheers. We felt now that our small dugout was not isolated from the outside but was closely linked with every

position along the entire front. We no longer felt cut off from the others, for it seemed that our divisional commander was right there watching over us affectionately.

After that we repulsed several More enemy attacks. Four days and four nights had passed since we took up our tunnel quarters, and in all that time our eyelids had scarcely closed. Thirst especially plagued us the last two or three days when we had not a mouthful of water. Yet even the tortures of fatigue and thirst could not dampen our optimistic enthusiasm. Our confidence in victory made us forget all manner of hardship.

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Finally, the long-awaited day came. It was dawn of the 16th!

The company commander organized us into a fighting force to join in the general counter-offensive in co-ordination with our main force. After cleaning our weapons and ammunition and putting them in order we spruced ourselves up, wiping the smears of mud from our faces and arranging our clothes and tying and retying our shoe laces. Trim and neat, we looked at each other with knowing smiles.

Daylight gradually faded as we waited in anxious expectation. Our excitement knew no bounds. Though I knew the hour of our counter-attack was still far off I kept looking out of the tunnel entrance as if the signal for our counter-attack was to be fired at once.

At last the eagerly-awaited moment came. We were soon to exact retribution from the enemy for the sum of their atrocities against us during those five days and nights in the tunnel.

The hour arrived. Thousands of shells and rockets flew over our heads in a veritable shower. The roar was deafening; fires blazed on all sides, and soon Height 190.8 was enveloped in thick smoke and leaping flames.

Following the end of the cannon fire, the rapid staccato of rifles and machine-guns resounded through the valleys and in the fields. We gripped our rifles tightly in excitement. As the reports drew nearer it became more and more difficult for us to keep our places till finally, at the company commander's vigorous "Charge! . . ." We leaped upon the enemy, who had by that time already been worn down to a bedraggled and crest-fallen condition. Our hand-grenades and tommy-guns served to open up a way for us and, treading the dead bodies of the enemy underfoot, we linked up with our main forces in our victorious counter-offensive.

# THROUGH AN ARTILLERYMAN'S EYES

WANG PING

*Artillery Observer*

There had been a furious battle the night before in which the enemy had lost two companies of men in occupying the surface position of one of our platoons at an outpost on Height. 612. Our infantrymen on the height had moved into tunnels temporarily and were harassing the enemy from there.

Early that morning the company commander had given me the following order by phone:

"In order to act in concert with our infantrymen so that they may hold out in the tunnels and annihilate the enemy you are to keep a sharp watch on Height 612. Report any enemy movement to me at once."

I knew immediately what our task was. The enemy troops that had crawled up to our position must never be allowed to get out alive; we must use our guns to exterminate the beasts! But for the three whole hours since daybreak, I had made out nothing except the little red flag stuck on a damaged machine-gun emplacement.

My observation post was not badly placed. It was on a crest directly overlooking Height 612, the farthest point of which was more than 1,400 metres distant. Moreover, the twelve-power artillery telescope I was using was the best we had in the whole battalion. And yet I could discover nothing. It was maddening!

Suddenly the telephone rang again. I pressed the instrument tightly against my ear to hear the voice of the company commander distinctly.

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"Wang Ping," it came through the receiver, "have you spotted any enemy troop movements?"

This was the seventh time the commander had phoned to ask that same question. I felt ashamed to say "no" again so I rubbed my eyes and readjusted the sight. Then bending over the telescope, I searched Height 612 carefully once again, up, down and across. Still I found nothing.

"Nothing, Commander," I said, "please ask the calculator, Comrade Lan Yun-lung, to hold the line. I'll report to you as soon as I find anything."

"Don't worry, just keep it under careful observation."

The commander had tried to ease my tension, yet I knew full well how an artillery commander relied on efficient observation and prompt reporting of information so that he could give orders at the most opportune moments and inflict the heaviest casualties on the enemy. Besides, I knew how anxiously the infantrymen were waiting in the tunnels along the front for the support of the artillery! I would observe the height once again. Rotating the range adjustment of the artillery telescope very slowly, I searched every depression and defence work within the optical ring over and over, counting under my breath the lopped-off stumps of trees I had already counted numberless times:

"One, two, three, four . . . !"

Ho! Strange! How was it there was one more stump before the entrance of Tunnel No. 3 this time?

I sighted back to the right and counted again:

"One, two, three, four. . . ."

No mistake, still one more than before.

Aha! Some trick here! Fixing the telescopic sight on the stumps as though driving a nail through them, I scarcely dared breathe as I glued my eyes on each stump in succession. Suddenly the "stump" near the entrance of the tunnel started to move. I gave myself a thump on the head:

"Why! A machine-gun!"

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Just then an enemy soldier crept up from behind the machine-gun, stopping as he drew near it. His path of approach was originally a communication trench some parts of which had been levelled by the gunfire from both sides the preceding night. I followed along the ruined trench slowly with my eyes and discovered in a depression behind Position No. 1 two other enemy soldiers stealing over from a hill creek at the rear.

From this evidence I concluded that the small red flag was the enemy's signal for bringing up reinforcements to recoup their heavy losses, while the machine-gun had been placed near the tunnel entrance specifically to seal our men in the tunnels. Now the vanguard of the enemy reinforcements had already arrived. I lost no time in reporting all I had seen, together with my conclusions, to the company commander and requesting immediate bombardment.

Having heard my report the company commander ordered: "Get ready. Keep your eye on the depression behind Position No. 1, and on that machine-gun!"

We were still talking over the phone when I saw through the artillery telescope five or six more enemy soldiers coming up. I called into the mouthpiece in great agitation:

"Fire! Quick! There are five or six of them now!"

Then our telephone lines got crossed and I heard some other party saying to the company commander:

"We . . . First Platoon . . . yesterday . . . fought the whole night . . . now . . . in the tunnels . . . making counter-attacks at night . . . but in the daytime . . . entirely relying on you. .

"Still chattering away like that!" I was indeed annoyed. Determined to make myself heard, I shouted louder:

"Enemy troops are coming up! Fire! . . . Quick . . . the guns!"

"Steady there, Comrade!" the company commander addressed me and then resumed his conversation with the other party. I put down the earphone, grumbling to myself:

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" 'Steady there!' he says. Another minute and the enemy will all have fled."

However, the enemy did not flee but kept coming up in greater and greater numbers. Suddenly the machine-gun began to sound off and up jumped all the enemy who had been lying crouched to the ground. They had merged into a black semi-circular mass before I had time to count them, but I estimated there must have been eighty or ninety of them rushing towards Tunnel No. 3 on Main Peak from three directions.

I heard the company commander exclaim:

"Wang Ping! Watch observation! Two shrapnels over!"

Bang! Bang! The shrapnels burst high in the air, 50 metres or more from the ground over the Tunnel. No. 3 area. Some . of the enemy were hit and fell, but the point of explosion seemed to me too high so I suggested bringing it down by five mils of the angle of sight.

After a short while the company commander again gave me a brief order through the phone:

"Attention observation! Four shells over!"

The four shells, three more shrapnels and one instantaneous shell all exploded in the greatest enemy concentrations. While I was watching the debacle another four shells plunged into the bulk of the enemy. They had already been thrown into confusion and were running helter-skelter for dear life when other of our artillery units joined in the barrage, lobbing shells on Position No. 1 in timely support.

Just as I was going to transmit the results of the barrage, I heard a familiar voice over the phone:

"Commander Ku! Commander Ku! Your guns did a wonderful job! All your shells plunged into enemy concentrations. . . ." It was the same voice I had overheard a little while ago.

"Good! Good! Captain Lu, please ask your comrades to be on the lookout. We're going to give the enemy another demonstration of 'bursts in mid-air'!"

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These cheerful remarks of the company commander made me laugh too.

After that a great number of shells shrieked through the air and exploded among the enemy, each sending a scramble of earth clods and limbs of enemy corpses flying into the air. A stubby enemy soldier emerged from the shell smoke in the dilapidated communication trench and presented an absurd picture as he tried to crawl under the belly of a dead troop-mate for shelter. . . .

Such inane confusion on the part of the enemy made me burst out laughing. Then, once again company commander's voice came over the telephone:

"Is that Wang Ping? How many casualties have we inflicted on the enemy?"

"I haven't finished tallying them up yet. Not a bad score though."

"Not bad, eh? In future battles, bear in mind that steady does it. You must know that the enemy are very cunning. We must coolly analyse them, grasp the general laws governing their movements, and deal them fatal blows with concentrated gunfire when and where they'll feel it most. Get it?"

Only then did I come to understand why the company commander had not shown the least sign of anxiety some moments before. Though I stood corrected, I was happy.

That night we infantrymen, acting in co-ordination with our fraternal units, recaptured Height 612. The comrades on guard duty above told me that the number of enemy annihilated by our gunfire that morning added up to a whole company.

## **A VICTORY WITH SIX SHOTS**

**HSIEH LIANG-CHENG**

*Deputy Squad Leader*

For the past several days enemy shells had been coming over more frequently and we had been seeing more enemy tanks than before. Their reconnaissance planes had hovered over our positions all day long. And the 'day before I had found a broad road they had repaired in the lowlands at the front. In their mad rush of activity I described the enemy's devilry: they thought they would use tanks to cover an infantry attack on our main position at South Tochang-dong Hill. Hm! A fine trick no doubt; but wait. . . !

Dawn found us busy checking our gun, polishing up our shells — preparing to deal with those enemy tanks. At sunrise the enemy gunfire sounded up, increasing in intensity till a pall of black smoke enveloped our position and the picric fumes choked us. I crouched in the communication trench, trying to keep tabs on developments. Soon our deputy company commander came running up, shouting: "Hsieh Liangcheng! We've spotted enemy tanks. Keep on the alert; tell the men to keep calm, open fire only when the enemy tanks get near, and then give 'em all we've got!"

We hastened to the gun emplacement, loaded on the shells and waited for the order to fire. Surveying the forefront of our position, I saw five enemy tanks looming up one after another, snaking their way around some mounds and then heading straight for our right flank.

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The nonchalance of the enemy's approach betrayed the lack of any knowledge of the reception awaiting them from our recoilless guns.

I let the enemy tanks approach under my very eyes to within 400 metres, thinking

to myself that we had better knock out the first one first so as to give the enemy a crushing blow at the very outset. We would take care of those behind as they came along. So I ordered Chang Chan-tu to aim at the first tank, and a thundering clamour followed. His shell scored a direct hit on the gun-turret, buckling the gun barrel and laying it back against the rear of the tank. The entire tank was afire at once. Surprised by this sudden attack, the enemy dispersed and formed a single file of their tanks to fire random shots on our position. The second enemy tank, however, rattled on towards the one in flames as though to the rescue of their fellows under cover of gunfire. Fixing my gaze on the second one, I said to Chang Chan-tu: "Don't let it get any nearer! Destroy it now!" Chang Chan-tu pressed down the trigger firmly and, bang! one of the treads in the caterpillar belt of the second tank was shattered and soon this tank also bit the dust.

Just then the enemy discovered our gun emplacement and trained his batteries on us. Barrage after barrage of shells exploded around us. Earth flew up in all directions and the smoke was suffocating. Raising the alarm: "We have been discovered by the enemy! We must move at once!" I motioned to the men. Some of us carried the gun on our shoulders and others removed the ammunition, taking advantage of the smoke to cover our move. We moved over to the defence works on the left. Then, just as we were setting up the gun, I saw a bunch of about eight enemy soldiers bending over the broken tread of that second tank, trying to repair it on the sly. The sight stirred Yuan Shang-yu to request: "Deputy Squad Leader, let me take a shot at them and send them all to hell!" "Well then," I said, "aim carefully not to let a single one escape!" Yuan Shang-yu gave his reply as he threw

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himself to the ground, his gun at his back. In order not to become a target for the enemy, he crept forward perfectly flat. When he had crawled to three metres outside the mouth of the cave, just the right place for taking aim, he stopped and loaded his gun. With a sudden crack there was a flash from the gun breech and a shell exploded in the enemy's midst, felling all eight of their soldiers. We all shouted our applause: "A good shot that!"

The enemy, badly crippled, tried to wreak his vengeance on us with more gunfire. Braving the guns, I leaned out to take a look and found that the three remaining enemy tanks were firing madly at our position. Quickly Yuan Shang-yu set up the gun. "That's enough out of you, you bastards. You have no voice here!" So saying, he took aim and scored a direct hit on one of the tanks. There was a burst of dense smoke following the explosion and the tank was a mass of flame. "Ho! A good shot and one more tank done for," the comrades at our rear position shouted in high spirits. I was pretty excited myself.

Our three shots had scored three direct hits. In their exasperation, the enemy battered at our position more madly than ever. The noise and concussion deafened me. Earth was falling in from above and it seemed our Earthwork No. 7 could not hold up much longer. I looked about me but there was not one single defence work still intact. So, exposed to enemy fire, I quickly ran to shelter in a foxhole.

The enemy tanks were still spitting their fire at us with a vengeance. Our shelter provided us with nothing to lean against for protection and it was too small for setting up our gun.

My comrades looked steadily into my eyes, searching my face for a solution to our predicament. "Chang Pao-fu destroyed an enemy tank with just hand-grenades," I recalled. "Now, we have right here an anti-tank weapon. Are we so unresourceful as to remain helpless with such a weapon?"

Snapped off a handful of branches from a tree and entwined

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them over the gun barrel for camouflage; then I quickly detached the gun from its carriage, loaded it with shells and set it up on my right shoulder. Propping the gun barrel on my left hand, I clenched my teeth, aimed and fired. Once more a shell hit a tread in the caterpillar belt of the tank firing at us and an explosion followed. The kick of the gun caused excruciating pain to my shoulder and made my whole body ache, yet when I saw the enemy tank in flames I was so happy that I forgot all about my bruises. No sooner had we trained our gun on the fifth tank than it wheeled about and fled recklessly around the foot of the hill. Yuan Shangyu clenched his teeth and said: "See what abominable cowards they are. If they had any guts they wouldn't run away!"

A few minutes later there appeared from behind Height 201 a big iron frame from which was suspended a long hook. The thing hovered over the enemy's destroyed tanks like some pre-historic monster. So the enemy had brought up a crane to try to retrieve those heaps of scrap iron! We all laughed heartily at this new wrinkle and said to each other: "The enemy is doing his darnedest to pile up his losses by throwing in extra items!" We watched the crane as it reached out, failed several times to hook the object desired, again climbed upward slowly and stretched forward until it seemed pretty near the destroyed tanks. The quick-tempered Yuan Shang-yu's impatience mounted once again. His gun already loaded, he opened fire just as the crane paused a moment. His shell exploded on the iron frame with a loud noise and the crane, crippled by the heavy blow, deserted the destroyed tanks and staggered back as though in fright.

Our six shells had destroyed four of the enemy's tanks, killed eight enemy soldiers and damaged a crane into the 'bargain. Not a single one of our shells had missed its mark. On our way back to the tunnel the comrades were all rejoicing: "Well, our ambush attack this time was truly a hundred percenter!"

## **CONQUERING OUR FIRST ENEMY LAND MINE**

**YAO HSIEN-JU**

*Squad Leader, Hero Second Class*

It was on the Kaesong front that I discovered the secret of enemy mines.

On a February night in 1952 I had been ordered to lead a reinforced squad to the enemy's forefront and to ambush their mobile forces. It was in those days that the enemy was systematically dispatching small armed bands against our positions to shamelessly provoke disturbances in the "truce areas" along the Kaesong front. They hoped in this way to provide their negotiators with pretences for further armed disruption.

We braved the drizzle of rain and sleet to climb Height 159 and lay in ambush there the whole night. But even after the sun had attained the height of a tall pole in the sky the following day we hadn't detected the slightest trace of the enemy. Our patience began to grow a bit thin; but to return thus empty-handed seemed rather a pity, so I said to my men:

"You keep close watch here; I'll go and see what the enemy's up to at the front."

Taking the precaution of ample camouflage, I had crept about halfway up when a sudden sound from some bushes Stopped me in my tracks. I drew back the bolt of my gun, ready to fire at the enemy. But a close look told me that the disturbance in the bushes was caused by two mountain goats. I had startled them and they were now chasing each other up the hill, their stubs of tails standing up straight.

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Relieved, I took a deep breath and was about to continue clambering up the hill when suddenly on the slope above was an explosion followed by a cloud of heavy smoke. The two mountain goats had been blown into oblivion.

"That shell was certainly accurate!" I thought. Then turning the safety catch on my tommy-gun, I had crawled forward another short piece when suddenly further

thought struck me: "Why had there been no sound as the shell emerged from the gun muzzle, nor any whining as it sped through the air? It came so close it was impossible that I should fail to hear it." My suspicion was immediately aroused, an incident of a few days before flashed into my mind: Several of our scouts were on their way to the enemy front to catch "tongues" when they had got entangled with enemy mines and a few had been wounded. Also our company commander had told us that the enemy was trying to hold up our attacks by laying large numbers of mines in front of their positions. Had the two unfortunate goats not stepped on land mines? Yes! That was it!

The thought of land mines put me on my guard. Luckily I was already more than halfway up the hill. Proceeding cautiously, I tested each step and finally reached the crest and surveyed the scene below. As all was quiet on the enemy front, I was pretty sure none of the devils would be venturing out on any sortie. So I cautiously slipped back down the hill to the halfway stop, where I turned to scrutinize the topography of the hill slope, thinking as I did so: "From now on we must be more careful in our movements around here not to step on enemy mines."

Then I thought further: "Why not destroy the mines on the spot so they won't harm others!"

And then again: "I don't know how a mine behaves. What if one should explode on me? It would be better to wait for our sappers to come and dispose of them!"

Then I thought again: "Who knows how long it will be till the sappers will be able to come. 'Distant water cannot satisfy

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one's immediate thirst.' We will be coming here every night to engage in guerrilla activities; how can we afford to wait for the sappers to do the job? . . . No, I must get rid of the mines right here and now!"

Then back again shuttled my thread of thought: "But it's altogether too risky! . . . No! I'm not getting tangled up with any mines! The farther away the better!"

I started on down, but after walking only a few paces I was suddenly struck with yet another idea: "This won't do! Not only is our own squad engaged in activities in this area but scouts from other headquarters, groups out capturing P.O.W.s. patrol men of every company as well as teams for ambush attacks, all frequent this area, so that for us alone to be apprised of the mines here does not solve the problem. In this business of mines. if you don't bother them, they are sure to bother you. If I don't get rid of them today, who knows how many of our comrades they may harm! I am a member of the Communist Party. As a Party

member how can I shut my eyes to this danger?"

Summoning all my courage I made up my mind. "Mine! Oh you mine! Were you a tiger I would push in your nose for you, were you a venomous dragon I would draw out your fangs. So long as I, Yao Hsien-ju, am here, you shall not bar our victorious march forward!"

Once my mind was made up I felt eased at heart. I walked back to our ambush post and found the comrades of my squad worrying about me after hearing the explosion. Seeing I had come back, they were very happy indeed and gathered round to ask me one question after another about the results of my observations.

"All quiet on the enemy front," I said with a smile. "Though our ambush netted nothing. I did succeed in locating an enemy mine-field. Let's go and dig mines!"

Then I told my squad what I had just thought of doing and the fellows unanimously agreed to it, all requesting to go. But I said, "This is our first encounter with these things; we

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haven't any experience. If too many of us go, it will be a case of too many cooks spoiling the broth, and that won't do." so I told them to stay where they were, to keep a good lookout for enemy movements and provide cover for those who would be assigned to go and dig out the mines. Then I appointed Comrade Chang Chen-kiang and myself for the task.

Long before arriving at the mine-field we had already got down and begun to crawl along, examining and searching every niche and cranny. No blade of withered grass, no tree, however small, no bit of rock, escaped our repeated examination and meticulous study for we were fully aware of the likelihood of an explosion from some clump of dry grass unnoticed under our feet. We knew that our slightest negligence might mean our death.

However, after searching for a long time and finding nothing, I gradually relaxed.

Suddenly we came across a big thick straw rope stretched in front of us, apparently a demarcation line of some sort —might it not be one of the enemy's mine-fields? For it was in this very area that the two goats had been blown to bits a short time ago. We were suddenly tense with excitement, and fortunately so, for it was precisely this being on edge that saved us from pretty sure death.

To reduce to a minimum the area of our bodily contact with the earth we stood erect and walked as though on eggs After I had taken two steps and was about to take a third. I suddenly felt myself entangled in something. I set my foot down

gingerly and craned my neck to get a good look at the ground. I found I had stepped on a green wire of no greater breadth than a hair's. Certainly it would pass unnoticed except on minute inspection. I felt this very strange. What could such a wire be doing there? I followed it for about four metres, then cold shivers raced up and down my spine for beneath a scrubby pine tree lay squarely before me a camouflage-green iron case — the mine we had been looking for!

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I stepped lightly over the wire and crouched down before the mine, gazing at it and tempted to feel it. But I dare not stretch out my hand till I should have hit upon a way to tackle it. Perhaps this was the "entanglement" mine we had learned about in our military science classes. To dispose of this kind of mine the sappers usually used a mine-sweeper and exploded it. But where were we to get a mine-sweeper now? Then I thought of the straw rope I had just seen, loosened it and was about to attach it to the connecting wire when better judgement told me this was not the solution to the problem either. Suppose I should succeed in exploding this mine, or even in clearing up the whole mine-field, what about other mine-fields? The enemy would draw on his rich store of iron and steel to replace what we exploded. Besides, the explosions would make it easier for the enemy to trace our movements and that would not be to our advantage. If only a way could be found to dispose of the mine without any noise or concussion! And if all comrades engaged in front-line activity could know the secret of land mines so that when they discovered one they could dispose of it on the spot — then we would have the enemy in the palm of our hand!

But how was the mine to be taken apart, its secret laid bare?

I threw away the rope and crouched down again, studying carefully the external structure as well as every attachment of the case. Projecting from its cubical body was an inch-thick detonating cap from which was strung the green wire tightly knotted onto an iron ring. I was wondering why, if this monstrous contraption had been made by man, if the enemy had taken a few spare parts and made a mine out of them, why then could I not break it down again into those parts? If only I could take it apart and make a thorough study of its internal mechanism it would no longer pose a problem!

The task of taking this mine apart was to me like extracting a tooth from a tiger's mouth. But if the fang were not drawn

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out, it would be only a matter of time till it would harm people.

I said to Chang Chen-kiang:

"Stand farther away and watch carefully how I proceed to take it apart. If I do something wrong and get killed, you must learn a lesson and go on working from there till you gain enough experience to take a mine apart successfully."

Chang Chen-kiang gripped my arms to restrain me, saying, "Squad Leader, you can't do this! Suppose the mine goes off while we are working on it, what are we to do? We have no experience. . . ."

"Where does experience come from anyway? If we don't create it, we shall never have it," I said firmly, then added, "Let this be our decision! Now get back a few paces, quick!"

Seeing that I was determined to break that mine down, Chang Chen-kiang warned: "Squad Leader, you must be very careful!"

"Yes," I nodded that I would; then when my comrade was some distance from me, I started to work. I decided that the iron ring must be the detonator, and if I cut the wire that was connected with it so it could receive no shock from that source, there would be no explosion. I pressed the wire down gently with one hand to relieve the tension on it and then tried to break it with my fingernails, but without success. Better to bite it in two! Bending down I got it between my teeth, and snap! The wire was severed.

I drew a breath of relief, but then another suspicion arose within me: why had the enemy not buried the mine completely but left it half exposed above ground? This question would have to be answered. I got down and started removing the surrounding snow and bits of rock with my hands. How strange! When I had dug down only about half a foot I found there was nothing more to it than that — there was nothing underneath. Sweating, I held the mine firmly in position with one hand and thrust the other under it. With one great heave I succeeded in exhuming the mine.

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Clenching my teeth and trying to suppress the pounding of my heart, I held the mine aloft, swearing at it: "Damn you! Now explode!" But after several minutes it was still intact.

I let out a big breath very slowly and looked at Chang Chen-kiang who was also staring at me wide-eyed. He burst out in joy and surprise, "Squad Leader, you've really got it! You've lifted it clear out!"

Trying my best to suppress my excitement, I replied: "Though I've lifted it out, I still don't know what's inside or how it's put together. There's nothing for it but to

take it apart and see!"

Eyeing the mine I thought that now that it could be moved I'd have to look for a safe place to get to work on it. The communication trench the enemy had dug on the top of the hill would answer my purpose. So I lugged it up and put it down gingerly on the edge of the trench, thinking that in case I fumbled it and it started fuming I could just shove it into the trench and the explosion wouldn't harm me.

Having turned over in my mind all these possibilities, I fell to work on the mine. First I examined carefully the detonating-cap and found a screw thread between the body of the mine and the cap. So the thing was screwed on! "Well, if you can be screwed on, you can certainly be screwed off!" I said to it. I held my breath, trying my best to keep a cool head. One hand steadying the body of the mine, I started to unscrew the iron cap with the other. Each turn seemed to tighten a band around my heart. I was covered with cold sweat by the time the cap was successfully unscrewed from the body of the mine.

I mopped the sweat off my face, heaved a sigh of relief and examined the cap. The spring and firing pin were engaged; inside the body of the mine the detonator and the igniter were still intact. Although the igniter was now separated from the firing pin, might there not be some fiendish trick yet hidden?

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I scrutinized for quite some time the point of connection between the detonator and the body of the case. And though I racked my brains I could not discover the secret of separating the two. I tugged at the detonator but it refused to budge, so I decided it must be screwed on. I gave it a few turns and off it came!

The mine casing now lay stripped bare, but still I could not feel easy at heart. Was there truly no further devilment in it? I lifted it in my arms and gave it a mighty heave into the air. It crashed to the ground but failed to explode — just made a small cavity in the earth. I could no longer suppress the excitement in my heart and I shouted for joy: "You American bandits! Here's your 'talisman' — changed into scrap iron!"

With his eyes wide-open in joy and surprise, Chang Chenkiang ran up and embraced me.

"Well," I said, "I'll take you as my first apprentice!"

My "apprentice" mastered the whole course in a few minutes. "So there's really nothing mystifying about this American magic box after all!"

I taught all the comrades of my squad how to take mines apart, and they learned

the lesson quickly. After that we used the enemy mine-field as our drilling ground, practising mine disposal there. In a very short time we had put all fifteen of the mines we found there out of action.

From then on enemy mines were no longer a puzzle to our infantrymen. We not only dug them up by the hundreds and even thousands, but we started a big "house moving" movement — that is, we moved the enemy mines and laid them under communication paths leading to enemy positions. After that, sudden explosions occurred day and night, rocking the enemy positions. Thus these weapons the cruel enemy had made for slaughtering others proved to be boomerangs on themselves.

## **LAMENT OF ONE WHO HAS BLIND FAITH IN THE "SUPREMACY OF FIRE POWER"**

**LI YO-YANG**

*Reconnaissance Staff Officer*

In the autumn of 1952 while the Americans were boasting of their "naval and air supremacy" at the Panmunjom Conference, our army launched a powerful offensive on the Kaesong front and dealt the enemy a smashing blow, thus giving the American delegation a box on the ear, as it were, for their tricks and boasts of "military pressure" at the negotiation table.

This really embarrassed Uncle Sam before his lackeys. In order to save a scrap of face, the enemy brought up their reserves from the rear. But, as the proverb goes, "When one fails in stealing a chicken he also loses the rice he has used to bait it." The enemy's counter-attack on the forward areas of our newly-occupied positions ended in another crushing defeat.

The American generals were extremely hard put to find excuses for their repeated losses. Faced with this dilemma, their last resort was to throw together the most powerful military force they could and concentrate their strongest, most fierce gunfire on us for spite. The enemy artillery units opposite our regiment alone were increased to more than five battalions, bombarding us day and night, while enemy planes and tanks took turns firing at our squads' and platoons' forward posts and positions east of the Sachon River. Not infrequently the mortar and heavy artillery shells and napalm bombs dropped on us in a day would number a

thousand. While such attacks were going on, the American delegates sitting in the tents at Panmunjom would again shamelessly boast of their "supremacy of fire power." But this much-vaunted "supremacy of fire power" which the enemy passed off at the conference table as their "capital" in striking bargains with us proved of nebulous advantage to them in the final analysis, for it left us unscathed.

Although the enemy dropped ton upon ton of steel and iron every day, our positions stood as firm and secure as mountains. Our fighters had long since become familiar with the behaviour of enemy gunfire and had become adept in avoiding enemy shells. We did not suffer a single casualty for an entire half month. While the enemy was firing our fighters would sit securely in their tunnels mocking. "Hey! Let's have a sing-song! The American artillerymen are beating time for us from the top of the mountain."

One night we captured an observer attached to the enemy artillery. This cunning devil kept boasting of the might of their fire power even after we had him in our tunnel. His blind boasting really annoyed us and we loathed him heartily. When I recalled that we had had no casualties at all for half a month, I asked him:

"Do you know how many you have killed or wounded with all that fire power of yours?"

"Oh, a lot! A lot!" And he spread his arms as if to take in vast numbers, grinning the while an arrogant grin that made our disgust at him complete.

Presently a few sudden explosions thundered up, rocking the mountain top for some time. The candle on our table was snuffed out and dirt sifted down from the ceiling of the tunnel. The enemy heavy artillery was again pounding our position! I took off my hat to shake off the dust, put it on again and slowly and deliberately relighted the candle. The P.O.W. was gone! Then our liaison officer pointed to a spot on the ground. When I switched on my flashlight I could

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not help bursting into uproarious laughter. For there was our P.O.W. flat to the ground, for all the world like a mangy dog in a fit, both hands clapped tight over his ears. When I told him to get up his face turned as transparent as wax, his two hands quivered uncontrollably and he wailed like a lost soul.

"Help! Help!"

"What are you afraid of! There's no danger of being killed on a position fortified by the Chinese People's Volunteers." As I spoke I beamed my flashlight on the stout, solid beams supporting the roof of our air-raid shelter.

"Don't you know it's impossible for your shells to penetrate our air-raid shelters?" He blinked his fear-filled, lustreless eyes dumbfounded; and knowing not what to say, he lowered his head after a brief blank stare at the air-raid shelter.

As soon as the firing died down our liaison officer and I, together with two of our scouts, escorted the prisoner-of-war to headquarters.

On our way we suddenly heard shells hiss from the muzzles of guns across the river. One of our scouts rushed to the P.O.W. and made him lie flat. Almost immediately after we had all crouched down, a barrage of shells exploded not far in front of us and twigs from trees and chips of rock came pelting down upon us.

That over, we were on our feet again ready to dash across the line of enemy gunfire. But the P.O.W. just lay there like a dead pig, too stupefied to budge. The scout gave him a quick tug as he shouted at him, "Come on, get a move on there!" Only then did he scramble to his feet and, once we got him started, he ran faster than we did.

After racing thus for five or six minutes we came to another crossroad sealed by enemy gunfire. Our scout again directed us to lie down. And sure enough, it was not long till shells were whining through the air and exploding nearby. When it was again quiet we dragged the P.O.W. to

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his feet and ran on till the area sealed by the enemy's artillery was behind us.

We shook the dust from our clothes and sat down for a rest. Just then a long line of wagons came rumbling by. They were fully loaded with food and ammunition for our forward positions, the drivers whooping merrily at the draught animals as they curled their whips in the air. Suddenly the wagons picked up speed, obviously to cross the areas "sealed off" by enemy artillery. How orderly was the running of the enemy blockade by our transport comrades! No sooner was the last wagon over than the area they had traversed was again popping with enemy shell-fire.

This completely nonplussed the P.O.W. Staring into space in a fixed gaze ahead he uttered feebly:

"Wunnerful! Wunnerful! Our shells sure do take your orders!"

"Not only your shells, boy, even your General Van Fleet has to take orders from us!" A scout remarked thoughtfully.

Next dawn, crossing a small hilltop, we saw several sappers spreading out waterproofs for sunning ammunition. Nearby was a big heap of dud shells bearing

the mark "U.S.A." in blatant white letters. The P.O.W. gawked at the skim milk-coloured blocks of explosive, and our scout, guessing his reaction, said to him:

"No, this mildewed stuff isn't worth thanking you besides, it isn't a drop in the bucket compared with the tons of explosives you've already handed over to us." Then indicating the towering Kunchang Mountain, he continued, "Look, the impregnable fortifications on that hilltop were blasted with your dynamite."

"Can't be helped!" The fellow held out his hands in a gesture of despair, shrugged his shoulders and moaned, "Just can't be helped!"

## **BOMBARDING LOWER KOJAN-NI**

### **SHIH HSING**

*Deputy Company Commander of an Artillery Unit*

It was already past twelve but the advanced observation post had not yet discovered anything new along the front and the whole morning had thus slipped away.

It was not credible that the enemy would not venture out at all for a whole day so I ordered our observer, Comrade Nieh Jung, to make a careful search and find a target before dark for sure so we could deal the enemy a crushing blow.

A long time passed and the information from our advanced observation post was still the same. Had we scared the enemy so stiff with our gunfire that they dared not show so much as a shadow of their motor vehicles since daybreak? True enough, the enemy was getting more timid as well as more cunning after having learned a lesson from our gunfire; but the fact that our artillery could not perform its role deeply disappointed me. I spoke furiously to Comrade Nieh Jung over the telephone:

"From what you said the enemy is scared to death of our gunfire. Does that mean we are just to stop fighting them?"

Nieh Jung hesitated a moment before replying: "In order to fight them we have to see them first. Comrade Deputy Company Commander, what would you advise?"

His tone showed how wronged he felt at my groundless reproach. and I also thought I had been in the wrong to have upbraided this blameless observer simply out of temper. So I lowered my voice and told him to concentrate his search along

the highway in the Lower Kojan-ni area.

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Having finished my conversation with Nieh Jung, I put the receiver on my knee to adjust the artillery telescope. But no sooner had I placed the optical piece to my eyes than I exclaimed aloud. I immediately called our computer, Comrade Wu Ping-hsiang, to get out the drawing board and instruments.

While we were head over heels in excited activity following our sudden discovery, Comrade Nieh Jung phoned again from the advanced observation post. I knew his call must bring good news.

"Deputy Company Commander, Comrade Deputy Company Commander: on the highway between Tang Village and Lower Kojan-ni was spotted a dark patch very much like a hill of ants — clearly a battalion of the enemy! It is spearheaded by five tanks and followed by a company of infantry. Behind the infantry are eight trucks also loaded with infantry. Behind those are three armoured cars and three small jeeps. The whole is moving in two columns along the highway." Nieh Jung's words came slowly, loud and clear, but they betrayed his great excitement. I could fairly feel his elation even over the phone. Then he told me that the vanguard of the damned ruffians were already rounding the small hill opposite us and mustering there. He suggested we should open fire on the spot.

I immediately notified our artillerymen to adjust the guns to the firing data of Lower Kojan-ni and to prepare for immediate action. After receiving instructions from the battalion commander, I gave the order to our gunners on the position:

"Distance 9,700 metres, first gun two shells, rapid fire!"

Fifteen seconds later the gunners reported that the two shells had been fired, and the observation post reported that the farther shell had deviated to the right, zero to forty mils.

I ordered the gunners to reset their sights and fire two more shells at once.

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According to Nieh Jung's report these two shells had fallen within five or six metres of the jeeps in the enemy train. That meant we could really get down to firing in earnest. But I felt we should lob our shells into the heart of the enemy concentration, so again I ordered readjustment of the firing direction and ordered the whole company to fire two volleys, this time in full confidence of finding their mark.

Nieh Jung was already hallooing and whooping over the phone before I had a chance to ask for a report on the results of the firing.

"Fine, Deputy Company Commander! The firing has produced excellent results — no deviation at all. Every shot counted. Please open fire again immediately! Bravo!"

The battalion commander sent an order for the gunners on the position to keep up the firing until they received word to cease. I relayed the order in a very loud voice in order to be heard above the din of gunfire.

I laid the red-and-blue-coloured pencil down on the drawing board, ordered Comrade Wu Ping-hsiang to take over the telephone duty, and with field-glasses in hand I went to the outer communication trench to survey the results of our battle. I knew how anxious the gunners on the position were to know what had been achieved by the shells they had fired with their own hands.

Emerging from the tunnel entrance I ran into our battalion commander, also with field-glasses in hand, observing the enemy's situation following our bombardment. He took a quick stride up to me, gripped both my hands and shook them heartily as he lavished praises upon our company.

Seeing into what chaos the enemy had been thrown, I could not express the joy in my heart.

Fifteen minutes more and the battalion commander sent us instructions to withhold fire for the time being. We should plan our next step on the basis of the enemy's movements. He said:

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"The situation indicates a continuous and area bombardment!"

That meant our battalion commander would order very heavy firing that day so I ran back to the command post and ordered the gunners on our position to withhold fire temporarily.

The tumult of our comrades' cheers and peals of laughter reached me over the phone so that I had difficulty relaying the order. Instead of Nieh Jung I heard Chang Kuanghua speaking from the advanced observation post.

"Ha, ha, ha! Deputy Company Commander, it is Chang Kuang-hua, now speaking," he giggled in such a state of elation that he could not hold back his laughter even while speaking over the phone. I was quite out of patience with him and gave him a stern rebuke.

Chang Kuang-hua told me that our advanced observation post was crowded to the gills with infantrymen who had been defending Mayang Hill and that they were telling how they had cheered and applauded our bull's-eye hits on the enemy and that they would recommend our gunners for an award of honour.

I asked Chang Kuang-hua to express our company's gratitude to the heroic men of the infantry and to tell them that the honour belonged to all. I had just told him to look up Nieh Jung and ask him to report the situation to me when I heard Nieh Jung's voice:

"Comrade Deputy Company Commander, that hail of shells a moment ago fell smack in the thick of enemy concentrations, throwing the devils into utter confusion. They're scrambling about like chickens with their heads cut off, their motor vehicles crashing into each other. Two of their trucks are already aflame after a head-on crash. The enemy are just now trying to retrieve their dead and snatch away their equipment!"

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upon instruction of the battalion commander I ordered the resumption of our bombardment upon the enemy at this most opportune moment of their confusion.

In volley after volley our artillery shells streaked towards the enemy like flaming dragons. The enemy released numerous smoke-shells on their own position to provide a screen for their men to run like homeless dogs out of our net of fire. But their trick was all too transparent and we fired several more volleys in rapid succession. Just then too, the heavy guns of brother units joined in a concerted artillery barrage on the enemy remnants.

Bursting shells glittered through the smokescreen and the whole frontline position reverberated with the roar of our guns.

Later on the infantry company commander, Comrade Chu Lien-kwei, told me that according to the depositions of the P.O.W.s, this wretched band was a unit of British troops who had just arrived all the way from England. They came swaggering out in bunches under our very noses in broad daylight. It was beyond their wildest dream that even before they arrived at their destination they would already have met with such disaster.

We all burst out laughing. They had no doubt lived well enough in the far away West; why had they come all the way to the Far East to look for trouble in Korea?

# FIGHTING "TRUMP CARD" TROOPS

## NI EN-SHAN

*Battalion Commander*

Night was drawing on and utter silence reigned over the West Chongdong Hill. In only a little over an hour our counter-attack was to begin. Our battalion command post was the scene of more bustle and excitement than ever before. From the rear clear up to the battle-front every one of us was counting the minutes, eagerly awaiting H-hour.

The enemy on the West Chongdong Hill was a battalion of the First Cavalry Division, the U.S. "trump card" outfit. A month before, in our campaign to shatter Van Fleet's autumn offensive, we had made those "trump card" troops pay an average price of more than 120 killed and wounded for each metre of ground gained, thus giving the boastful general Van Fleet plenty of headaches. Now we intended to change from the defensive to the offensive and launch a combined attack so as to completely destroy this detachment of enemy intruders.

I thought of the defence works on West Chongdong Hill which the enemy had been scurrying about for days digging. I had observed them clearly through my field-glasses only two days before when our regimental commander, Comrade Li Hung-chieh, and I had approached the enemy position to study the terrain there. The hilltops were a maze of communication trenches, foxholes and fortifications in clusters as well as lines of barbed-wire entanglements and mine-fields. This showed how bound and determined the enemy were to

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hold onto the hilltops. Little did they know that each one of those hills was very soon to become another of their burial grounds! On our way back from our survey, Commander Li cautioned us time and again: "We must organize our gunfire . . . effectively so as to give the enemy a taste of our iron fist."

Now, when we would soon be fighting our way back to the position so hotly contested for scores of days, when our resolution would soon be meeting its severest test, I felt fully confident, even if somewhat tense.

At half past eight, Commander Li telephoned me: "Let's synchronize watches. The time is now eight-thirty."

At nine o'clock sharp the telephone rang again. And again it was Commander Li's voice. He was checking up on whether our shock brigades had all reached their

attack positions.

I reported back again that the troops had all arrived at their designated places on time. I followed the minute hand on my watch. At this final moment, how slowly time crept by!

Ten past nine; the battle began!

A barrage of guns and mortars sounded from the slope of West Chongdong Hill, growing more and more intense till the bursts of hand-grenades and shouts could be clearly heard. The First Squad of our Seventh Company, under orders to make a feint attack, was now engaged with the enemy. This brought on an immediate and rapid firing of guns and mortars from the enemy position. A few minutes later, following the sending up of their signal flare, all the enemy artillery started to fire in the direction of the First Squad as if their lives depended on it. The entire hill-slope was lit up with flashing balls of fire.

Our aim to induce the enemy to throw the full weight of his man and fire power into the battle — had been achieved.

Twenty minutes later the leader of the First Platoon of the Seventh Company phoned me that the First Squad had fulfilled their mission and had all withdrawn.

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I picked up the telephone connected with the regimental command post and said into it: "The First Squad has completely withdrawn. Artillery, quick fire!"

Explosions immediately thundered all along the front line and the earth fairly trembled under the shock. Hundreds of cannons on our position sounded up in one great roar, while powerful bombardments of rocket fire shot forth blinding flames. Barrage after barrage of our rocket shells, their long tails of fire trailing behind quickly traversed the night sky to storm the enemy position. Nothing could be heard above the din of this sudden and powerful attack. Soon the entire crest of West Chongdong Hill was a sea of fire, showered with shells. Most of the enemy batteries were silenced on the spot.

I gripped the walkie-talkie communicating with the shock brigades more tightly, excitement pulsing through my being. During this sudden, furious artillery barrage our tanks were dashing towards the enemy position at top speed and five minutes later, at the signal "forward charge," our assault forces, under direct cover of our tank gunfire, charged towards the main crest of West Chongdong Hill.

The Second Squad of the Eighth Company, being foremost in the assault, was pinned down by the resumed enemy gunfire. So to divert the enemy fire I ordered

the assault forces of the Seventh and Ninth Companies to move in swiftly from both flanks onto the main crest and attack the enemy there.

Minute after minute passed as I anxiously awaited news from the main crest. Then suddenly three dazzling red signal flares shot up into the sky above West Chongdong Hill. That display was followed by the irrepressible happy voice of Pang Chen-lin, Commander of the Eighth Company assigned for shock action, who reported through my walkie-talkie that the Eighth Company had succeeded in occupying the main crest. Almost immediately afterwards news came that the Seventh and Ninth Companies had also reached there one after another. A glance at my watch told me that the assault had taken only fifteen minutes, having developed at extraordinary

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speed. I reported the details of the fighting to the regimental commander while at the same time ordering the battalion command post to move forward. The key issue of the battle had now resolved into crushing any enemy counter-attacks.

The battle was drawing to a close by the time I reached the principal crest of West Chongdong Hill. I went along with the second echelon as it streamed towards the hilltop. Our forces had already shattered the straggling enemy's several attempts at counter-charge. Our guns shifted now to the Rear Chongdong Hill, firing with box barrage at the fleeing enemy and their reinforcements.

Prisoners-of-war were taken into custody and led off the battlefield in batches. . . .

Thus, in that one night we knocked out almost a whole battalion of the U.S. First Cavalry Division, their "trump card" outfit.

## **"OLD BALDY" IS OURS FOR EVER!**

**HAO CHUNG-YUN**

*Battalion Commander, Meritorious Fighter First Class*

There was no such name as "Old Baldy" on our military maps. For it was only a nameless rise on East Sangpopang Hill till the heavy gunfire of repeated, extremely intense battles with the enemy stripped off the entire top of the height, leaving it bare and bald. Hence this ordinary hillock came to be known as "Old Baldy."

After each of our successive attacks on that position the enemy had repaired and augmented his fortifications, till now there were over 200 pillboxes of different dimensions dotting the hilltop and seven rings of barbed-wire entanglements lining the slopes. General Taylor, commander of the U.S Eighth Army invading Korea, had been to this position in person to inspect and deploy his troops. The enemy referred to the hill vauntingly as "an impregnable position," "the gateway to Seoul," "the iron chain linking Chorwon and Yongchon " The U.S. Army Command dispatched its "crack" U.S. 7th Division to hold the place, their divisional commander Trudeau boasting of "Old Baldy" as an "impregnable fortress."

But we were never much impressed by such barefaced bragging calculated to intimidate us. For us Volunteers there was only one truth: If we deemed it necessary to capture certain position, we would capture it no matter what kind of "defence works" were on it or what kind of enemy defended it. The fact that in March 1953 we finally captured "Old

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Baldy" and made it for ever ours is iron-clad evidence of this truth.

At dusk on March 22 as darkness slowly gathered over the rolling hills, our troops stood ready to march forth into battle. The political commissar and the deputy regimental commander hurried over from the command post to send off the fighters of the shock brigade. On behalf of the commanders, members of the art troupe toasted the fighters in the "wine of victory" and pinned "flowers of heroism" on their breasts.

Then our fighter, Tien Shun-hua, appeared from the tunnel with a shimmering red banner at his shoulder. Followed by two others he strode up with great vigour; then shifting the banner to his left shoulder, he raised his hand in a military salute. "We three are Red Flag Bearers. We have signed our names on the red banner together with our other comrades, and we have taken our oath that 'the flag shall never fall even though we may.' We have full confidence that we shall plant it firmly on that nameless height!"

A song, powerful and spirited, rose from the tunnel. It was called "The Song of the Red Flag" and had been composed by the soldiers themselves. How stirring it was! Listen!

*This glorious red banner's unfurled to  
the breeze,  
It stands for our victory and pride.  
Our names are signed and our pledges  
made,  
"Men may fall but never the flag."  
Our banner will advance in triumph,  
And we will follow, heads up and backs  
straight.  
Through a phalanx of guns and showers  
of bullets,  
To plant the red flag on the highest peak!*

With the singing of the song our shock brigade fighters emerged. They grouped into many columns and then marched proudly towards their attack positions, filled with confidence in victory.

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On seeing the red banner covered with names and hearing the fighters take their oath in song, my whole being surged with emotion. I stood at the tunnel entrance together with our regimental political commissar, deputy regimental commander and battalion political instructor, warmly shaking hands with each in turn. The resoluteness, calm and confidence on the faces of the men passing before us filled us with such emotion that we lost our tongues and could find no fresh words of good wishes for them but kept repeating:

"May you be victorious, win military honours and become heroes!"

"Be careful along the way. Once you have crossed the open country you will come to the place where you start your attack," we said.

But our words of advice were lost in the rush of spirited and gallant pledges of the fighters:

"Comrade Commanders, set your hearts at ease. 'Old Baldy' will surely be ours!"

"Comrade Commanders, we are confident that we shall win military honours in this battle!"

"Comrade Commanders, we shall bring back prisoners-of-war!"

Their response — every sentence straight talk — strengthened the confidence we commanders had in our fighters because they always kept true to their word.

Rifles and guns began cracking in the distance, and there were flashes of fire. We stood silent in a communication trench, watching the fighters file by in their advance to the front till they gradually became enveloped in the darkness of the night. Suddenly, our political commissar turned round and said to me, "You have requested to lead these fighters personally in their attack on the nameless height, and we've approved your request. But you must promise us that you will direct the fighting there and not participate in the assault on the enemy position yourself. As to the reason for this I think there is no need to elaborate." The deputy regimental com-

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mander exhorted me again and again: "Proceed on schedule throughout and stick to the plan; report on the situation regularly; let the operators take along three sets of walkie-talkie equipment." My request was at last granted! I was filled with so much thankfulness that I insistently repeated my pledges to our leaders.

Next day before dawn, taking with me the leader of our signal platoon, a messenger and the walkie-talkie operator, I arrived at the network of tunnels from which we would start our attack. The tunnels were narrow and low, and were fully packed. Those at the entrances got gusts of cold wind that chilled them to the very marrow, while those inside found the tunnels as stifling as a steamcooker. Crowded together as they were, everyone's face shone with sweat.

I examined the tunnels one by one in the still dim twilight, then once again sent for our company commanders, political instructors and platoon leaders and briefed them on the situation. I asked them in minute detail concerning the communication of messages, the routes of attack, the procedure to follow upon seizing the main peak, and many other things.

Their ready answers satisfied me completely.

At the fourth tunnel I found Teng Ming-kuo of the dynamiting squad crouched in a corner readying his bangalore torpedoes in the pale flicker of yellow candlelight. "Teng Ming-kuo, are you all ready?" I asked. "The Dynamiting Squad will spearhead this attack and your task is a difficult one. Can you fulfil it?"

Teng Ming-kuo looked up and replied in a clear, even voice, "Battalion Commander, we are confident that we can fulfil the task! The Red Banner Bearers' resolve is 'men may fall but never the flag.' We dynamiters won't lag behind. Our resolve is to 'place our explosives on the barbed-wire entanglements so effectively

that the red banner may advance without a single check'!"

Chang Fu-hsiang, another explosives man, commented: "Battalion Commander, Teng Ming-kuo's resolve is very firm

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indeed! He says that after the battle he will write an open letter to the children of our motherland, telling them of the heroic deeds of our squad!" Teng Ming-kuo's face turned scarlet and he gave Chang Fu-hsiang a punch in the back.

Watching these vigorous young men, I felt pride in our fighters well up from the very bottom of my heart. The people of our motherland could very well call our fighters "the most beloved ones"; it was not overstating things at all.

That night and another day passed in intense expectancy. Then in the evening twilight we fighters silently emerged from the tunnel, scattered about and hid ourselves. With my arm raised to keep the luminous dial of my watch before my eyes, I waited for the momentous hour — 8 p.m.

At seven-thirty the troops on our right, assigned to make a feint attack on Northwest Tokun Hill, opened fire. Presently gunfire was also heard on our left, from North Sokandong Hill. A number of flares rose from the enemy position and the gunfire from both sides reddened the night sky on both flanks of "Old Baldy."

Impatient for action, I fixed my gaze upon my watch. Time seemed to be standing still as each minute, each second, now stretched out to an hour.

Finally it was eight o'clock! The hour to destroy the enemy had arrived at last! A tremendous roar of gunfire from our position shook the earth. "Old Baldy" was instantly submerged in a sea of fire which lit up the very dome of the sky and painted the dusky hills of Sangpopang red.

After scarcely five minutes' quick artillery fire I waved my fist and shouted with great determination, "Attack! Forward charge!"

The brave fighters crouched on the ground sprang up like fierce tigers and, in five columns, rushed towards "Old Baldy." Taking with me the messengers, I followed close upon the heels of the vanguard troops.

Our gunfire so terrified and confused the enemy that they hid themselves in their dugouts, not daring to stick their heads

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out. The sky was alight with the enemy's flares, revealing the trees and hill-slopes as though in broad daylight. Our fighters advanced rapidly under the brilliant illumination.

Someone dashed past me. Carrying the red banner, Tien Shun-hua had overtaken the shock troops. Two other Red Banner Bearers, Tan Tsun-chiu and Chang Ting-hsiao, followed close on his heels. The red banner, enfolding the gun smoke as it was borne forward, gleamed like an orb of leaping fire.

At the very front of the charge was our Third Platoon, though the dynamiting squad were still ahead of them. Our devastating gunfire had cut a way for our advance, having destroyed five lines of barbed-wire entanglement, while the dynamiting squad had blown up the sixth line. Now only the last line, the seventh, remained. The enemy, frightened out of their wits by our first artillery barrage, now began to size up the situation and, hiding themselves in their earthwork ruins, shot desperately at our advancing troops in an attempt to seal off the seventh and last line of barbed-wire entanglement.

Everything now hinged on our penetrating that seventh line of barbed wire! I was bringing up the rear of our Third Platoon, and when we had advanced to within some 50 metres of the wire I told the communications platoon leader to relay orders to the dynamiting team to prepare for action at once. At the same time I directed the commander of the battery to open fire on the enemy in order to silence their guns.

"Start blasting at once! I'll keep you covered!" Teng Mingkuo's voice rang out. With this cry he began sweeping the field with his tommy-gun. Fighter Li Kao-piao dashed forward and thrust his bangalore torpedo into the barbed-wire entanglement. Though the explosion was loud, the gap opened up was all too small. The immense height and breadth of the entanglement made it a hard one to crack.

The situation was critical, with our assault troops piling up before the barbed wire and casualties mounting. The sacred

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red flag too was being held up in its advance. Meanwhile enemy fire grew more and more fierce till the area up to the seventh line of barbed wire was a sea of fire. I was rushing up to get a series of explosions going when I saw Teng

kuo suddenly leap from the ground, tossing his tommy-gun and his cap aside. He shouted to the leader of the Third Platoon, Hsu Chin-thing:

"Comrade Platoon Leader, grant my request! Just see! The red flag is waiting for

us to act, the assault troops are looking to us. There's no time for explosives now. Now is the time when our motherland, Chairman Mao, victory are in need of us. . . ."

He did not finish but dashed heroically through the net of fire, lunged forward and threw his body full length on the barbed-wire entanglement. Motioning to the others, he commanded: "Comrades, cross over my body!" Chang Fu-hsiang, Ting Chao-kuei, Li Kao-piao and Wu Erh-hua all followed his example and lay over the barbed wire.

The commander of the Third Platoon was sorely disturbed at this and shouted: "You can't do that! You mustn't! Get up quickly and start blasting!" But the five were steadfast. The fighters, however, hesitated to tread upon this bridge of men's bodies.

"Comrades! Don't hesitate! Cross over! Cross over!" they shouted through their pain.

"Long live Chairman Mao! Long live victory!"

"Take 'Old Baldy'! Plant the red flag on its highest pinnacle!"

The shouts stabbed my heart. I am normally a staid person, but now tears rolled down my face. Looking back. I suddenly saw the red banner at a complete standstill, with hundreds and thousands of our fighters exposed to enemy fire. It was all too clear that we could not afford to lose a minute. My mind was quickly made up. I signalled with my hand: "Comrades! For the sake of victory, cross over!"

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Our comrades were now left with no choice; all they could do was say to one another "Lightly there, tread lightly," as they took big, smooth strides through the barbed-wire entanglement. Their heroic comrades-in-arms' act of building a human bridge of their own flesh had redoubled their fiery wrath against the enemy a thousand fold. Thus inspired, they rushed to annihilate the enemy and avenge their comrades.

"Learn from the heroic spirit of our comrades of the dynamiting squad! Advance!"

"Smash the enemy and avenge our comrades of the dynamiting squad!"

When I passed the barbed-wire entanglement I saw that all the heroes of the squad, with the exception of Chang Fu-hsiang, had already gloriously laid down their lives, their fresh blood staining crimson the barbed wire and the earth below.

I paused before them for a moment in silent sorrow. Teng Ming-kuo's wish while he was still alive now came to me and I could not restrain my feelings. "Heroes!" I muttered, "You will live for ever in our hearts. I shall relate your heroic deeds to the children of our motherland and they will remember you for all time. . . ."

The red flag advanced, over the "human bridge," through the cloud of smoke. The red of the banner seemed to grow more intense and its beauty enhanced as our fighters followed in its splendour, pressing forward onto our objective.

Like a bolt of lightning the red banner flashed past the ridge of the hill; but when it neared the main peak, its bearer, Tien Shun-hua, fell. Tan Tsun-chiu strode up, retrieved the flag and continued the advance. But before taking a dozen steps, he too fell; and then it was Chang Ting-hsiao who took up the red banner and rushed forward with it. The enemy, whose doom was already sealed, struggled on desperately, keeping up a frenzied machine-gun fire and shower of hand-grenades that burst beneath our very eyes.

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"Comrades! In the name of the red flag, charge!"

"Long live Chairman Mao! Long live victory!"

In the wake of the red flag there arose a mighty wave of shouts towering with indignation. The shock troops, ushered up by the red flag, penetrated the main peak and fought like whetted swords and spears into the enemy fortifications. The remnant enemy soldiers were now on their knees begging for mercy, while those who were stubborn enough to fight on lost their lives under the flash of our bayonets.

Just then Chang Ting-hsiao received a hit in the chest. He staggered once but then placed his hand over the wound and bravely endured the pain. He threw out his chest in a few strides, was on the main peak where he planted the red flag on the very summit.

Following close behind, I was also soon on the hilltop. I looked at my watch — exactly fifteen minutes since we started our assault. I asked the walkie-talkie operator to report the news of victory to the command post.

Then I turned round and saw that Chang Ting-hsiao had already shed the last drop of his life-blood. Leaning against a rock, the flag staff still grasped firmly in his two hands, he appeared to be driving the staff deep into the earth, a trace of the smile of victory still on his lips. The red flag, riddled with bullet holes, fluttered triumphantly, proudly, like a ball of leaping flames amid the smoke enveloping "Oid Baldy."

As the rear forces charged up I ordered them to immediately occupy the two flank positions and exterminate the remaining enemy troops. Our staunch fighters rushed up like a tidal wave, rolling forward in different directions for attacks on positions Nos. 15 and 16.

While fierce fighting was still in progress on the two flanks I discovered behind enemy positions more than a hundred American soldiers mustering, apparently intending to recapture the main peak under cover of tanks. I immediately communicated this observation to our artillery battery and in no

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one our powerful guns were bombarding the enemy concentration. The area was shrouded in heavy smoke and rocks were flying in all directions. The hundred or so American soldiers were all killed and buried there under the debris.

My messenger kept reporting to me as the situation developed. "Position No. 16 captured." Now only Position \_No. 15 remained in enemy hands. I anxiously awaited the news of each victory.

Then all of a sudden from far away on Height 15 there burst forth a peal of cheers so loud that the darkness of the night seemed pierced by it.

"No. 15 has been captured!"

"Victory! Hurrah!"

Throbbing with excitement, I jumped up and snatched the transmitter from the hands of my walkie-talkie operator. "Zero one! Zero one! Eight-fifty; eight-fifty; according to plan the position has been taken in its entirety! Yes, the position has been taken completely!"

The commander of our regiment expressed his congratulations on our victory. Blended with his voice were the cheers of our comrades on the top of the hill. The fighters began to dance round the red banner, and "The Song of the Red Flag" penetrated the depths of the night. They had changed the last line of the song to:

*And our red flag is flying on the highest peak!*

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# SACRIFICED HIMSELF

**WAN FU-LAI**

*Company Commander*

It was 10 o'clock in the evening of October 19, 1952. Under strong cover of gunfire, we had recaptured in rapid succession Positions Nos. 4, 5 and 6 to the right of Height 597.9. But just as we were about to take possession of the whole rugged area around the foot of the hill enemy firing points left on the main peak and on Position Zero immediately below it suddenly sprang to life again. Their gunfire, spitting from points both high and low, formed a fiery net over us, confining us to the ridge of Position Zero. Our artillery bombardment had by this time already been lifted according to plan, and now we ourselves must sweep away the obstacles to our advance. Our shock troops paused, taking shelter in bomb craters and behind enemy corpses. Just then, flares rose one after another over the battlefield, lighting it up as though it were day. Thus I could see distinctly about 50 metres distant, in the front line of Position Zero, two enemy firing points side by side which provided cover for enemy troops in a large bomb-pit a few metres off. Further back, some 30 metres distant, was a big enemy pillbox. These firing points made the hilltop a veritable fortress, formidable and inaccessible.

By that time our company's shock force had been reduced to sixteen of whom only nine were combat soldiers. To capture Position Zero was to be no easy task. However, Comrade Feng Yu-thing, the political instructor, and I decided

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that no matter what the difficulties we must continue to push ahead. For at daybreak the enemy would certainly launch a counter-attack from Position Zero and it would then be impossible for us to hold on at the foot of the hill. In that event our blood would be shed in vain and a very heavy price paid later on to launch another counter-attack to support our comrades who had withdrawn to the tunnels on Height 597.9. Thus I resolved to accomplish the task even if it should mean a fight to the last man. I organized the nine combat men into three groups, forming our company's staunchest squad of men, the "Meritorious Sixth Squad," as we named it. We prepared to go and dynamite the enemy pillbox at Position Zero.

Just then the battalion chief of staff, Comrade Chang Kuang-sheng, arrived with his messenger Huang Chi-kuang. After hearing my report on the situation, he declared most emphatically:

"We must capture Position Zero before dawn at whatever cost."

While carrying out the task of throwing explosives the first group of fighters of the Sixth Squad fell under the enemy's concentrated gunfire. The second group followed up, then the third till all nine comrades had fallen bravely before the enemy gunfire. Seeing our fighters give their lives one after another in battle, the chief of staff exclaimed again and again: "Heroes! Heroes!"

But the situation became ever more grave. Who else could be sent against the enemy? Aside from two messengers for the company, there were only the political instructor, Comrade Feng Yu-ching, and myself with sufficient combat experience to undertake such an arduous task. The time had come when our Party and our motherland would require of us extreme sacrifice. I requested the chief of staff to allow me to go. At the same time Comrade Feng Yu-ching also volunteered to participate in planting explosives. But the

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chief of staff, placing his hands upon our shoulders, said sternly:

"No, that won't do! Commanding officers are needed for other tasks."

Without an instant's hesitation the battalion messenger, Huang Chi-kuang, stepped forward from beside the chief of staff and requested:

"Comrade Chief of Staff, please entrust me with the task!"

The chief of staff gripped the messenger's hand and I could see his eyes gleaming as he told him: "Good! Comrade Huang Chi-kuang, you are a Youth League member. I am confident you can accomplish the task."

Our company's two messengers, Wu Shan-yang and Hsiao Teng-liang, had shown their eagerness for the task at the time our instructor and I offered to go ourselves. Now they insisted on going with Huang Chi-kuang. Thus we organized the three of them into another "Meritorious Sixth Squad" with Huang Chi-kuang as leader.

They laid aside their tommy-guns and lined their belts with hand-grenades. Huang Chi-kuang took his Resist-U.S.Agression-Aid-Korea Medal from his pocket and Hsiao Tengliang also got out his medal and his diary and handed them over to us. But the chief of staff said to them:

"Why leave your medals here? The medal is an honour our motherland has conferred on us. You should wear them as you go into battle and attain still

greater honour."

The instructor pinned the medals onto the breasts of the three comrades and, with Huang Chi-kuang's hand in his, gave them parting advice:

"All right, go now! Be nimble and flexible. We will await the news of your success!"

Huang Chi-kuang looked up into the face of the political instructor and spoke out his noblest thought:

"I shall prove myself worthy of the care and education the Party has given me. Since the day I joined the Youth League my only hope has been that one day I could become a mem-

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ber of the Communist Party. If in discharging my duty this time I can meet the requirements of the Party, please recommend that I become a glorious Communist!"

"The Party will certainly accept one who is loyal to his , motherland and courageous in battle. You may be sure of that as you go out to fight!"

With deep emotion the chief of staff once more gave them counsel: "Comrades, representatives of the people of our motherland are watching beside us. We must answer them with victory!"

"Please tell the comrades of the delegation to tell our people that they may expect news of our victory." With these words Huang Chi-kuang, together with his two comrades-in-arms, started out towards the enemy's firing points.

The chief of staff stood gazing at his messenger Huang Chikuang hastening to his task. Parting his tight-set lips he said softly. "He will achieve victory!" Then he turned to me and said, "Comrade Wan Fu-lai, you must keep up your reports on the situation. I am going to bring up more men to support you." Thereupon he turned and made his way back.

I focused my eyes on the three agile figures rushing forward under the enemy's net of fire. They advanced nimbly, skilfully taking advantage of the intervals in the enemy's firing and making use of bomb craters for shelter. When they had got quite close to the two nearest enemy firing points, Huang Chi-kuang directed his two comrades to form a triangle with him and thus crawl forward at top speed. Suddenly the enemy's firing points opened up on them. Wu Shan-yang, the forward man of the triangle, could be seen furiously hurling himself into a bomb pit. Immediately there were explosions at the two firing points almost

simultaneously, shaking the entire ridge, while dazzling flame lit up the hill-slope. Through gaps in the screen of gunpowder smoke we could see the enemy troops scrambling panic-stricken from bomb pits towards the rear of the ridge. The hand-grenades of Huang Chi-kuang and his two comrades continued to explode

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at the heels of the fleeing enemy. After this swift onslaught the more stubborn remnants of the enemy fled into the last of their firing points. Instantly enemy machine-gun and artillery fire from the main peak and Position Zero was again concentrated on us, and the battlefield was once again veiled in smoke so that nothing could be seen distinctly.

The political instructor braved the enemy fire to rush forward and direct the Sixth Squad in continuing their fight. By that time, four fighters mobilized by the battalion chief of staff as reinforcements also came up; and I was about to send in another group when suddenly Hsiao Teng-liang came crawling back, dragging one leg behind him.

"Company Commander," he cried out, "give me more hand-grenades. Quick!"

"What has happened? Are the others wounded too?"

"Wu Shan-yang is dead. Huang Chi-kuang has a slight wound, nothing serious." Then he added as he took the hand-grenades:

"The enemy fire is too dense for many of us to go— losses would be too heavy. Rest assured; we pledge to fulfil our task."

As the enemy fire thinned a little smoke and dust dispersed from the battlefield and I saw Huang Chi-kuang again. He had been replenished with hand-grenades and seemed to be saying something to the political instructor and Hsiao Teng-liang, both of whom lay flat to the ground; and then, a quick flit and Huang Chi-kuang had rushed forward again.

Now quite close to the enemy stronghold, he had obviously been discovered; for the enemy fire came spurting at him like a stream of glittering flames from a nozzle, while flares lit up his short sturdy figure. Plunging through the red smoke and dust he sprang forward four times, and four times fell back.

There could never be a moment more tense than this. In the few seconds' interval between two waves of enemy machine-gun fire I saw the dark figure rush forward. A loud



C.P.V. shock troops charging the enemy positions

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explosion followed, and both the human figure and the pillbox were lost in smoke. Caught up in the excitement of the moment, I was just about to dash forward with my men when I saw enemy fire spurting again in the midst of smoke and dust. Obviously the grenade responsible for the explosion a moment before had missed its mark and the enemy's machine-guns spit forth even more viciously, as though maddened. Again the dark figure flashed through the rising fire and smoke. "He is still alive!" I assured myself excitedly. In vaguest outline he darted in and out of view several times; but aside from the mad barking of the enemy's machine-guns no detonation could be heard.

"Why doesn't he strike with hand-mines?" I wondered, as the battalion chief of staff and I gazed on the front in deepest anxiety. Each of the several fighters who had come up to reinforce us had taken hand-grenades, ready to dash forward.

At this most anxious moment Huang Chi-kuang's figure once more appeared from the midst of smoke and fire. It was clear that he had already approached the

stronghold from the side. Through the thin veil of smoke there I could see him straighten his body and stretch out his two arms, then like a fierce tiger he threw himself onto the muzzle of the machine-gun.

The flashing tongues of fire were suddenly extinguished as the roar of the machine-gun was reduced to a low whine and then to complete silence.

"Comrades, charge!" What I had seen in that brief space of time had brought home to me what had happened in all its poignancy. I felt my blood rushing hot through my veins as I leaped up, shouting in excitement, and charged on with the fighters. Enveloped in smoke and dust, we climbed up onto Position Zero through a sea of flame so vast that the air above was heated by it. But we wiped out every last enemy soldier who put up stubborn resistance.

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## **ONE WILL, ONE HEART**

**WANG TSAI-PANG**

*Battalion Chief of Staff*

One night during the toughest stage of the battle at Sangkumryung I was ordered to one of the tunnels along the forefront on an organizing task. The regimental commander, briefing me on the situation there, had said that the troops guarding this tunnel were a miscellaneous group of soldiers from different outfits who had lost connection with their original units in the course of the past several counter-attacks. Owing to their diversity and lack of a common military commander they had rather poor battle discipline. The walkie-talkie operator there had taken the initiative of communicating with the regimental headquarters to ask for a cadre to be sent quickly to organize these soldiers into a homogeneous unit and to direct their fighting. Thus I arrived at the tunnel.

Wishing first to familiarize myself with the conditions in the tunnel before deciding on what measures to adopt, I did not make any stir upon my arrival but sidled up to the entrance to listen for a while. I could make out dimly that some were polishing their guns in the flicker of a candle while others were just lolling about. Occasionally, from the pitch-dark depths of the tunnel came the faint, suppressed groans of the wounded: sometimes an uproar would lead one to think a brawl was going on. The whole tunnel it seemed was in a state of confusion. The air was polluted and oppressing.

"Come on! Let's go out for a counter-attack. These fellows are all of them inclined to deviate to the right," said a big stout machine-gunner to the tummy-gunner at his side.

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"Who's deviating to the right?" another short soldier bristled up to inquire.

Another man of thirty-odd (he was, as I found out later, officer of supplies, the only cadre in the tunnel with no wound at all) rose up between them and said in a conciliatory tone.

"Stop your row, we're all here to kill the enemy and defend our position. If we hold different opinions, we can talk things over."

No sooner had this discord died down than someone inside shouted:

"Who'll go out with me?"

"Calm down. This is war, not a game of poker."

". . . . ."

I listened for fully five minutes and then began to understand: these soldiers who had lost contact with their own units during the counter-attacks had not been in the tunnel very long; not only were they unacquainted with one another but their hearts seethed with hatred for the enemy to the point of impatience and even grumpiness. It was obvious that these men needed organization and leadership more urgently at the moment even than water and biscuits.

I hunched over and groped my way along till I got to a place appropriately in the middle, where I stopped and said in a loud voice:

"Comrades! How are you? I greet you on behalf of your superior officers!" Apparently my words did not reach the recesses of the tunnel, for those inside went on with their shouting till hushed into silence by those nearer the entrance. "I'm a battalion chief of staff," I went on, "sent here by our leaders to direct your fighting. . . ."

Instantly the buzz of conversation rose again like water boiling and seething in the pot. A young soldier leaned forward to look me up and down at close range and then muttered to himself, not without a look of suspicion however:

"Battalion chief of staff? Ah, battalion chief of staff!"

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"Which battalion?" a wounded soldier asked another one at his side in a low voice.

"Don't bother which battalion! So long as it's the Chinese People's Volunteers that's enough for me," replied the other wounded soldier.

"Good! I'll go right away and enroll myself in the shock brigade!" the soldier holding a tommy-gun said loudly to another who was holding a light machine-gun in his arms.

Suddenly a voice came hoarse and rasping in falsetto from among the crowd:

"We really should get ourselves well organized and go out and fight the enemy!" These words were for those around to hear no doubt, but at the same time they were meant expressly for me.

Immediately I shouted, echoing the words of the soldier:

"Comrades! Just now someone suggested that we organize ourselves. Right! Only when we are organized do we have strength. Though we have come from different units our hearts are set on the same thing: to annihilate the enemy and safeguard our motherland!"

An immediate hubbub arose there in the tunnel, out of which could be heard shouts of:

"Let's get organized!"

"Yes, let's organize ourselves!"

". . . . ."

A tall young man elbowed his way up to me and said: "Comrade Chief of Staff, in the tunnel here are men from many different units. I would be willing to do the work of registering every one here." His voice sounded very familiar. On looking at him closer, I found him to be no other than the cultural instructor for my battalion, Li Ya-to — a young intellectual who had undergone severe tests in the war.

"Good," I nodded.

"One more word, Comrade Chief of Staff," he went on. "It would be better if you could get a nurse to help me in this work because many of the wounded will pretend to be able-

bodied and sign up to participate in the counter-attack. They need a physical

check-up."

Of course it was beyond my resources to satisfy this last request of his. All the same the registration soon got underway and all except the gravely wounded, who really could not move, sat up for it. The Communists took out the receipt-cards for their Party dues and the Youth League members theirs for their League dues. Each of the men gave an account (which sounded almost like an official report) of his own capacity and combat experience and each pledged himself to his task in the battle.

The man of thirty or so who had tried to mediate in the dispute came up to me and, taking out the receipt-card for his Party dues, reported: "Comrade Chief of Staff, I'm a Communist, admitted to the Party in the thick of battle during the Huai-Hai Campaign in 1948. I've been through twenty to thirty battles, big and small, first as a common soldier and then as a squad leader. I joined the Volunteers in 1950 and am now serving as supplies officer. I hope that the Party will put me down among the first to be entrusted with the most dangerous and most difficult of tasks." He spoke with such strength of will that I was deeply moved.

"Can you direct the fighting?"

"I can. I'm sure I wouldn't be any worse than those green platoon leaders!" he answered, perfectly self-assured.

Even after the registration some of the men could still not set their minds at rest, but one by one came to me again to express their resolution and ask to be assigned for combat duty. I promised them their request would be granted; then I shook hands with every one of the comrades in the tunnel and gave them encouragement.

Before daybreak we had established communication with the comrades in the small tunnel No. 1 above us. A Communist Party branch was formed of comrades from both tunnels with Chang Yung-kuan, the political instructor of the Ninth

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Company in the tunnel above, as branch secretary. In line with the decisions of the Party branch I organized the men in our tunnel into five squads: three combat squads, one squad of guards comprising men only slightly wounded, and the fifth — a reserve squad of the more seriously wounded who were thus organized only upon their repeated requests to join in the fight.

The atmosphere of the tunnel underwent a complete change. The groans of the wounded gave way to the sounds of gun polishing and the unscrewing of hand-

grenade. caps. There was no more quarrelling and grumbling.

Standing at the walkie-talkie, I examined the registration list and found that, not counting the more severely wounded, we had only twenty-four men who could fight. And these twenty-four represented no less than thirteen different units. Now, under Party leadership, these men were organized and brought into close fellowship. Our will was one: "to wipe out the enemy and hold our ground in the tunnel." We would smash the enemy once and for all!

In the next two days and three nights we had one victory after another. We made several sorties against the enemy, shattering their defence works on the hilltops, damaging the heavy machine-guns and rocket-launchers they had set up on the crest of the hill and blasting time and again their schemes to ruin our tunnel with dynamite, gas and incendiary shells.

Cruel and intense fighting continued till the night of the 19th when the regimental commander himself spoke to me over the walkie-talkie:

"Wang Tsai-pang, Wang Tsai-pang, prepare to serve the meal, \* prepare to serve the meal! Have you got chopsticks \* \* over there? Have you got chopsticks over there?"

I answered him in full confidence.

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\* "Serve the meal" refers to launching the counter-attack.

\* \* "Chopsticks" refers to troops.

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Then the regimental commander proceeded with his coded order to start the counter-attack at 11 o'clock that evening upon Position No. 4 on Height 537.7.

The fighters in the tunnel all looked at me serenely as they had every time I talked with our superior officers over the phone. How eagerly they had awaited the day of counterattack! Now the day had finally come. I put down the transmitter and announced to them:

"Comrades, the regimental commander has ordered us to launch a counter-attack on Position No. 4 tonight. We are to start preparations now!"

My words had no sooner left my lips than a tumultuous cheer went up from the tunnel. The men simply could not suppress their joy. Some stood up, gun in hand, while others thrust hand-grenades under their belts. Those with only slight

wounds tidied up their bandages so as to appear presentable. The more seriously wounded, too, struggled to crawl out. There was at that moment throughout the tunnel an atmosphere of excitement and bustle almost like before a festival.

At 11 o'clock that evening after a fierce artillery attack on the enemy entrenched on surface positions, the signal for counter-attack was given and our "shock platoon," composed of men from thirteen different units but filled with a common, infinite hatred for the enemy, went into action. Like lava from a suddenly erupting volcano, they rushed upon the foe according to plan.

## **SEVENTEEN FLASKS OF WATER**

**HU CHAO-CHUN**

*Messenger, Meritorious Fighter Special Class*

Comrade Li Yu-wen and I filled seventeen army flasks with water, stoppered them and, dividing them between us, slung them over our shoulders. Then, fastening them close to our bodies by means of our belts, we crawled around in the tunnel to see how we went. The result was fairly good. Though the flasks were somewhat burdensome, they did not hinder our movements too much.

After we had got all our gear fastened about our persons we saluted and said good-bye to the battalion political instructor: "Comrade Instructor, we're going back now!"

"Not so fast there!" the instructor said, extending an arm to stop us. Consulting his watch, he said warmly: "It's not yet seven, still not dark enough outside. Wait a while and don't go till you've eaten and drunk your fill."

Although this tunnel, of which the political instructor had charge, was besieged by the enemy in the same way as the one on our hill, yet, as this was farther from the summit of the hill, its consumption of all necessities, including ammunition and water, was comparatively less. Its water supply, in particular, was relieved by the tunnel being in a concavity in the hill so that spring water seeped from the crevices in the rocks. In this respect, it had a great advantage over the bone dry cave on the hilltop that we, under our battalion commander, were guarding. So when our tunnel ran out of water, Li Yu-wen and I had volunteered to fetch some for the sake of our comrades' lives and for victory in our struggle.

Now we ate some biscuits and drank plenty of water, then the instructor accompanied us to the mouth of the tunnel. It was already pitch dark outside. On the shelter at the tunnel entrance a machine-gun had been mounted to face the hilltop, specially arranged no doubt by the instructor to protect us. On our way back to our tunnel. The instructor shook our hands as he advised us in a low voice: "Take it easy; don't be impetuous. Just take your time now, and be careful!" Then, seizing a moment when the enemy gunfire was comparatively thin, we quietly crawled out of the tunnel and, loaded down with the flasks, headed straight for the hilltop.

I should have been thoroughly familiar with the terrain between the two tunnels, for I had been to and fro countless times and could get from one to the other even with my eyes closed. But as a result of the battles there those days, everything was totally changed: the communication trench linking the two tunnels was no more, and the hill-slope was nothing but a rutted criss-cross of shell pits of various sizes.

So even on our trip over we had quite a lot of trouble finding the entrance to the tunnel where we were to get water. After crawling for a short while I paused a moment to get my bearings.

Li Yu-wen urged in a whisper: "Group Leader, hurry!"

"Wait a minute," I replied. "With enemy firing points all around us, we must be careful not to crawl off in the wrong direction."

Suddenly, with a "pah," a flare was set gleaming over our heads. I thought I would move up a bit in the shadow of the smoke from the flare, but then suddenly a wind sprang up and blew it away. We would have to lie patiently and wait for the flare to go out. Meanwhile I carefully studied the route we would take up the hill-slope. About a hundred metres to the right, near the hilltop, was the battered communication trench, and in that trench was a big gap. One

more bend after that and we would be at the entrance to our tunnel.

Immediately the flare went out, I let Li Yu-wen go on ahead of me. He made very slow progress, and as he inched forward, he left a depression like the irrigation ditch between two rows of vegetables. Suddenly another flare went up and we had to stop again. "Heavens! If it goes on like this much longer we won't reach our destination till broad daylight!"

The surface of that part of the hill-slope had been turned up by shells till it was like an ash heap. I had never seen anything like it. Shells had so loosened the earth and rock that for every foot forward we advanced we sank five inches and had to exert a lot of energy digging my two hands into the earth and dragging the lower part of my body forward. After crawling wearily thus like an earthworm a short while my head was bathed in sweat and dust clung to my face and filled my eyes so that I had to rub them hard with my sleeve until they ached and tears came before I could open them at all. The sweat and dirt made me itch maddeningly all over.

Through the darkness I could see that Li Yu-wen had crawled almost up to the communication trench. How happy I was! But immediately after that I was shocked to see him straighten up and run for the trench in the brilliance of a flare. Quick as a wink a cloud of smoke and dust had swallowed up the trench. The enemy had hurled a hand-grenade at Li! Then came a sweep of enemy machine-gun fire and more hand-grenades over that strip of the hill-slope. I quickly rolled into a shell hole as bullets flew shrieking all around me, their "ping! pang!" and "putz, putz," like the sound of a big pan of peanuts frying. In the face of all this I crawled over to Li Yu-wen, calling his name. When there was no answer I nudged him but he did not move. He was dead.

Just then a bullet flew past, struck a rock in front of me with a "sh-sh" sound and glanced back, grazing my head. I knew I could not stay there long, so I quickly unfastened the flasks from around Li Yu-wen's body and silently bade him

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farewell: "Let me first deliver the water then I'll come back for You, dear comrade-in-arms!"

I crept into a shell hole where there were four enemy corpses in bullet-proof nylon vests and piled the bodies up for shelter. Thus the enemy, sweeping madly over me with their machine-guns, only put more bullets into their own corpses, "putz, putz," while I laid down safely on my stomach. "Fire ahead; see how long you can keep it up!" thought I.

A full thirty minutes passed before there was a halt in the machine-gun fire from the hill opposite and the two flanks while on the hilltop three machine-guns still rattled away. The glistening whiteness of the flare changed to pale yellowish but I would have to rein in my temper and wait patiently for it to vanish altogether, then, in the brief calm that followed, creep swiftly and surely up the hill.

While I was passing within five or six metres of the enemy entrenched on the hilltop, with the entrance to our tunnel immediately to the right, the sky was again lit up by a flare directly over my head. Excited, I lost my grip and rolled back

down a few steps, setting the loosened earth and gravel rolling. The commotion alerted an enemy guard on the hilltop who cried out in alarm. Then hand-grenades and packs of explosives were thrown down, wounding my left arm. I threw my body over the flasks to shield them, thinking: "My body will heal but these flasks of water must not be hit. A few holes in them and the water's finished." No, I could not delay further; I would have to make a bee line for the tunnel.

An enemy lay crouched on the hilltop, a sentinel perhaps. There was another with a rifle four or five metres to the left of our tunnel, watching the entrance. "Drat it! How am I to get in now!" My whole body felt weak and soft as a ball of cotton. There seemed to be a ton weight on my legs so that I could not lift them from the ground, and the pain in my wound was bitter.

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But there was no time to delay there even for a brief moment for the water supply in our tunnel had been exhausted for several days already. The lips of the battalion commander and all the fighters were fissured and bleeding. They coughed each time they inhaled while eating and biscuit crumbs, still dry and hard, would be expelled from their nostrils. Thirst had swelled the throat of our walkie-talkie operator into a lump as big as a plum and still he went on shouting with his hoarse, cracked voice all day long. Some of our wounded comrades would ask for water now and then in their weak voices. . . . Water had become our most grave problem in carrying on our fight against the enemy from the tunnel. With water, we would be able to keep up the fight despite the enemy siege till our final victory; but without water, the enemy wouldn't need to attack — we would die of thirst without ever emerging from the tunnel. Therefore, if I could just get the seventeen flasks of water into the tunnel I would be quite willing even to give up my life to do it if necessary. I had lost my one hand-grenade on the way as I crept along but had retrieved a hand-mine from the body of a martyred comrade I found in a machine-gun nest. Tossing away the safety-catch, I took the mine with me and crept forward. thinking to myself: "If I can only make it to the tunnel entrance! . . . Should I be killed there my comrades would surely discover me, the seventeen flasks of water would then be in their hands and my task would be fulfilled."

Finally I did succeed in inching my way up to the tunnel entrance. But just as I was straightening up to climb over the breast wall the enemy soldier to the left saw me and levelled his gun in fright. Before he could shoot, however. I let fly my hand-mine at him. Then rolling into the tunnel I was at once received by comradely hands.

While outside was the muffled sound of that hand-mine exploding. . . .

## **AN APPLE**

**CHANG CHI-FA**

*Company Commander, Meritorious Fighter First Class*

"Company Commander, here's an apple for you!"

This came from a front-line transport man who had been sent over from Fifth Company to reinforce us. He was short and lean and twenty years old at the outside. Upon entering our shelter he first put down his burden of ammunition, then the very next thing he did was to hand me the apple.

Our shelter was not more than three by two metres — a small place indeed — so though it was dusk I could see the young transport man plainly enough in the light filtering through the entrance. His lank figure was covered with dust, the legs of his thin trousers torn in places from crawling and rolling all the way under fire, while the skin of his legs showed numerous scratches on which the blood had already dried. I looked at his gaunt sweating face and asked, a little skeptical:

"Where does this apple come from?"

"Oh, I picked it up on the way. Company Commander, your voice has become hoarse; the apple will ease your throat a bit!"

What he said was indeed the truth: the seven days since the 24th, when our company had launched an attack, we had not had a single drop of water. All I had had was a wedge of turnip two inches long that the battalion commander had given me the night before. To say that my throat was hot and dry was a gross understatement of fact — it felt scorched to

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the point of bursting into flame! The parching thirst of the fighters must have been even more acute.

"Your transport work is pretty strenuous," I said to the young comrade. "You'd better eat the apple yourself." I knew it was tough enough for him those days too, sharing the hardships of our life.

"No, I can get cold water to drink on the way," he smiled at me shyly, declining

resolutely to take the apple in spite of anything I could say.

Everyone knew that there was not a single drop of water to be had within three *li* of the path leading to our rear and the transport comrade had told a white lie so we would not worry about him — Such was his love for us.

I gazed at the apple in deep appreciation. It had been polished with great care — flecks of red shone on its smooth green skin, and the aroma it gave off was positively maddening! At that moment I alone could easily have put away not one, but a dozen or two apples.

Who should have it? was the question in my mind as I held up the apple. Just then Li Hsin-min, our walkie-talkie comrade, started reporting to our higher command on the battle situation. I was struck by his voice, or rather, his lack of voice. For he too, so fond of talking and singing, had snatched precious little rest those days and nights of continuous fighting. His lips were so dry that they had split in places, blood oozing out and forming crusts. His face was like a mask — covered with dust, the eyes sunk deep into their dark sockets, shot through with blood and red like those of a person in high fever.

"Li Hsin-min, take this apple and share it with the others here. Moisten your throat with it so that you can carry on your work better." I handed him the apple.

Li Hsin-min stared at me blankly. He knew that I would never retract what I had said. He turned round and looked at the others, then at the wounded messenger, Lan Fa-pao, lying

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at the back of the cave. He took the apple but did not eat it; he gave it to Lan Fa-pao. The messenger Lan Fa-pao had always been with me. One day while on an errand his right leg had been fractured by a shell but we very seldom heard him groan as he lay in pain. Now his face was sallow and his parched lips a dull purple. He took the apple and was about to bite into it when, he glanced around, suddenly closed his mouth again and put the apple down. He had discovered that it was the only apple.

"Company Commander, you haven't had any water for quite a few days. You'd better eat it to help you perform your duties as our commanding officer," he said. No matter how we urged him, Lan Fa-pao just wouldn't take a bite and finally handed the apple back to me.

So all I could do was pass the apple on to the bugler, who immediately passed it to the health worker beside him, who gave it back to Lan Fa-pao, whom he had been looking after day and night. Finally, after making a complete round, the

apple came back into my hand once again.

It was no use going on like this. I knew that the harder our struggle was the more solicitous our soldiers were of their leaders' well-being. If I would not eat it, surely they would not. Therefore I decided to share the precious apple among the eight of us.

Even then, persuasion was needed to get the apple eaten. I said in my rasping voice: "Comrades, we can recapture our positions and drive off the enemy; how is it that we can't finish up an apple?"

No one uttered a word so I pressed my point:

"Come now, let everyone have a bite. Anyone refusing will be regarded as not keenly concerned with victory!"

Thereupon I myself took the first bite then passed it on to Li Hsin-min. He put it to his mouth, bit off a tiny piece and handed it on to Hu Ching-tsai. The apple was thus passed from one to another but after a whole round still more than half of it remained.

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"Who hasn't taken a bite?" I asked.

Again no one uttered a word.

I became a little impatient and was about to say a few words of reproach and give an order for everyone to eat his share of the apple when I felt a sudden strange silence in the general atmosphere around me. In the fading twilight I saw the ever cheerful walkie-talkie operator, Li Hsin-min, now with teardrops glistening on his cheeks. And in the dim light that still filtered into the cave from outside I saw the other comrades wiping their eyes with the backs of their hands. Powerful emotion seized me and it seemed for a moment that something had got stuck in my throat. The love between class brothers had pierced the dark night of bitter fighting and penetrated to the depths of my heart. Tears welled in my eyes but they were tears of happiness and pride.

## **HOW THE THREAT TO POSITION 10 WAS AVERTED**

**HU HSIU-TAO**

*Fighter, Hero of the Korean Democratic People's Republic,*

Twenty-four enemy attacks against Position 3 on Height 597.9 had been repulsed. Making use of an interval between battles, Teng Tu-sheng and I hastened to set our munitions in order. Rows of hand-grenades with caps removed lay at hand, ready to be hurled against the enemy at any moment. Though there were only two of us on the position, in fighting strength we were equal to two platoons.

No sooner had the smoke of gunfire dispersed from the position than the enemy heavy artillery sounded up again. Waves of explosions broke over us fiercely and torn-up earth and rock clattered down on our heads but we paid not the slightest heed, just waited for the impending enemy charge.

"Get ready for it!" I said to Teng Tu-sheng.

We crept to our fighting posts, each with a grenade firmly in hand. I stuck my head out and looked down the hill, but neither hide nor hair of the enemy was visible. It was incredible, for the enemy had a set routine of first extending the range of their heavy artillery and opening up on us with their mortars and 50 mm. heavy machine-guns from the hill Opposite, then enemy soldiers would rush up in flocks. This time they had followed much the same procedure except that there was no follow-up by the infantry. I made a careful search once again but still could not see a single enemy soldier.

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It was all very puzzling and I wondered what tricks the enemy were up to now?

I hastily scanned the flank positions. Ho! There in front of Position 10 was a large black mass of enemy soldiers slinking up. I watched their movements anxiously, secretly worried for our fighters holding the position. Helmeted and bristling with rifles the enemy soldiers climbed halfway up the hill like a pack of ravening wolves. "Hit them! Quick! Hit them with grenades!" I thought to myself. A minute's delay and the situation would become desperate! But still all was quiet on Position 10. Except for the puffs of smoke rising from shell explosions one could see only uprooted stumps of trees, bits of shattered rock and the bald mountain top. No response whatsoever came from Position 10, and not a single human form was to be seen.

I grew more and more uneasy. Could it be that our position there had been evacuated? If so, it would be lost for certain and the enemy thus enabled to attack Positions 3 and 9 from an altitude. Height 597.9 would be doomed!

I turned to observe the situation at my rear. The rapid enemy gunfire had concentrated into a wall of fire completely sealing off all possible paths for troop movements. It would be difficult for our reinforcements to make a quick breakthrough. And by the time they did succeed in getting through, it would probably be too late. I was in such a state of anxiety that sweat was streaming down my face and I seemed to be sitting on a pin cushion. How I longed at that moment for our fighters suddenly to appear on the mountain top!

Seconds lengthened into minutes and still no sign of activity on our hilltop position. Each second was now dearer than life itself, for the enemy was charging up the hill. Position 10 was in imminent danger! Then, like a flash, an idea struck me: if we ran up at top speed we could make it ahead of the enemy. Position 10 could still be saved!

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"Teng Tu-sheng!" I shouted in great haste, "Quick, follow me to Ten!"

Teng Tu-sheng was on his feet at once, but he hesitated a bit. "After we go, what about Position 3?" he objected. "What if the enemy. . . ."

Yes, there was the rub. What if the enemy was playing the trick of "luring the tiger away from the mountain"? After we had gone over to Position 10 suppose the enemy should turn on Position 3? I was at the height of perplexity when luckily, a messenger who had been sent by company headquarters for information on the situation appeared on the scene. How opportune his arrival was! I wasted no time in seizing him and saying: "Hold Position 3 while we go to Ten! In case we're killed report the circumstances to the company officers!" Without waiting for a reply I was off up the slope, rushing towards Position 10.

I carried a bangalore torpedo in my left hand, the fuse held down tightly under my thumb, and in my right hand I had a hand-mine, the safety-can of which I had bitten off. If I reached the position ahead of the enemy, I would use these weapons to beat off his charge; if the enemy should arrive first then I would use them to destroy the enemy and myself together. Behind would be Comrade Teng Tu-sheng, who would thus be able to hold the position.

I knew the enemy encamped on the slope opposite had discovered me when he began showering me with machine-gun bullets. I was pinned down on a ridge eight or nine metres from Position 10, unable to raise my head, as bullets whipped over me. But I knew I mustn't die yet for I still had to rush up to the summit. I quickly rolled into a shell hole and then, creeping and rolling from one pit to another, I gained some ground. My anxiety was by no means relieved, however, for the enemy were also creeping along. If they should creep faster than I did. . . .

No, I mustn't think of that, but just keep on creeping feverishly up like a pangolin. Not really creeping either but simply moving upwards on all fours

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as quickly as possible. Finally I reached the summit. I raised my head. Ho! I was face to face with the enemy!

The mere sight of me seemed to throw the enemy into a panic. They stood stupefied for some time then, relying on their numbers, began rushing fiercely at me. I took one look at those bandit brutes then angrily hurled my hand-mine at them. The concussion knocked me unconscious. . . .

Vaguely I felt someone helping me sit up and heard Teng Tu-sheng calling me in an agitated voice: "Hu Hsiu-tao! Hu Hsiu-tao !"

Now again I heard the clamour of the enemy from the foot of the hill. I opened my eyes and, pushing Teng Tu-sheng away, said: "Don't bother about me. Strike at the enemy first!"

Teng Tu-sheng at once laid me down, grasped his hand-mines and grenades and immediately engaged the enemy in battle.

I was bathed in sweat, my eyes were glazed and the whole universe seemed to be whirling. The pungent nitrous smoke stifled me and I shook with the pain of a thousand needles pricking my body. How I longed just to lie down in a shell hole and drop off to sleep! But I remembered that the enemy would soon be bearing down upon our position. My pain was at once forgotten. With tremendous effort I raised my chest from the ground. One of the fingers of my left hand felt as if it had been stung by a scorpion. Ah, it was the bangalore torpedo pinching my finger. At the sight of that torpedo my spirits immediately rose. Leaping up, I hurled it into the midst of the enemy.

Even after the hill slope had been strewn with their corpses the enemy continued swarming up in great numbers. But before they could engage us we heard prolonged whizzing in the air and, in a trice, balls of flame were flashing within the enemy ranks. Teng Tu-sheng was shouting rapturously: "Bravo! Good shot! That's getting 'em! The comrades of the artillery deserve high honours!" Suddenly I heard some

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one shouting from behind me and, picking up a hand-mine as precaution, I turned round to find Ho Ta-cheng and two other of our fighters coming up to reinforce us. Overjoyed, I ran over and embraced first one and then another. "Oh! Am I glad

you've come!" I said exultantly. "The enemy has been beaten back — Position 10 remains firmly in our hands!"

## **OUR "FIRING LINE PUBLISHING HOUSE"**

**LI MING-TIEN**

*Deputy Chief of Propaganda Section*

In a small corner of the tunnel that served as the command post of the division's political department a wooden plank was set, about three feet long and one foot wide. This was our "Firing Line Publishing House." The staff consisted of three people — a functionary of my section, a stencil cutter who also ran off the copies, and me. We were often compelled to turn to other jobs as well as our own — reporting, editing, stencil-cutting, mimeographing, or distributing. In other words, each of us had to be a "Jack of all trades."

The director of the division's political department demanded that our publishing be done "promptly and still more promptly." We thoroughly understood the importance of speed because when a soldier distinguished himself at the front, other fighters were very anxious to know about it as soon as possible! And the fighter himself also wanted to pass on his experience with all possible speed in order that his comrades-in-arms might use it to kill more of the enemy. Our duty was precisely to spread such news and make the necessary explanations so as to encourage all others to wipe out the enemy with similar accuracy. On the other hand, if our publishing was just a bit tardy, there would be a "surplus" of articles, because almost all the fighters and cadres, whether at the front lines where the bullets were flying, or on the transport line under heavy enemy barrage, actively supported us and sent in daily reports about the good fights their comrades had put up. Most important of all, every day they

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performed new exploits. Had we not published promptly, new material would have been squeezed out by still newer material and thus become out-of-date. So "still more promptly" became our watchword, the common goal for which the staff of our "publishing house" strived.

To achieve this goal, we used to gather in the daily battle reports from the front over the phone. Sometimes by standing on the road leading from the front to the

rear we were able to collect some of the latest items by interviewing commanders, fighters, the wounded and the transport corps as they returned from the front. Besides, we had a "special correspondent" at headquarters.

On October 30, the night the big counter-offensive was launched, I went to headquarters in the capacity of "special correspondent." The divisional commander, holding the receiver to his ear, stared at his watch. Suddenly, as though just discovering my presence he asked in surprise, "What are you waiting for?"

I did not answer him at once, as I was thinking, "Everyone is waiting for zero hour!" It seemed to me that all the watches were creeping much more slowly than usual.

After I had returned amidst the roar of guns to the "publishing house," the mimeographer immediately started to cut the stencil so that the divisional commander's order and the frontline battle news could be run off.

The preparations for stencil cutting and mimeographing were usually completed by the time the artillery fired for adjustment. This was because when the big guns roar the battle is on, and then comes victory — The roar of the guns is the prelude to victory.

Our publishing covered another aspect. Past experience had proved that almost every attack against us resulted in bitter defeat for the enemy and heavy casualties among their men. Accordingly, to help the enemy calculate their losses, we published special dispatches containing statistical reports revealing their "splendid records of fighting."

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With the development of the campaign, the circulation of these victory dispatches steadily increased. As a result there was no fixed number of copies for distribution. Later on we simply printed as many as we possibly could from each stencil. When the surface position was temporarily in enemy hands, communication between the troops in the tunnels became extremely difficult. Many messengers and transport personnel were wounded or killed on the roads to the front-line tunnels. and the victory dispatches they carried were blasted into the air. To ensure that the dispatches reached each and every tunnel, we were obliged to print several dozen extra copies to replace those lost. Each stencil was, accordingly, used until it fell to pieces.

The agitation station on the transport route was our best distributor. Their demand was, "the more, the better!" The fact was that all the commanders who went to headquarters to receive orders. cadres on their way to meetings,

messengers delivering letters, scouts reporting conditions, engineers building railroads or bridges, cooks taking food to the fighters at the front line, truck drivers delivering ammunition, drivers of pack-animals carrying grain — all would reach out their hands at the agitation station, saying:

"Propagandist! Give us a victory dispatch!"

The transport men in their hundreds would say in a proud and confident tone: "Give us some more copies. I'm delivering ammunition to the tunnels!"

In this way we distributed all the dispatches we had on hand, no matter in how many copies.

As the mimeographer ran off the copies, he would grumble, "Another stencil done for! Another! To print one extra copy, and it wrinkles up!"

We all knew that the man at the mimeograph was an old hand at the job, with rich experience and tremendous skill. When he used a stencil until it broke up, it meant that the stencil had really reached the stage of utter exhaustion.

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would try to cheer him up, "Don't get mad at the stencil! It has overfulfilled its quota!"

When that particular battle had been going on for two weeks, the divisional Party committee issued the directive: "Record as a meritorious feat the names of those who stand firm and hold the surface positions for twenty-four consecutive hours." The Party committee wanted this directive to reach each commander and each fighter in the shortest possible time.

At that time the surface position was continually changing hands, maybe even several times a day. The lofty mountain tops were denuded of vegetation, and all the fortifications had been destroyed. The earth had been churned up to a depth of two feet. Even seasoned veterans with over six months of combat duty on that battlefield, on returning from the counter-offensive, found the terrain unfamiliar. Soldiers holding fast in the tunnels used to lose count of how many bombs and shells rained down every hour. Imagine how much fighting as well as courage and fortitude it took to hold the surface positions for twenty-four hours! If it could be held for a day and a night, then simple fortifications could be built, and the surface positions consolidated.

This important call was to be printed in the victory dispatch and sent to the front line and tunnels before daybreak. The mimeographer cut and printed the stencil with the greatest possible speed — yet on looking it over, I discovered that this

most important dispatch was the most illegible we had printed. Yet I could not blame the printer for this dispatch had been printed faster than any other number.

For the task of sending these dispatches to the front lines at once, we selected four sturdy young men from the cultural troupe. Even so, our chief was still afraid the delivery would be too slow. He gave instructions that the infantry companies were to be informed briefly by verbal communication, so the telephones and walkie-talkies came immediately into action.

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The following day the Party committee received pledges from the front-line fighters. On the third day headquarters gave the order to "record the collective meritorious deed of the 4th, 5th and 6th Companies, which had held their surface positions for twenty-four hours." As this order was being cut and printed, the "publishing house" staff beamed with delight.

Immediately following this we printed a series of further reports of splendid exploits on all battle fronts:

"Yi Tsai-hsueh has won merit in detonating explosives...." "Niu Pao-tsai connected electric wires with his own body...."

"Chen Chen-an saved a big number of wounded men in the tunnel...."

"Chang Chuan-ho got his supplies through to the firing line...."

This is how our "Firing Line Publishing House" operated during the battle of Sangkumryung.

## **FORCING THE ENEMY TO BOW HIS HEAD**

— From entries in snipers' diaries and their recollections —

April 19, 1952, a bright sunny day with not a cloud in the sky.

I went to my sniping post early in the morning as usual to wait for the enemy. According to information from our observer post the enemy was moving his troops about, apparently relieving the front-line men. To screen their movements they fired smoke bombs at our position time and again, and this they followed closely with a barrage from their big and small guns, aiming at targets indicated by the smoke bombs. A pall of black smoke hung over our position.

I leaned over my post, and through the smoke of the explosions watched carefully the doings of the enemy. When my observation lit on the unnamed height due south I discovered a pillbox on the main peak that had not been there when I went to study at the snipers' brigade. Later, when I was returning from my study our squad leader, Comrade Teng Tzu-ping, had said to me:

"Little Chang, there is an enemy lookout in a pillbox on the main peak of the hill due south. His special duty is to direct enemy gunfire at us. You must think of some way to get rid of him."

Tcday it must be that very fellow directing the gunfire at us. I must destroy him!

And sure enough, I had no sooner got my rear sight adjusted than I spotted a figure at the rear of the pillbox

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stealthily scanning our position through his field-glasses. I took aim, but his head was waving about so that it was very difficult to keep it in the sights so I decided to wait a while and catch him off guard. It was not long before he became bold and careless and soon even straightened up and went to the top of the pillbox to take a peep at us. I cursed him roundly:

"You bastard! So you're so bold as to do your observation right under the muzzle of my gun, are you! You must indeed be fed up with your miserable life!" I aimed at his chest and, holding my breath, gave the trigger a steady pull. The shot brought the fellow tumbling head first all the way from the pillbox as though he were seized in a sudden fit.

"You bastard," I cursed him to myself, "stand up and direct your gunners new, if you can!"

**Chang Tao-fang**  
*Fighter, Hero Second Class*

July 13, 1952.

At 3 a.m. I was awakened from a sound sleep by our platoon leader and began immediately to gird my weapons. "They say the enemy relieved their troops yesterday," I was thinking. "In that case this newly captured semiautomatic rifle of mine will come in very handy." I hurried to call Jen Ping-thing and Cheng Ying-kao and together we went out of the tunnel.

It was still too dark to see much but the way was familiar. We slipped quickly through the enemy's fixed target area which was sealed off by their artillery. Here shell holes and splintered stumps of trees obstructed our way, but luckily the enemy's searchlights helped us out. Cheng Ying-kao said with a smile: "We've been passing back and forth along here day after day without having so much as a single hair

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touched. Wouldn't it make the enemy gunners fit to die of anger if they knew!"

Having traversed a little hill, we arrived at our "target range." It was already dawn, and as we stood in the defence works we had erected for sniping in upright posture, the enemy's pillboxes, communication trenches and latrines as well as the highways and rivulets below all came into clear view in minutest detail. I asked Cheng Ying-kao to go to the shelter and get our breakfast while I checked the rifles and put them on the parapet, now camouflaged with pine branches. Jen Ping-thing carried the field-glasses and observed the targets for me from a nearby shelter.

I rolled a cigarette and lighted it. "Look, Group Leader," said Jen Ping-thing as soon as he had adjusted his glasses, "the one-legged sentinel is still there." It was a decoy the enemy had placed beside the pillbox the previous afternoon.

"Probably the enemy soldiers who were relieved yesterday were so happy to get out of here they forgot to turn in their decoy," said I.

A few minutes later Jen Ping-ching cried out, "Group Leader, watch Position 1!" I looked and there, in shirt and shorts, was a hulking beast of an American soldier craning his neck from the entrance of the pillbox peeping first in one direction and then the other. Then he made a dash for the latrine. Jen Ping-ching kept urging me, "Fire! Fire!" But I was in no hurry. "Let the fellow finish what he's doing first!" I said.

I adjusted the rear sight, shoved in the bullets and took aim at Target Three, between the latrine and the pillbox. I waited three or four minutes before the fellow finally came out and started running back. Then, holding my breath, I pulled the trigger. Jen Ping-ching shouted: "That hit home! You got him!" I watched him for a long time but he did not move so I picked up a pebble and made another mark on the breast wall behind me. It was my 41st kill.

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It was not long till Jen Ping-ching was shouting again: "Look! There are three

enemy soldiers on Number Four!" I looked across the river and saw the three of them just bending down at the river bank to wash their faces. Jen Pingching pointed out the soldier in the middle, saying, "Look at that fellow — seems to be carrying a pistol on his hip. Probably he's an officer." To this I replied, "Then let's start operations on him." At the report of the gun Jen Ping-ching said, "Fell short of the mark; the bullet landed in the river." Then while the devilish soldiers, panic-stricken, were stumbling about trying to run away I took plenty of time to readjust my distance and fired at the trunk of the man with the pistol. This time he obediently fell and lay quiet in the stream. The other two must have been frightened out of their wits for they hung close together as they ran for their lives. This only made it easier for me to get them. I fired five bullets in quick succession and those two also fell motionless on the river bank. Jen Ping-ching came running up, drawing one line after another for me on the breastwork as he exclaimed: "That's some record this morning, four in succession!" "But just wait!" I said: "More enemy soldiers will come to carry off the corpses."

Cheng Ying-kao, spoon in hand, ran out from the cave in which we sheltered from artillery fire and asked, "What's all the shooting about? What's your score now?" Then as Jen Ping-ching held up four fingers twice in succession, he said with great admiration in his voice: "Hey, Group Leader, you'll soon have a hundred to your credit!" "That's right!" said I, "I must do my best to reach the hundred mark and our group will have the honour."

Volleys of enemy gunfire began to locate us but we had already gone into the cave for breakfast. Jen Ping-ching observed while munching away: "The steady shelling shows the enemy's dead set on revenge." I listened to the gunfire for a while then put down my bowl. "This action of theirs is not simply one of revenge but very likely also a cover for get-

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ting back their corpses," said I. "Let's go! We mustn't miss this opportunity."

I was no sooner out of the cave than I was littered from head to foot with dust and debris thrown up in the explosion of a heavy mortar shell nearby. In two or three strides I was in our defence work from where I took a good look at what the enemy was up to. Sure enough, the three dead bodies had disappeared and two American soldiers were bearing off a long burden. At my three rapid shots at the soldier in front the one behind threw down his end of the burden and scuttled into the bushes. His nimble legs saved him so that this time I added only one more enemy to my score.

Having got five at that place, we were pretty sure no more of the enemy would fall into our trap there. So that afternoon, braving the burning sun, we quietly

advanced into one of the flanks of the enemy position and hid ourselves in concealed earthworks already prepared. We had to keep wiping the sweat from our eyes lest the targets should slip out of our sight. Soon I saw a motor vehicle speeding along the highway. Jen Ping-ching signalled to me. It stopped at the foot of the hill and three enemy soldiers got out and started up the slope. "Shall we fire?" Jen Ping-ching asked. "Wait a minute," I answered, "it's too soon." When the three had climbed to a turn in the path they formed a line at exactly my gun level. "Let's get the one in the rear first and save him the effort of climbing that hill," I suggested. It took only one shot to fell him while the pair in front dropped to the ground as though at an order. I waited patiently and after quite some time the first moved one of his legs a little. I didn't bother about that nor did I make a move when he raised his head. But finally, when he propped himself up on one arm and made as though to jump up I took aim, and as soon as he got to his feet to run away I opened fire. So this enemy soldier too, after rolling a little distance, lay quiet. Jen Ping-ching had the field-glasses in both hands, looking and shouting at the same time: "Good shot! Fell like a

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dog. And look! There's the other one crawling off on all fours." I put down my gun. "It won't be easy this time. I think we'd better wait till he reaches that small bridge there. Anyhow he can't go back any other way." And sure enough, after crawling along a little way and finding no one firing at him, the man made a sudden lunge and set off at a great clip, slowing down only when he reached the bridge. Perhaps he thought he was already out of danger. I seized the opportunity and with two shots finally laid him low on the bridge, having given him more than twenty minutes extra to live.

It was getting dark. The searchlights at the enemy positions were lit up and their "whistling in the graveyard" shots were sounding as usual from all directions. We would let them be. The enemy might perform burial rites for his soldiers for that was strictly his own business!

Satisfied as peasants after a grand harvest, we three went back to our tunnel in the twilight.

Our platoon leader was waiting there, and as soon as he caught sight of us, he said: "Comrade Su Hsu-sung, just now company headquarters has sent word that a meeting will be held on the main peak at eight o'clock. The snipers of each unit will be there and your group is asked to tell your experiences. A movement for sniping on the enemy will soon be launched at all our positions."

**Su Hsu-sung**

Can a gunny bag walk?

Well, I saw one with my own eyes. It was July 28, 1952, a little after 4 a.m. The day had not yet dawned and a thin haze curtained the entrance of our tunnel. Still even with my bare eyes I could see the enemy forty metres distant very

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clearly. As usual, I left the tunnel with my sniper group an hour before our other fighters were up.

The five of us had two rifles and three tommy-guns, all fully loaded. Although we had snatched only three hours' sleep and had dark rings under our eyes, we were all in especially high spirits.

Like hunters equipped and ready to set out, we distributed our tasks. Then three of us — Yen Lung-fa, Chu Kai-yu and I—went off to the shelters on the right, Yen Lung-fa to do the observing from the centre, Chu Kai-yu and I to wait quietly beside him.

It was time for our "targets" to appear on the scene; for the enemy soldiers had a habit of coming out in greatest numbers at dawn.

But today ten minutes passed and not one made his appearance. Yen Lung-fa got somewhat impatient and said: "What's the matter? The enemy seem more cunning than yesterday."

"Calm yourself. Don't be too impatient!" I whispered.

Chu Kai-yu was not making a sound. I looked at him and there he was staring straight ahead, swallowing for all he was worth as he did whenever he saw something good to eat. Suddenly he raised his head and his finger touched the trigger — he had discovered a target.

"Group Leader, look! What is that halfway up the slope?"

I looked in the direction he indicated and saw a dark figure moving on the enemy position before us, but it seemed to be a formless, headless mass, not at all like a human figure. I remembered that when I had been out during the night I had heard the sound of digging, and also our sentry had reported that the enemy had been making a racket with their spades the whole night repairing their defence works.

"That looks very much like one of the gunny bags they're using to repair their defence works." I said.

"But can a gunny bag come alive?"

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He was right. How could a bag walk? Comrade Chu Kaiyu's cool analysis was quite correct.

Once again I made a quick mental summary of the changes in the enemy's behaviour in the past few days. When they had first taken up the position they had been so free and easy, using their loudspeakers, singing their songs and sauntering out to urinate at will. . . . As soon as our sniping movement got underway, however, the enemy seemed to have been dwarfed by half — full-length figures were reduced to only an occasional head, and even this would quickly disappear behind a trench. Yesterday morning we had shot down several enemy soldiers repairing the defence works and carrying water but today we could see nobody, nothing but gunny bags. But never fear! Even concealed inside bags the enemy could not escape the keen eyes of us C.P.V. snipers!

"Open fire! Fire at the lower part of the bag!" I ordered.

At the first shot a bag rolled empty down the slope and where the bag had stood a man was left lying instead!

Another bag came out. Huh! So they hadn't yet learned their lesson. This time Chu Kai-yu fired without the order, and he missed. The bag rolled down much the same as the first had done, only this time the occupant ran back into the defence works.

A string of curses and swearing came from the communication trench opposite. It seemed the enemy officer was bawling out his soldier for being so yellow. Why had he thrown off his bag?

Well! If he had not discarded the bag and taken to his heels he himself would have been thrown in the discard right then and there! His officer should have known that.

Chu Kai-yu was in raptures. "Group Leader," he whispered, "and there's a fog today too! Who ever would have thought we'd meet gunny bags walking! Let's get ready! The enemy will surely come to carry off their dead." Hardly had he finished saying this when the enemy started quarrelling noisily among themselves. What was happening was that several

enemy soldiers were groping stealthily towards us, but while each was shoving the other up, no one actually dared come near us. Finally two of them were pushed up together after the body and both were felled beside it. Yen Lung-fa, the observer, was elated. "A fine business, this! We kill one and two more come along!"

Terse and deliberate was Chu Kai-yu's appraisal of the enemy's "cleverness": "They are ingenious at concealment. Their 'mobile shelter' is indeed a novel invention!"

**Yao Tse-ching**  
*Fighter*

## **CHIU SHAO-YUN, MY COMRADE-IN-ARMS**

**LI YUAN-HSING**  
*Deputy Squad Leader, Hero Second Class*

We found a relatively concealed gully in a dip on Height 391 before dawn and hid ourselves there.

As the sun gradually climbed the sides of the mountains it dried the chill dew on our clothing and warmed our legs. which had been numbed with cold. Our idea originally had been to sleep at this time in the pleasant warmth of the sun. We had been up all the night before, and tonight a fierce battle was awaiting us. We needed to replenish our strength for the coming struggle.

But now I was unable to close my eyes. How could one sleep — right under the nose of the enemy?

I discovered our gully was not so concealed after all. We were much too close to the enemy. One of their outposts was only sixty metres away. Not only could we see the barbed wire and breastworks of the outpost — even the pillboxes and firing emplacements of their main position were also clearly visible; we could hear the enemy soldiers when they talked. Naturally, it was even easier for the enemy to see us from their vantage points on higher ground. We had to lie absolutely

still. A cough or the least movement of a leg might attract the attention of an enemy sentry.

Everything depended on our camouflage. I peered ahead through the wild grass. Our squad leader and several of our men were lying in a thicket of dried-out yellow weeds, and their uniforms were tufted with clumps of the same thing. They blended in perfectly with the terrain. Although they

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were closer to the enemy than I, they lay so quietly I knew they would not be detected.

Slowly turning my head, I observed Comrade Chiu Shaoyun, lying a short distance to one side of me. His camouflage was excellent. Even though we were near each other, I had difficulty in discerning him. We all were very fond of this young comrade. He said very little, but whether at work or in battle, no one ever had to worry about him.

Actually, there was no need for me to be so concerned. Almost from dawn, our artillery kept up a continuous barrage at the enemy's position, draping the mountain top in blue smoke, blasting one pillbox after another in the enemy's outer line of defence. Our commanders had planned it well. The barrage was not only destroying enemy fortifications and cutting open a path for our coming night assault; it was driving the enemy back into their shelters and thus preventing them from spotting our hidden troops.

Observing the devastation our artillery was working on the mountain top, we longed for night to fall so that we could get into action. But the sun seemed to remain stationary, as if it were nailed to the sky.

About eleven in the morning, a smoke shell suddenly dropped near us, followed by round after round of high explosive. Plainly, the crafty enemy were uneasy about their outer lines, but they didn't dare brave our artillery barrage to come out and investigate. They therefore began probing for us with their own shells.

Bursting explosives set fire to the dried grass. The flames spread; soon the yellow weeds were crackling too. The wicked enemy were eventually carrying out an investigation by the use of incendiary bombs.

Before long, the flames were right before me. I could feel their heat on my face. Luckily, in front of me was a bare stretch of rocks and stones. The fire was unable to spread to my body.

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Suddenly, the acrid smell of burning cotton assailed my nostrils. I turned my head and looked. Flames were all around Comrade Chiu Shao-yun, and his uniform was burning. He had evidently been splashed with a napalm shell. The wind was sweeping the tongues of flame into one sheet. of fire.

At that moment, if he had jumped up and rolled a couple of times, he could have extinguished the blaze. Or if any of us near him had dragged him out and stripped off his burning clothing, we could have saved our comrade. But that would have revealed us to the enemy sentries on the height. Not only would our squad have been wiped out and heavy losses inflicted on the troops lying concealed behind us, but the attack for which we had prepared so long would have ended in failure.

Several times I turned my head away. I couldn't bear to watch a comrade burn to death. But I had to look; I couldn't bear not to look. A knife seemed to be piercing my heart. I was blinded by tears.

After about half an hour, the flames on my friend's body finally died. Until his last breath, this great comrade never uttered a groan. He lay as motionless as a thousand-catty boulder.

To save his comrades' lives, to ensure victory, my friend Comrade Chiu Shao-yun stood the test of the cruel flames and died a hero's death!

At dusk, we rose up and charged. A stirring battle cry rang out on Height 391:

"Avenge Comrade Chiu Shao-yun!"

It seemed to me that Comrade Chiu Shao-yun had not died, that he was there with us charging into the enemy! I shall never forget that day — October 12, 1952.

## **LAYING A MINE-FIELD AT THE FOOT OF THE KYO-AM HILLS**

**SHEN SHU-PIN**

*Fighter*

In the twelfth month according to the lunar calendar we were hurriedly throwing

up defence works on Height 606. below the Kyo-am Hills. It was bitterly cold and the earth was frozen till it seemed more solid than rock. With great difficulty we had dug a few metres into the earth during the night only to have enemy tanks emerge from the valley opposite onto the plain in front of us at dawn and fire several volleys on our position, levelling all that we had succeeded in putting up the night before. The comrades clenched their teeth and cursed the enemy, "Knock out those enemy tanks: Destroy those enemy tanks!"

All of us were very much excited, but our squad leader, Comrade Chang Tsai-yun, was not at all worried. If anything he looked calmer than ever. Comrade Chen Wen-chien whispered to me: "See how calm our squad leader appears; he's certainly already got plans well in hand!" Our squad leader's utter composure put all our hearts at ease.

That afternoon the squad leader came back from company headquarters with several small flat oblong wooden boxes, his face radiant with joy. "The regimental commander has given us the task of demolishing enemy tanks to protect our men throwing up the breastwork," he said, "and these 'boxes' are the very thing to do the job." Our comrades were overjoyed and Comrade Chen Wen-chien held one of the mines in his arms — for that is what the "boxes" were — smiling

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so broadly that his eyes were narrowed to threads. Addressing the mine he said in a high-pitched voice: "What a wondrous thing you are! Now's the time for you and me to win merit. You've got to help me win honour for our motherland and our people!" We all laughed heartily.

Our squad leader waited for each of us to voice our resolution, then he began to speak animatedly: "Comrades, a delegation has come from our motherland to visit us. We must knock out the enemy tanks as our present to the people at home. Now this is a hard task requiring a long time. Our regimental commander has told us: 'Keep up the fight in spite of wind or weather till no enemy tank dares to venture out.' Is everyone confident that we can accomplish this task?" The fighters shouted a unanimous "Yes, we are!" I chimed in too, though inexperienced in such action and none too sure of details. So mingled with the joy in my heart was also a tinge of anxiety.

The squad leader seemed to sense my qualms and took my hand solicitously as he said, "It's a bit of a strain before the first combat assignment, isn't it? Never mind! Tonight you go along with me. When we go into action keep cool and listen for my instructions!" Then he told me to wear my cotton-quilted coat inside out with the white lining exposed and to carry on my back everything needed for the night. He looked me up, down and around several times and then told me to run a few

rounds. When he found I could do it silently, he nodded, saying: "Everything is all right except that your shoe-laces are too worn, not strong enough. Go and change them!" This calmed my heart. Being with the squad leader would give almost anyone added strength and courage.

That night in a heavy fog we made our way onto the wide expanse of no-man's-land. The way 'down the hill was pathless, nothing anywhere but the boundless white blanket of snow and ice. A little unsteady and you would fall. Of

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course a fall was in itself inconsequential, but if the enemy should hear a sound we would not be able to lay our mines.

I never dreamed that mine-laying could present so many problems: If you went at it too vigorously the enemy would hear; if too lightly you wouldn't get into the earth, which was frozen harder than rock. So we had to stop for a while after each round of chipping at the earth with picks while we removed the frozen lumps with shovels. But in this way there was no sound of digging for the enemy to hear.

So the squad leader and I chipped and carried, burying the chunks of earth in the snow at the edge of a ditch several hundred metres away. No trace was left of our work in the vast expanse of white.

We had about finished laying the mines when suddenly two flares went up from the enemy-held hill above, bathing the snowy plains and valleys in pale white daylight. I had flattened myself out on a pile of newly upturned earth but the squad leader reassured me in a low voice: "Don't be afraid. So long as we're well camouflaged flares are useless against us, no matter how many." When the light of the two flares had dimmed quiet darkness again reigned over the hills and plains — the enemy had not discovered us.

Early the following morning the whir of engines sounded from the front of our position. Enemy tanks were again roaring out along their accustomed paths, pompous as cocks of the walk. But just as the first tank was manoeuvring over an embankment it was blown up; the second tried to move up beside the first, but no sooner had its gun-turret been turned round than there arose from it too puffs of heavy smoke. The other tanks bumped about in utter confusion on the broad plain, daring to go neither forward nor backward. They looked so ridiculous that our comrades shouted at them:

"Bravo! This time you wild beasts have picked out a real beauty spot as a cemetery for yourselves!"

From then on, for scores of days in succession, we had the enemy's tanks absolutely under our control and they could

not do a thing about it. If they came up along the highway they were certain to meet their doom; if they came by the hill slope it wasn't safe there either, and if they chose to move along the river bank, the explosion would come suddenly from beneath the pebbles. Even if they followed in tracks they themselves had made, mines would explode beneath them just the same. At last they were driven into the frozen stream bordering the plain and from there they continued to fire upon our position.

This posed a difficult problem because we had no mines for use in water. Besides, in that severe winter weather how were we to lay mines under the stream? This problem worried me a lot, but our squad leader was as calm and collected as ever. "If we all put our brains to work on it, we could fill in the whole river. No matter how slippery the enemy is, he can't slip out of our hands!" Having said this, he looked at us all as if in expectation of an answer.

Chen Wen-chien stood up and said: "I think we can work out some way to prevent water from getting into the mines. For example, we might use several thicknesses of oiled paper to wrap them in. . . ."

"Ha — ha," Yao Wen-kuang's laughter cut short the sentence.

"What's so funny about that?" retorted Chen Wen-Chien. "Besides, I haven't even finished what I started out to say!" Chen Wen-chien raised his voice and went on, gesturing as he explained, "Perhaps you haven't seen the moisture-proof paper used to wrap up explosives or the oiled paper for wrapping up biscuits?"

"Moisture-proof's not the same thing as waterproof!" Yao Wen-kuang came back at him.

There was a short pause; then the squad leader said by way of summing up: "There is something in Chen Wen-chien's suggestion; we should all rack our brains to hit upon some way. For we must destroy those enemy tanks!"

Finally a way was found. Chen Wen-chien salvaged from the blasted enemy tanks two metal cases for machine-gun cartridges. Into these we placed small blocks of explosive we had removed from mines, sealing all cracks with a glue we made by boiling up worn-out rubber shoes. That done, we submerged the metal cases in water by way of test and found that not a single drop of water got into the powder. Thus we produced mines for use under water. That night, braving the severe weather, we broke the layer of ice and laid our "water-mines" in the stream. A few days later the wrecks of more enemy tanks were found in the water.

Spring came and the snow piled up on the broad plain began to melt. The enemy blandly tried another way to run their tanks against us. They drove with one caterpillar tread in the shallows of the stream and the other on the sandy beach, and in this way came right up onto the paddy-field at the end of the broad plain, set on getting their revenge. Still our squad leader smiled as he said to us: "We won't indulge in these skirmishes any longer. It's time we engaged the enemy in a full-dress fight to the finish. We must make this entire stretch of paddy a mine-field!" We all burst out cheering. Before long, we had won the approval of the higher command for our plan of laying a whole field of mines. Our regimental commander said that this time artillery units would surely be sent to co-operate with us in making a clean sweep of those enemy tanks.

For the whole week before we were to lay the mines we were planning how to fool the enemy. Not a single mine did we lay either under the roadbed or in the paddy-field. Thus the enemy became so cocksure of their new route that their tanks continued over it day after day, coming out onto the paddy-field without the slightest hesitation. On the very last night of the week, however, we laid more than forty mines in different patterns in this stretch of paddy-field. We laid them in triangles, the plum-flower pattern, the snake pattern, and

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the ladder pattern. Thus the area was turned into a complicated network of mines.

Scarcely had the thin early morning mist dispersed from about the hills when sixteen enemy tanks started towards us in single file. A light tank led the way, immediately followed by another with turret wide open. A commanding officer, boldly exposing the upper half of his body to view, was waving a red flag as he moved along, apparently signalling "all safe." The other tanks followed, one after another, their gun-turrets turning this way and that as their machine-guns fired wild shots at our position. Another officer stood in the turret of the tank at the end of the file. He held a small yellow flag with which he was communicating with the tanks in front. Beside him was a red air-signal panel.

More than ten of the enemy tanks had already roared onto the paddy-field in single file. Their crews must have thought things were going well with them that day. But as they started to scatter there came from the field two deafening explosions. Two of the enemy tanks had run afoul of our mines and caught fire. The sudden detonations struck panic into the enemy, their commanding officers disappearing into their turrets as the tanks careened about the paddy-field in confusion. Then the plain seemed to erupt like a volcano, the explosions following one another in rapid succession. Shell splinters, rock and clods of earth flew up in wild fury and a haze of smoke covered the whole valley. One enemy tank sank

deep into the mud in the ditch off the paddy-field leaving only its turret showing above the field. Some of the tanks had jammed together so that they could neither move in nor out. Caught thus, the wild beasts of soldiers snapped open the turret tops, jumped out and fled.

Just at that moment our artillery fired broadsides sending shells flying over the hills in violent blasts and within seconds the broad stretch of land was entirely enveloped in thick smoke and heavy fire. Nothing could be seen in any direction, there was nothing but the confusion of the firing of

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guns, the explosion of mines and the doleful grind of the enemy tank motors. The comrades on our position jumped out of the communication trenches, shouted and clapped their hands. We were so happy that we all danced and jumped about; for the "manned fortresses of iron and steel" which the enemy had bragged about were reduced to "scrap brass and gutted iron," all wrapped up in thick smoke and heavy fire.

That night, when our squad leader led us to the wide stretch of land to clean up the battlefield, there were still flames everywhere and the air was heavy with a mixed stench of burnt corpses, gasoline and rubber shoes, while strewn on the footpaths between the fields, along the banks of the ditches and in the mire, lay the wreckage of six American tanks and, beside them, the corpses of their bestial crews.

## **VAN FLEET'S LAST PERFORMANCE**

**HUANG HAO**

*Deputy Regimental Commander*

At the beginning of 1953, the First Battalion of our regiment was holding Height 205 northwest of Chorwon in the Songsan-Chisandong sector. To the enemy it was known as "T-Bone Hill." We called it "Nail Hill." The point of it drovedeep into enemy territory.

Because of its shape it was exposed to the enemy on three sides, which made it easy for them to attack. At the same time it seriously menaced them. The men holding Height 205 used to say, "This nail of ours stabs straight into the enemy's living heart!"

The enemy never stopped trying to extract this nail; battles big and small followed one after another. But no matter what tactics and tricks the enemy used, we always sent them rolling down the hill. Our men guarding the height were quite accustomed to fighting battle after battle day in and day out.

starting on January 20, there was a sudden obvious change in the region of the front. Enemy shelling increased from 500 to over 2,000 rounds a day. On the 24th, enemy planes came over in 148 sorties and bombed us for six hours: more than a dozen bombs fell in the neighbourhood of the regimental command post and on the roof of its cave. Enemy reconnaissance patrols were active every night. There was a great deal of moving of supplies behind heavy smokescreens. Jeeps darted up to the front to make observations. . . .

All this told us that the enemy was preparing to launch a large-scale attack. We got busy preparing to meet it. I was

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sent to First Battalion to take direct command of the fighting; the battalion chief of staff moved into the cave-tunnel of Company One, which held our foremost position.

At about eight in the morning, on the 25th, I was in an observation post at the front. Three enemy scout planes came over, circled a couple of times above the battalion command post, then dropped two red smoke bombs on "Nail Hill." I had no sooner entered our cave shelter than the whole mountain began to shake. The enemy was bombarding us with their planes and heavy artillery. Outside was an uninterrupted fury of roaring thunder. In less than an hour all telephone lines between division, regiment and company were snapped. Using a walkie-talkie, I instructed Company One to get ready for battle.

The shelling and bombing lasted until 12:30. Then a reinforced battalion, preceded by 30 tanks, moved up towards our position. First, an enemy company rushed us in a fierce charge.

Waiting to meet them was First Platoon of Company One. One squad of our men leaped from their cave-shelter and spread out in the trench. Because the enemy assaulted in continuous waves, our men couldn't mow them down fast enough; they put aside their tommy-guns and blasted back the attackers with clusters of hand-grenades.

I directed our men through the walkie-talkie. I could see that the enemy were trying to exhaust us with unremitting attacks. This enemy tactic of recklessly throwing their men's lives away was not unfamiliar to us. I immediately gave

instructions to the battalion chief of staff who was commanding Company One: Save your ammunition; don't waste your fighting strength; get ready for an even bigger enemy assault.

Except for the small number of men holding off the attackers, the rest of our fighters remained in their cave-shelters, taking off the caps of hand-grenades and passing them down to the men in the frontlines. We thus kept up a continuous supply of ammunition and avoided needless casualties.

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Before the fighting had lasted very long, the leader of First Platoon was wounded. Comrade Chen Chih, Deputy Leader of Squad Three, was appointed to take command.

An enemy rush brought several of them to the edge of our communication trench, where they set up a machine-gun. With one grenade, Chen blew the men and their gun right back again. An incendiary shell landed in the trench during another assault; the flames were licking Chen's body. Only after the enemy had been repelled did he pick up handfuls of earth and extinguish his burning uniform.

Soldier Liu Kai-fa insisted on remaining in the fight even after his left eye was blinded. He stuck to his gun until he fainted and was carried away.

The report of the courage of these men spread quickly through the frontline, stirring our men's fighting spirit.

The ferocity of this battle exceeded all previous encounters. So heavy was the enemy artillery fire that all communication between our units was cut off. In some places communication trenches were completely levelled. But their frenzied bombardment didn't do the enemy a bit of good. We sent them rolling down the mountain each time they attacked. They left piles of bodies before our emplacements.

At four in the afternoon the battle was still raging. The enemy had launched eight intensive assaults. In three of these they had used the strength of two companies as a combined spearhead. But we smashed their every attempt.

In the few hours of fighting we had already used five or six days' supply of hand-grenades. The men at the front asked for more. I ordered them to conserve their munitions and stick it out. At the same time I brought the battalion artillery into action, and informed the regiment to get ready to use divisional artillery. I decided to throw in the reserves soon after dark.

But none of these preparations proved necessary. From the frontline came the

report: "The enemy are using tanks, heavy artillery, machine-guns and smokescreens to cover the

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retreat of their infantry." They were running even before our main force had been thrown into action!

But we weren't going to let them get away! I immediately ordered our men to plaster them with every weapon at our command. By five in the afternoon, those of the enemy who were still alive had all fled. On the battlefield were only a few tanks, hiding behind a smokescreen, giving cover to the removal of bodies by armoured cars.

When we collected booty on the field at dusk that day we found plenty of riddled American helmets and pierced nylon bullet-proof vests. One of the most interesting prizes was a huge store of high explosive packs. The enemy were going to use these to blow open our cave-shelters, but the scoundrels never even came within sight of them!

In this attack, except for their battleships, the U.S. invaders threw in everything they had — planes, tanks, artillery. And we, from beginning to end, held them off with a group of seventeen men, using only 838 hand-grenades, a few tommy-guns, and other light infantry weapons. Our heavy artillery never fired a shot. Our little group smashed this "combined land and air operations" of the enemy.

The battle — though somewhat bigger and fiercer than most was nothing remarkable in our experience of a year and more of defensive positional warfare. We made our "detailed battle report" to our commanders, as usual, summing up what we had learned. Our staff officers and colleagues were busy for a while preparing the report, and that was all.

Much to our surprise, two days later, divisional command informed us by telephone that the battle had been something special indeed. On January 25 not only had we inflicted tremendous casualties on the enemy, as stated in our report, but we had given General Van Fleet a "farewell party."

Van Fleet had been the commanding general of the U.S. Eighth Army invading Korea. He had sent thousands of enemy soldiers to their death in the previous two years, winning in exchange nothing but a whole series of disasters in his "limited

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offensive," "autumn offensive," "Heartbreak Ridge," "Old Baldy," "Sangkumryung". . . . His disappointed Wall Street bosses decided to remove him.

The attack on "T-Bone Hill" was his last attempt to win a little glory to gloss over the disgrace of his removal.

The day of the twenty-fifth, as our men were braving plane and artillery bombardment and blasting the attackers with clumps of hand-grenades, behind the enemy lines were gathered "high-ranking officials" and foreign correspondents whom Van Fleet had invited to witness his "last great performance." Each had been issued a well-bound map of the attack, printed in three colours, together with a "time schedule." All waited expectantly for the attackers to quickly reach the summit, so that they could give this oft-defeated general some favourable publicity to lend him a bit of face on his departure.

But what was the result? The U.S. and British press were compelled to admit that the Chinese People's Volunteers had made the imperialist invaders look like fools on "T-Bone Hill"; many U.S. Congressmen demanded an answer for this from the Defense Department. Even members of the British Parliament joined in the clamour.

That was Van Fleet's final crushing defeat. He left Korea with his tail between his legs. In the future when this ill-fated general shudderingly recalls those Korean hills —"Heartbreak Ridge," "Old Baldy," "Sangkumryung" . . . he will probably not forget the "T-Bone Hill" which put such a spoke in his wheel during his last performance.

## **FORCING OUR WAY INTO AN ENEMY TUNNEL**

**LI JEN-CHIN**

*Platoon Leader*

It had taken just ten minutes for our shock brigade to force its way up Twin Peak Mountain and take possession of the enemy's surface positions there. The battle was developing rapidly in depth. As I rushed up the hill close on the heels of our troops I made a careful search for signs of the tunnels I knew the enemy had dug in the hilltop. The words of our divisional chief still rang fresh in my mind: "Failure to annihilate the enemy in the tunnels will mean failure to take the enemy positions." And, "If we fail to make full use of tunnel warfare, we will be under enemy fire in their counter-attack . . ." he had said as we set out.

My comrades' battle-cries now sounded far away. From the hilltop, shrouded in smoke, I examined the lay of the land around me in my search for the enemy tunnel. The entrance, I reasoned, would surely not be right on the peak, but more likely somewhere lower down, in a sheltered spot. I started down, therefore, along the slope towards a depression. But hardly had I run more than ten metres, when bang! a shot suddenly whizzed past me. Quickly I lay face down and took my bearings. A volley of shells exploded nearby, and in the flashes of light I saw a dark mass more than 20 metres ahead of me. A hidden earthwork! I im

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mediately crawled into a communication trench and, swinging around to the left, moved up until I reached the fringe of the pillbox. Then with my ear to the ground, I listened very carefully.

From the dark mouth of the cave came the thin hum of a radio set, originating apparently from deep within. Was this a tunnel? I resolved to make a thorough investigation. So with my body well concealed I beamed my flashlight on the cave entrance. Bang! Another shot came from within the pillbox. "What the hell! It's my turn now to return you the salute!" I thought as I threw in a hand-grenade. There was a muffled explosion, then all was quiet. Gripping another hand-grenade firmly, I crept cautiously over to the entrance of the cave. There in the light of my flashlight, I found a man lying dead, a six-chambered revolver tossed aside. I resolved to get into that cave and find out all about it. Anyway I still had seven hand-grenades on me and thus could not be overpowered by the enemy.

On entering the cave the smell of gas prickled my nose and the smoke was so dense that the beam of the flashlight scarcely penetrated it. Groping my way in, I noted the rock walls around me. It was certainly a tunnel. The passage seemed to turn slightly to the left and then lead straight on. An enemy corpse was lying at the turn, his neck awry against a wooden bed plank. Here was another achievement of that hand-grenade of mine!

I continued on in, using my flashlight. Two automatic rifle shots sounded from inside, and a further commotion there told me that there were still bands of the enemy in hiding. The situation permitted of no hesitation, so taking two steps back I threw six of my hand-grenades one after another into the recesses of the cave. There arose from within a muffled din of distant thunder, out of which came the unmistakable cries of the enemy. Dust and smoke instantly filled the tunnel, while the smell of gas assailed my nostrils till I began

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to feel dizzy. I decided to go out and fill my lungs with fresh air and also to look

around for some more hand-grenades.

Once outside the cave, I saw a sweep of enemy searchlights over West Matap-ri Hill, held by a fraternal unit on our right flank. There was no sound of rifles from that direction, only volleys of artillery shells exploding. Apparently the enemy intended to wait for daybreak to make a counter-assault, to be bolstered by their troops in the tunnel. This plan of theirs was miscalculation pure and simple; for, once on the hill, we would never allow ourselves to be driven off, and besides, the tunnel which the enemy had prepared on the hilltop would serve us admirably in our attacks on them.

. I had only one hand-grenade left and wanted to go in search of more, but I dared not leave the cave entrance, for the enemy might still make a comeback.

I was just wondering what to do when Wang Chung-yuan, the first-aid man, appeared. I hastily explained our situation and asked him to go quickly for hand-grenades while I guarded the cave.

No movement within. Apparently the enemy had been struck dumb.

A few minutes later Wang Chung-yuan came back lugging a box of hand-grenades from which we each took five. Then cautiously we entered the tunnel.

In the beam of the flashlight I saw a cloud of smoke still hanging around the top of the tunnel, while beside two demolished walkie-talkie sets lay several of the enemy, some still muttering, so that it was difficult to distinguish between the living and the dead.

Calculating from the range of my hand-grenades, I knew there could scarcely be any more enemy alive in the tunnel unless it branched out into a network. We would have to find out. So the two of us pushed in over the more than ten enemy bodies, using their stiff bullet-proof vests as stepping

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stones where the bodies lay too thick to put a foot between. We found that this was only half of the tunnel network. that there were still two branches turning off at different points to the right. We separated to explore the two branches, each throwing hand-grenades ahead.

I did not hear the noise behind me till I had thrown my last grenade. Then I spun around, switching on my flashlight. There in the small "bed-room" at the tunnel entrance was an enemy soldier levelling an automatic rifle at me. "It'll be all over with me if he fires," flashed across my mind like a bolt of lightning. I dashed up and immediately laid hold of his rifle with my right hand while with the left I gave

a jerk at the bayonet. The gun did not go off; perhaps it had jammed. But neither could I dislodge the bayonet. Wang Chungyuan was just running over to lend me a hand when I heard the thud of some object as it hit the ground and the sputter of fire at my feet. This was bad, so I gave Wang Chung-yuan a shove as I shouted: "Run, quick! The enemy has thrown a hand-grenade." Then thinking not to let the enemy off so easy I picked up the grenade, which was by now fiercely spitting fire, and returned it. It exploded just as I reached the tunnel entrance. There was a sensation of numbness in my right leg, but I managed to make it out of the cave.

Once outside, however, I could no longer stand. I found my right leg cut and bleeding in several places. "Really too bad." I thought, "the enemy have not yet been entirely cleaned out of the tunnel and here I am already wounded." Wang Chungyuan carried me over his shoulder into a pillbox.

I was just asking Wang Chung-yuan to contact our troops when, led by our battalion commander, they appeared. I reported the situation to the battalion commander and he decided to immediately sweep the tunnel clean and convert it into a strong base in our defence. The battalion commander consulted with me:

"What do you think is the best way to organize our gunfire?"

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"Hand-grenades are very effective, only they give off so much gas that it's hard on ourselves. I think it would be better to use three tommy-guns in turn to strafe the enemy, giving them no breathing spell." From my experience in the last two encounters and based on what I had learned before the battle this would be the best method under the circumstances.

"Good, now you take a rest. Litter-bearers will soon be here to take you to the rear." After saying these words of comfort the battalion commander sent for a group of the Third Company to make a clean sweep of the tunnel. The leader of the group was Comrade Wang Chao-tung whom I knew well, so when they said their unfamiliarity with the inside of the tunnel might handicap them, I immediately asked the battalion commander to permit me to go as their guide. He examined my wounded leg carefully for some time without giving a reply; then only after I had sworn again and again that I would surely fulfil the task did he grant my request.

Clenching my teeth from the burden of dragging along the weight of my mangled leg, I crawled up behind the three tommy-gunners, beaming the flashlight through the cracks between them. They advanced and strafed in turn with the three tommy-guns, pouring such a dense shower of bullets through the tunnel that not one of the remaining enemy could escape alive. But dragging along on the ground

for scores of metres completely exhausted me; my head was pouring with sweat and my leg got heavier and heavier till at the end of the first branch tunnel I myself fell into a dead faint.

When I came to, I found myself in a tunnel we had used for concentration before the offensive. Our deputy regimental commander was sitting beside me, his hand on my forehead.

Just then Wang Chao-tung came back with an enemy soldier in tow. On seeing me Wang cried out:

"Platoon Leader, are you feeling better? The enemy tunnel as well as the whole enemy position are now in our hands.

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Of all that bunch of the enemy the only survivor is this long-lived specimen; look!"

That crest-fallen prisoner, frightened out of his wits, certainly did not look like any "trump card," as the enemy First U.S. Marine Division had styled itself. I could not help spitting furiously at the very thought of such arrogance.

## **PART THREE**

# **BOMBING TAEHWA ISLAND**

**WANG KUANG-TOU**

*Airman, C.P.V. Air Force*

Winter's pale afternoon sunshine flooded the quiet airfield. Bombers of our squadron were drawn up in rows on the long grey runway. Our crew had already donned flying gear and were sitting in the cockpit, waiting for the order to take off.

Those last few anxious moments over, we finally got the signal to fly and took off one by one, climbing high into the sky.

As we neared the point where our fighters would join us as escort, the navigator called me and pointed out a landmark below. The commanding officer of the fighters radioed our commanding officer that they were ready to join our formation. The sensation of flying together, as intimate as brothers, fighting wing to wing, stimulated my enthusiasm to new heights. We sped through the air in full confidence of victory.

It was almost sunset and we were flying out over the sea when suddenly there appeared in front of us a group of silver-hued fighting eagles. These were the pursuit planes sent by our command to assure us a clear airpath. The last rays of the sun were still shining on the blue water beneath our wings and there was a mist hanging over the sea that cast a haze over everything below. Gradually we came in view of some vague dark masses which we knew to be the Taehwa Island on which were garrisoned the "Paek Ma (White Horse) detachments," the headquarters of the enemy's special service unit.

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This constituted a "tumour" in our advanced coastal defence and today we were determined to remove it.

Now the Taehwa Island came into full view directly ahead and enemy AA batteries opened fire on us frantically. Our commanding officer ordered a "closed order fighting formation" and we zoomed forward on our target. Exploding shells from the enemy's AA guns were sending shells up into the sky and silver-white smoke was swirling all around us, but nobody paid any attention to that. Our formation was intact and speeding towards our objective. I fixed my eyes on our leading plane, waiting for the release of its first bomb as the signal to start pouring out ours.

Finally, the leader's bomb bay opened and one bomb after another dropped out. The time to answer enemy's aggression with bombs had come at last! This was the moment of revenge I had been waiting for, and my feelings ran high. The navigator had pushed the bomb-release button and our deadly load went down rapidly. I glued my eyes on the control stick, scarcely daring to take a deep breath for fear of making a mistake. Not until the pilot-navigator informed me that we had laid all the "eggs" did I begin to breathe easily.

Our plane circled over the target once again and then the leader gave instructions to return to base. I immediately wheeled and sped up to join the formation. On the way back I scanned the target below on my left. The whole main island was on fire, especially Taehwadong adjacent to Taehwado Hill, which was a sea of fire. Tongues of red flame licked up into the sky; thick columns of smoke rushed upward.

With this victory chalked up, I could not suppress my enthusiasm any longer. The navigator nudged me with his arm and did a "thumbs-up." Looking at his tanned face I replied with a smile, "After fighting the enemy for only a year we find the situation already completely reversed. In the past it was the enemy who flew over to bomb us; today we are the ones to 'lay eggs' on their heads. Just see! From now on

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we will show ever greater initiative and hit our targets with even deadlier accuracy till we blast them off that position! The aggressor must be severely punished for his crimes!"

We were escorted by countless brother fighters glistening over the waves as we returned to our base triumphant.

## **LUNAR NEW YEAR'S DAY ON THE SALT BEACH**

**LI TSAN-LIN**  
*Interpreter*

It was the eve of the lunar New Year; the whole coast lay white under a cover of thick snow and the sea was coloured with the reflection of the brilliant evening sky above. Together with a team of eight young scouts I was hurrying closely behind

Han Chia-pao, our political instructor, across a wide stretch of salt-fields along a smooth path by the sea, heading towards Hanil-li.

Hanil-li was a small village lying at the extreme southern end of Yonan Peninsula on the west coast of Korea whose inhabitants depended mainly on the production of salt for their living. After the outbreak of war, this part of the coast had been exposed to frequent marauding raids by Syngman Rhee's puppet troops who occupied several small islands near by. For this reason, the villagers did not dare to stay in their houses at night and could only work during the day under the protection of our troops. Despite their hazardous life, however, the salt-workers hung on and maintained a steady supply of salt to the people living in many parts of northern Korea. We were going there so that the salt-workers may enjoy their lunar New Year's festival under our protection, and, further, to deal a blow at Syngman Rhee's puppet troops, who might very possibly seize such an occasion as this to make one of their raids.

It was already dark when we arrived at Hanil-li. The people had all moved to another village farther inland, leaving

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behind on the lonely beach only the ruins of several thatched houses, previously burned down by the marauders. At the end of this was a little jetty; and directly facing the jetty not far off was an island from which the enemy frequently made raids. The tide was just rising when we reached the jetty. Instructor Han promptly ordered us to scatter and lie in ambush. The order was carried out immediately. Two of us, Sun Yu and I hid ourselves in a little muddy ditch just beside the jetty.

Although in northern Korea the earth is usually hard-frozen in winter, it was soft and muddy on the salt beach. Sun Yu found some dry grass and put it under our feet so as to keep them from getting wet and possibly freezing; however, it was useful only for a little while, and before long our feet began to sink back into the slush again.

It was almost midnight. The air was getting colder and the sweat-soaked padded jackets we wore did not seem to add a bit of warmth. We lay motionless in the ditch, shivering in the piercing wind blowing in from the sea. The whole shore was as quiet as death without even the sound of a barking dog. Our comrades who lay on the other side of the main road, did not make a sound to disturb the silence. It was as though the beach was sunk deep in sleep.

My eyes were beginning to droop from continuously watching the sea when Sun Yu suddenly nudged me. I lifted my head to look in the direction of his hand, and discovered a dark spot moving on the surface of the boundless grey sea. In great excitement, I almost shouted out. "They're really coming!" A little later, the noise

of their wooden oars whipping the water could be clearly heard between the rise and fall of the waves. Nearer and nearer the dark object approached. Gradually we could see it was a wooden boat moving stealthily towards this little jetty, the very site of our ambush.

The boat moored by the jetty in the darkness. and a Syngman Rhee puppet soldier with rifle in hand leaped onto it. He

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stepped a few paces forward then halted to look around and listen carefully. He repeated this a few times until he was satisfied everything was as usual on the beach, then turned back to where the boat was moored. In a subdued voice he called to the rest of the enemy soldiers on the boat, and they promptly filed ashore. Two men led the way with guns in hand, followed by a long line of men carrying empty gunny sacks and wooden frames. As they walked along the jetty just about five metres away from where we were hidden. I counted there were twenty-three of them altogether.

Over an hour passed before they came back from the salt-yard breathing heavily under their sacks all filled to capacity with stolen salt. "Hurry! Hurry!" we heard them say as they came back towards the jetty; and from the way they chuckled to each other, they seemed fairly satisfied with their loot. They came, but in a matter of minutes all twenty-three had entered our trap at the jetty.

"Ping! Ping! Ping!" three shots rang out in the air as Instructor Han gave the signal to attack. Like firecrackers on lunar New Year, several tommy-guns instantaneously opened fire upon the enemy. This sudden attack threw the marauders into total confusion. Driven by a torrent of gunfire, they crowded upon one another in a huddle on the road.

"Charge! And catch 'em alive!"

Following the call of the instructor, our comrades jumped to their feet and dashed up to the enemy with guns levelled: "Don't move!" But by now these thieves, sprawling on the road with the heavy salt sacks upon their backs and their feet deep in the mud, were already quite unable to move. One man, however, who was probably the nimblest on his feet, managed to clamber into the boat, but a single shot from our tommy-gun made him tumble down in fright. Face upwards, he fell pretty heavily upon the side of the boat with the sack of salt upon his rifle. Accidentally his neck was caught in the belt of his rifle so that he was suspended upside-down over the side of the boat. He was already gasping for breath

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when I clambered aboard and released him from under the sack of salt. By then all the rest of Syngman Rhee's marauders had been captured without any resistance.

The following day, we received a tremendous welcome from the salt-workers at their lunar New Year's celebration party in The local government delegate warmly shook hands with us and then told us in a cheerful voice, the local government had decided that those salt-bags we had retrieved from the enemy were to be shipped in the very same boat which the Syngman Rhee puppet soldiers had given us, to where salt was needed most in the rear of northern Korea.

## **THE NIGHT SEARCH ON MOUNT OKYIU**

**LIU YI-MING**

*Fighter*

Standing at my sentry post one night, I saw in the moonlight two enemy planes coming in my direction from the southeast. They flew over the peak of Mount Okyiu near our troops who were stationed there, then suddenly turned and flew around the hilltop in endless circles like a pair of evil black crows. Gradually they came down lower and lower till finally their dark shapes became clearly visible in the bright moonlight. Moments later when they were over the southeast edge of the peak they dropped two dark objects, which drifted slowly down to the ground one after the other. At first I thought they were two bombs, but after a little thought I realized that no bomb would have come down so slowly; besides, there was no explosion even long after they had reached the earth. It was at this moment that something our political instructor had once said to us suddenly flashed through my mind: "When the enemy is preparing an amphibious landing along our coast, in order to co-ordinate their offensive they will send spies to the rear of our lines for espionage and sabotage." Then those objects the enemy planes had just dropped could be nothing else but enemy spies or supplies to be delivered to them. This now seemed the only logical conclusion.

Immediately I reported to headquarters. Promptly, a small detachment of our scouts of which I was one, set out quietly along a winding footpath leading up to Mount Okyiu to track down the objects.

It was February and the snow was knee-deep upon the hillside. In the teeth of a freezing wind we tramped through the thick snow up the 600-metre high Mount Okyiu. After a long search we finally discovered two abandoned parachutes with the snow around them well trampled by the footprints of two men. At once we began to follow the footprints of these two men, traces, of which were left in the snow. However, to our disappointment, the trail disappeared near a small ditch full of ice. It looked as if the spies had managed to slip through our hands. A few of the more impetuous among us 'began to swear under their breath, "We won't go home tonight until these damned spies are caught! They can't have actually grown wings!" Others joined in saying: "We'll lay our hands on these two 'little ears' of the enemy if we have to stay out for a couple of nights on end!"

The silvery snow-laden hilltop glistened in the moonlight, and looking down towards the valley we sighted a small village lying half way down the hillside. Since we felt that , the enemy agents could not have gone far in one brief hour, we decided to go down to the village and search for them.

I was the first to enter the small village, accompanied by our liaison man who knew Korean. However, no sign of any activity greeted us except the sound of a barking dog; and the door of every village farmer's house was closed. Then in the centre of the village, we suddenly noticed a streak of yellow light coming out from the half-closed door of a small house. Standing in front of it was an indignant-looking elderly Korean woman holding a kitchen knife in her hand. She took a look at us as we came near her, then without saying a word laid down her knife and sat down on the doorstep.

Quickly, the liaison man and I walked over to the door and looked inside. We saw that in the cooking pot were a bowl of pickled cabbage and two bowls of rice which seemed still warm, some steam rising from them. Apart from this, we noticed that the fire had not completely died out in the oven, all of which indicated that someone had just had a meal there.

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I was very happy as I thought to myself, "The two bastards must still be here."

However, without waiting for us to ask any questions, the Korean woman stood up and walked over to our liaison man furtively, patted him on the shoulder and directed his attention to the haystack outside the door with two fingers extended. saying in a whisper: "Two!"

It was now quite clear what she meant and immediately I dodged behind the wall by the door, to watch the haystack closely while motioning the liaison man to run back and notify the comrades who were coming behind us. When everything was

in order, I fired two shots into the top of the haystack. The two enemy spies threw off the hay and leaped out like a pair of startled rabbits. They came running in panic with their heads held between their hands. Afraid that they might actually run away, the Korean woman picked up a cudgel and threw it at them desperately. The wooden club caught one of the enemy agents squarely on the head. He gave a yelp of terror and fell flat upon the ground, thinking he had been hit by a grenade. As the other one seemed bent on trying to escape I fired another shot above his head and shouted: "Halt!" Meanwhile the comrades who had been lying in ambush around the haystack also shouted out all at once: "Catch him! Don't let him get away!" Seeing his way of escape blocked in front, the spy suddenly turned round to run back towards the house. With my gun levelled, I charged upon him with a roar: "Stand still!" Terror-stricken, the man stood stupefied, not knowing what to do. A moment later, however, he suddenly sprawled on the ground and pointed shakily to the Korean People's Army's uniform he wore. "I'm of . . . the Korean People's Army!" he said. This was too much, actually hoping to fool us even at a moment like this. "Stop this nonsense and stand up!" I roared. Our liaison man in the meantime shouted at him in Korean, "Throw down your gun or we'll knock your brains out!" At this, the fellow stopped muttering, laid down his

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gun and raised both hands. As for his companion who had been thrown into such a state of terror by the Korean woman's cudgel, he had already been taken prisoner by our comrades.

When the Korean woman saw we had both spies safely in hand, she grabbed one of the fellows by the scruff of the neck and started belabouring him with her cudgel. Our liaison man hurried over to stop her, and after much painstaking explanation he finally succeeded in persuading her to put her cudgel down. Still shaking with anger and her face wet with tears, she then related all that had happened before our men came. These two agent's, disguised as members of the Korean People's Army, came to her house and fooled her into building a fire for them and cooking them a meal. Then while they were eating, the dog began to bark outside. The spies had thereupon taken fright and threatened the woman with their guns, warning her to keep quiet about their presence. After that they sneaked out of the house and dived under the haystack. It was then that she realized who they really were. She picked up her kitchen knife intending to try and kill them single-handed but just then we had arrived.

While the woman was tearfully accusing them, the two wretches kept edging backwards, as though scared that we might beat them up. Our liaison man dragged them forward and said in a stern voice, "In northern Korea we have a perfect trap laid for you from the sky down to the earth; no matter whether you

come by air or by sea, you can't ever escape from the people's grip!" "Yes! Yes!" answered the two spies while they shook so violently with fear that they were almost bent double.

## **THE TUNNEL IS THROUGH**

**CHOU HUNG-KANG**

*Squad Leader February 22, 1953*

As soon as we had dug the first tunnel yesterday morning, we were ordered by our battalion headquarters to begin excavating another one over thirty metres long. Moreover, we were required to join forces with the working team of the First Company, which would work from the other end of the tunnel, at the centre of this new underground passage within a period of thirty days. Our company command decided to assign this task to our squad's working team and that of the Fourth Squad. Despite the fact that we had worked for sixteen days on end at the hard rocks, and that every one of us badly needed some rest, and even just one day's rest would have helped, we all jumped at the new task; for indeed none of us failed to understand the overwhelming importance of these tense defence preparations. What did a little hardship or fatigue mean after all when we were fighting for time in a vital race with the enemy?

I was up before daybreak this morning. I lit the lamp, arranged the tools in proper order, then wrapped a handkerchief around a cut on my right hand.

When that was done I rushed through my breakfast and set out for the new working site along with my team-mates, carrying the tools on our shoulders. On the way, Tai Ying-teh said to me:

"Squad Leader, we want to make a good start on this job!"

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"Don't you worry!" I replied. "So long as we work well together, make light of difficulties and use our brains, I dare say we'll even get it done ahead of time!"

On reaching the working site, I split up the job among our fellows. I worked with Chen An-ping and Tai Ying-teh, Chen holding the sharp-pointed steel rod while Tai and I in turn began to swing at it with the big hammers. The rod clanged loudly at each stroke and sparks flew from the rock. However, after more than a dozen strokes, there was still only the trace of a white mark on the rock. Yen Chi-chih,

our deputy squad leader, looked at it and remarked:

"This won't do, you'd better speed it up!"

At this we lifted the big hammers still higher and hit the rod with greater force. At this constant impact, sparks from the rock stung our cheeks, and numbers of minute burnt holes appeared on our sleeves. Just as the hammering was going full tilt, a string of dazzling sparks suddenly burst from the rock and the steel rod broke with a loud clang. It was at once replaced by a new one, but it too broke in a short while. . . . This happened time and again. Luckily the furnace was not far from where we worked, so I charged Deputy Squad Leader Yen Chi-chih with the special duty of repairing the broken rods so as to ensure the supply of this indispensable tool.

At the end of eight hours, we had broken a total of forty-five steel rods but when we took a measurement of the boring we had made in the rock, we found that its total depth was only 45 cm. Later, the result of the blast was no more encouraging, for the explosion brought down nothing but a heap of small white stones no bigger than a fist. Compared with our record on the first tunnel, we were taking seven times as long.

When finally the trumpeter sounded the close of a working day, we threw our sweat-soaked jackets on our shoulders and left the site. On the way home Chen An-ping said to me:

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"Squad Leader! Looks as if we won't get the job done on time if it goes on like this."

"You're right," I said, "we can't let things go on like this. The fact is we mustn't just use our hands blindly, we'll have to use our heads, too. If we all use our brains we'll think up some better way and be able to drive through not just these but even harder rocks!"

*February 25*

After some study we finally found a way to overcome the difficulties we had experienced on the first day. Chen An-ping made a circular band of straw, dampened it in water and then put it around the head of the steel rod, thus successfully controlling the sparks; Yen Chi-chih in the meantime urged our "blacksmith" to cut the rods shorter and oil them so they would not break so easily.

Today, we were just carrying out the rocks from inside the tunnel when the regiment's political commissar walked over hurriedly holding a level and a tape

measure in his hands. A thick fall of snow had turned his yellow uniform to a silvery white. As he drew near, I noticed that ice particles even covered his whiskers. We saluted him, and he answered our greetings with a smile, saying: "You've been finding the going a bit tough, I think, eh?" After that, he began to survey the entrance of the tunnel with the level in his hand.

When we had moved all the stones from within the tunnel, the political commissar walked inside, brushed the snow off himself with one hand, then stood watching us as we hammered at the steel rod. After a little while he said to us: "Comrades, you'll do well to calculate carefully before boring." At once we put down our tools and pricked up our ears. "I took a measurement a moment ago," he continued, "and discovered that this end of the tunnel is higher than the other. Now you need to go a little lower at this end and the others, a little higher at the other end so that you won't finish up on two storeys. I can see it's no easy job to bore into this hard

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rock. You're going to lose a lot of energy and sweat if you go in the wrong direction."

"True! We had only thought of digging it deep and it had never occurred to us that we might be veering in the wrong direction. Our political commissar always hits the nail on the head!" thought I; and I answered him cheerfully: "Don't you worry, Chief; we'll dig it just as you've told us."

smiling, the commissar nodded in satisfaction; then he went on in a sober tone: "Comrades, ever since Eisenhower went to Washington, realizing that it's impossible to break through our main lines, he's been clamouring about landing on our east and west coasts. In order to shatter this dirty plot of his, we must build up our defence work as quickly as we can. What we want is to turn every hill on our side into an impregnable fortress and smash the enemy wherever they come to attack us. That's why your work will guarantee our victory."

I answered him for our whole squad: "We'll not fail you, Chief. We'll finish our work ahead of schedule!"

Chen An-ping had recently had trouble with his eyes; and the last few days they became worse because the dust from the boring of the rocks increased the inflammation and caused his eyes to swell to the size of two small peaches. As for me the cut on my right hand had opened and begun to hurt more than ever: in addition to which a sizable boil had appeared upon my wrist. The pus from it spurted every time I swung the hammer. Finally my forearm swelled till it was the size of a bowl. In spite of all this, however, we refused to rest when our political

instructor tried to persuade us to do so. I always said to him: "Look at the leaders of our regiment: they run from one place to another every day, come rain or snow, and paying no attention to their age. How can a couple of youngsters like us go back to rest just because of a little discomfort?"

It was very cold these days. However, when we plunged into work and swung the hammers, each weighing several

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pounds, for some five hundred strokes, we looked like some\_ thing just taken out of the hot pot with steam all over us. Then we would simply take off most of our clothes and go on hammering energetically with just a pair of shorts on. one day the political instructor came to stand by with a watch in his hand trying to count how many strokes we could hit the rod in an hour. Then when we had given it more than a thousand strokes, sweat began streaking down our backs and once more the instructor told us to rest. Tai Ying-teh and I answered him at the same time: "Nothing doing! We-re going to stick it out with these die-hard rocks to see who's the stronger!" So we went on with renewed energy until by an order the instructor finally forced us to stop. By that time we had knocked 3,500 strokes without a stop. Everyone was impressed when we checked the time and discovered that a depth of 30 cm. had been bored in just a little more than fifty minutes! Chen An-ping, who had completely mastered the skill of holding a steel rod, was certainly remarkable: for he handled it in such a way that it drove deeper into the rock with each stroke of the hammer while the dust flowed cut rapidly of its own accord from the hole in the rock.

At the close of the day, the company's cultural instructor came into the tunnel with a book in his hand to record the day's score. When the tape measure revealed the depth of 200 cm. he exclaimed, "Marvellous!" Every man jumped up in wild excitement and joy.

"The highest record! The highest record!" shouted the cultural instructor in glee as he ran back towards the company headquarters.

*March 18*

The snow had stopped but the piercing wind began outside and the weather seemed even colder.

Today our tunnel would be finished, four days ahead of schedule. We were all unusually happy for our promise to our regimental command was nearly realized; and every one

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of us was singing or humming a familiar tune as we ran from our quarters towards the tunnel.

As we entered, Meng Hsien-chao and Chiao Ching-pin, who were on the first shift, were swinging the big hammers energetically with their shoulders bare; and Meng, following the rhythm of the strokes, was singing to himself: "Ding dong! my hammer of steel; with each stroke, I hit Ike on the head!" "Hey, Meng! You've enjoyed yourself long enough. It's our turn now!"

"What? Is it time for your shift? Why so soon!" They seemed to have forgotten about lunch completely.

At once we took over the shift, and went on hammering without interruption.

Suddenly the bang of hammers from the other end of the tunnel began to shake the rocky wall on our side. "It's coming soon! It's coming soon!" shouted our men cheering loudly. No wonder those two just now were reluctant to change shift with us, for we were about through to the other side!"

In but a little while we had driven a deep hole in the rock and filled it with dynamite.

At this juncture, however, Sun Wen-pin of the First Company rushed in breathlessly from outside with a cotton-padded coat spread over his shoulders. Panting, he shouted to me: "You people were very quick, Squad Leader Chou! Please wait a few minutes for us because our bore is nearly finished too." Then we agreed to fire the blast simultaneously at the signal of three hammer strokes. Before he ran off, however, he lifted a bandaged hand and saluted me, adding with a wink: "Here's a salute to you and the other brothers on behalf of my team. Thanks for your kind co-operation, we'll see each other soon after we join forces."

Several minutes later we heard three loud raps from the other side of the rocky wall. Without delay I answered it also with three strokes of my hammer upon the rock, and immediately lit the fuse with a burning cigarette. I waited

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until the fuse began to sparkle and I heard a sizzling noise, then I dashed out from the tunnel.

The comrades were already there all waiting expectantly upon the hillside just outside the tunnel. Suddenly the earth seemed to quiver under us as six dull explosions broke out in rapid succession from inside the hill. With loud cheers, the comrades rushed towards the tunnel without waiting for the nitrous smoke to disperse. When I groped my way inside, I saw a gleam of light coming through an

opening about the size of a wash-basin from the other side of the tunnel. Our co-workers had already come in from the other side and lit a lamp! "Comrades! We've joined forces in victory!" they shouted at us joyously as countless hands were extended towards us through the opening in the wall. In a rush, we ran towards them and clasped their hands tightly in our own.

"We've joined forces!"

"The tunnel is through!"

The whole tunnel shook with our loud cheers.

## **CAPTURING A U. S. AIRMAN**

**WANG HUI-CHUN**

*Driver, Transport Corps*

Of the group of enemy planes dispersed by our ack-ack guns, one suddenly caught fire and trailed a streak of black smoke from the tail. Suddenly a little white "umbrella" appeared from out of the plane, swinging and floating down through space till it dropped on the slope opposite Yosupo.

Squad Leader Chang Chin-tin waved to me and Liu Kiang, shouting, "Let's go; let's catch that flying bandit alive!" Each armed with a tommy-gun, we three rushed up the slope.

In the distant sky were seven of the enemy's Mustang fighters circling around the hills, diving and climbing. The piercing sounds, shrill though distant, and the continuous sweep of their machine-guns punctuated by bomb explosions made it clear to us that the enemy was creating all this disturbance to protect his shot-down airman until their helicopter could come to pick him up.

We were already panting hard but the squad leader urged us to run still faster, saying, "Hurry! Put on more speed!"

On reaching the foot of the slope we dashed on into the brush to conduct the search. We combed the bushes up and down the hill but could not find hide nor hair of the American air pirate. Strange! We had seen him drop into this thicket. How could he vanish!

The squad leader was very emphatic as he said, "There is no mistake about it. The devil must be somewhere around here; otherwise what were the enemy planes doing all that

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manoeuvring at this spot for? What's more, if our AA gunners can bring down the enemy plane, certainly it shouldn't be beyond us to catch their measly airman! Search again!"

But just then the enemy's helicopter came swooping down like a crow upon the scene! The squad leader shouted again more urgently, "Hurry! We've got to be quick! We can't let this thing take away what has already fallen into our hands!" While intensifying the search we suddenly heard from behind the slope a shrill yell, awful to hear, like the squawk of a chicken snatched by a weasel in the silence of midnight. Liu Kiang smiled as he whispered near my ear, "Listen! That fellow is contacting the 'copter!"

Following the squeal we rushed around the slope. Three enemy fighters were buzzing about the helicopter and another four were circling around the mountain, strafing and bombing without taking aim. From our hilltop our ear-drums seemed likely to burst with the grinding of the motors and the explosion of bullets and bombs. I had to shout to make myself heard as I said to Liu Kiang who was right beside me: "This is what is known as American modernization. Apparently they knew their planes hadn't a chance against our ack-ack guns so they had their flying sedan cruising about to pick up their shot-down airmen."

Liu Kiang commented on their co-ordination. "Not so bad," he said. "As soon as the airman baled out their 'copter started churning on its way to take him back again. They seem to have quite some experience in the routine!"

"We'll see what good their experience will do them this time!" the squad leader cut in.

Looking down from a hilltop, we spotted the airman on a mound halfway up the slope. He was making the sign of the cross as he shouted wildly into a direct phone.

"Just look at him! Is he praying to his God?" Liu Kiang said, nudging me.

"Perhaps his God won't be able to help him now!" the squad leader suggested.

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We decided on a plan of action: Liu Kiang was to keep his eye on the helicopter

and I would follow the squad leader into the brush. Our American airman had his scared green eyes glued to the helicopter as he shouted to it, completely oblivious of what was going on around him. A few more steps and we were face to face with him. The squad leader kicked the phone out of his hand and covered him with his gun. "Hands up," I ordered. He did not obey immediately, and then it was only with reluctance that he finally raised his two quivering arms over his head, at the same time throwing himself down on his knees. The squad leader ordered him to get up but he refused, pretending to be hurt. Only a little while before he had been murderous, mercilessly bombing Korean villages and slaughtering Korean women and children. Now, what a cringing, contemptible object he had become! His play-acting really wouldn't have been bad on the stage! But at the squad leader's stern order "March!" he did get up and start ambling along, his eyes still fixed on the helicopter.

There was a burst of gunfire from the hilltop — Lid Kiang had opened fire on the helicopter as it was descending. There was a screech from the 'copter as it rocked and then climbed back into space, leaving us shouting after it.

"Then we won't give you a receipt after all!" we said. "You'll just have to make it a verbal message — tell Eisenhower for us that we have received one of his airmen!"

## **KOREAN GRANDMOTHER**

**KUO TEH-HAI**

*Fighter*

In September 1951 our ack-ack battalion was stationed at the Samdeng railway junction to carry out garrison duty. The communication squad to which I belonged was billeted in the home of a Grannie Kim.

Sixty years of age, Grannie Kim was short of stature and silver-haired, but she had the buoyant spirit of a young girl. She was a member of the Workers' Party and a widow, her husband having been murdered by the Japanese bandits some twelve years before. When the American imperialists launched their war of aggression in Korea she sent her three sons to serve their country in the People's Army: thus she was left alone at home. Her sole companion was an old tawny ox, strong and fat, which helped her to transport her grain, plough her fields, carry firewood down from the mountains and do other odd jobs. In a word, Grannie Kim would have been lost without "Old Brownie."

We had scarcely got our knapsacks hung under her roof that very first day when Grannie Kim had greeted us with smiles, helped us to sweep the *kang* clean for us to rest and boiled water for us to drink. She even brought us water for washing our feet, which quite embarrassed us.

We noticed her great concern for the old tawny ox our first couple of days in her home. She would go to the stall several times each day with armfuls of hay or fresh water. She even gave it some of the nourishing soup and vegetables from

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her own table which she herself needed, and she picked ticks from its body. After her meal she would take the ox out to the fields and bring it back with its belly round and full, while on its back would be a bundle of faggots which she had picked up on the way. I noticed it caused her pain even to hear the ox cry. Whenever it lowed, even in the middle of the night, she would be roused and run out into the enclosure as soon as she could get to her feet. If nothing was amiss she would just pat the ox, gently caressing its big hairy jaw. Or she would scratch its back for it before she returned to her room.

It was not long till we were all like one big family. We called her Ah-ma-ni ("honoured mother"); in return she affectionately called us Ah-teh-erh ("beloved sons"). The only differences between us were language and dress.

I had been sick for half a month and was still very weak, with eyes just two hollows. I was unable to get up from the *kang*, so that comrades had to support me even to go to the toilet. Still I was sure I would recover soon and so refused to be sent to the rear to a hospital.

Day and night Grannie Kim watched at my bedside, giving me tender loving care. Once when my condition took a turn for the worse she did not leave my side the whole night but spent it tucking my quilt back around me when I kicked it off and feeling my forehead from time to time for fever. I did my best to persuade her to rest. "Ah-ma-ni, get some sleep," I urged with all the strength I had. But she paid no heed whatsoever — just stretched out her loving hands and turned her kind motherly eyes on me as though to tell me tenderly, "Never mind, Ah-teh-erh."

One day at noon the squad went out to string telephone wires, saying they would be back very soon. Because we had a limited number of people to do the job nobody was left at home to look after me, but not long after the fellows had gone out Grannie Kim came back from the field with something bundled in her apron. After tethering the ox, she

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came into the house. I turned over to greet her: "Ah-ma-ni, you have come back!" After settling down on the *kang* with her stocky legs crossed she stretched out her hand as usual to test my fever. Then she shook out her apron, and the apples and sweets she had bundled there fell on the *kang* before me. Then she said in her mildest tone, "Ah-teh-erh, these are for you. Eat them."

"Thank you, Ah-ma-ni, but I really don't feel like eating," I protested as I put the apples and candies back in her apron. She frowned. "If you don't listen to Ah-ma-ni you are not a good Ah-teh-erh." So saying she placed the apples and candies before me again.

Just then we were alarmed by a shrill screeching which pierced the air. An enemy plane had swept over our roof top and this was followed immediately by the detonation of bombs, which deafened us and shattered the windows. The concussion brought the dust down from the rafters onto the *kang* and laid it thick over my face and body. I cried out, "Ah-ma-ni, air-raid — run for shelter," and pushed her away, asking her not to worry about me. Meanwhile I struggled up, thinking to go out too. But what did Grannie Kim do? Without a moment's hesitation she pulled me up over her shoulders and was off with me like a bag of meal! I would rather have crawled all the way on my hands and knees than let a 60 year-old woman carry me on her back! But she refused to listen to my repeated protests and lifted me up, staggering as she headed for the door. I dared not contend with her any longer lest I should make her fall, so I had finally to give in. As we passed through the courtyard I saw "Old Brownie" leaping in fright in his enclosure. Thinking of her concern for her ox, I shouted, "Ah-ma-ni, the ox — the ox —" But Grannie Kim just tossed her head in its direction without so much as pausing to give it its accustomed pat and carried me straight for the air-raid shelter in the hillside.

The enemy plane swooped down again, releasing bombs around us. "Lie down." I told Grannie Kim at which she

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laid me on the ground and threw her tired body over me. A Korean grandmother would risk her very life for me! How could I allow that! No sooner had she got up than the concussion of another bomb threw her again to the ground. But before I had pulled myself together, she had righted herself and again threw her plump body over me. It was then that I saw her forehead had a great gash cut in it by flying debris while her white dress and apron were stained red. But all this shock and pain she took in her stride. As soon as the plane was gone she put me onto her back again and was off.

When she arrived with me at the shelter she was quite out of breath and beads of sweat glistened on her forehead. I quickly tore a sleeve from my jacket to bind her wound but she motioned "no" with her hand. She would not be fussed over. Then she opened her mouth to say something but had not the breath to say it. So she gestured to me to remind me of the communications equipment left in the house. That done, she turned and headed back. I grasped a corner of her apron and held it fast, refusing to let her go, but my recent illness had sapped my strength so that that little exertion set my head spinning and turned my limbs to cotton. A little tug and Grannie Kim had got away, while all I could do was crawl to the door of the air-raid shelter and look on helplessly as she ran towards the house. An enemy plane had circled round and was strafing the village, but it seemed to be my heart that was being swept with fire and flame. . . .

"Old Brownie" in his stall was lowing and kicking up a great fuss in response to the enemy machine-gun's barking at the village. At least the ox was there to greet the old woman on her return to the house. She doted so on her pet! It was on him too that she relied to plough her fields. How ardently I wished I could help her rescue the ox! But my legs failed me every time I struggled to get up. I could only hope that Grannie Kim would get the ox out of his stall safely.

By this time bombs were sending up great columns of smoke and dust and the village was enveloped in flames.

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Suddenly Grannie Kim appeared from out of a cloud of smoke. I was so delighted that I shouted my throat hoarse, "Ah-ma-ni, run quickly —" Though I shouted with all my strength, my voice came out so feeble that even I myself heard it only as a rasp. She had three sets of telephone apparatus with her but no ox. Then I saw her put the telephone sets on the ground and go back again to the house. I said to myself that this time she had surely gone back for the ox, But on her next trips to and from the village she brought our electric wire, knapsacks, water jugs and dry rations.

Only after all our gear and equipment were removed from the house would she go back for the ox. But who was to know that an enemy plane would circle back again dropping bombs. Grannie Kim's house vanished in a pall of dust!

A cold sweat burst out all over me. Why was Grannie Kim so long coming back? Why was there no sound from the ox? Something had happened! I gathered my little strength and, struggling for each breath, began crawling towards the house. At the gate I saw Grannie Kim lying in the courtyard. In her hand was the tether of her beloved ox, which lay quite still beside her. Crawling to her side, I saw her eyes closed, her face pale, with blood streaming from the wound on her forehead

and running down the troughs of her deep wrinkles. She was soaked with her own sweat. I was at a loss to know what I could do for her. Was she alive or dead? But thinking of all she had done for us gave me more strength, and I managed with some difficulty to get up. With trembling hands I felt her bosom and discovered that her heart was still beating, if feebly. I lifted her up by supporting her against my thighs, shook her gently and cried, "Ah-ma-ni! —"

At last Grannie Kim drew a long breath, slowly opened her eyes, searching me up and down — then she held me close only to loosen her embrace, her lips quivering. Her eyes were fixed upon me, searching for the wound she feared she might find on my body, then seeing that I was not in any way wounded she embraced me warmly again. Her bluish face

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Suddenly paled, then she laughed and cried all at once, great tears rushing down her cheeks. Unable any longer to control my emotion, I fell into Grannie Kim's arms and started bawling like a little child.

By nightfall Grannie Kim's courtyard was full of people. There were Korean villagers and many fighters and officers of the C.P.V. All came to give solicitude to Grannie Kim and inquire after her condition. But most of those who came to ask about Grannie Kim were from our battalion; almost every one of us was on hand to ask after her. They surrounded her, warmly calling her "Mama," and "Ah-ma-ni." Fortunately, her wounds were not serious. Neat in her white bandage, her face lit up with a broad smile as she received her Korean and Chinese "big children."

## **SUMMER DAY WITH AN AMERICAN AIRMAN UNDER ESCORT**

**LIU FENG-SHENG C.P.V.**

*Art Troupe*

While we were billeted in Koksan we had one unusually hot day. On my way back from a company headquarters that day I was passing Mumyang-ni when I began looking for a shady spot to rest a while. There someone called to me, "Hsiao Liu, where are you going?"

I looked up and saw it was Lao Tang, the English interpreter attached to the Political Department, who, together with two of our fighters, was escorting a

captured American airman to headquarters.

I joined them and Lao Tang started to tell me about the capture. "This fellow was brought down by our ack-ack battery this morning with only three shots," he explained. "The wreckage of his plane lies in the mountains, but he arrived by parachute, only slightly wounded in the leg." Lao Tang broke into a gale of laughter when he got to the next. "Funny thing about this fellow, he is quite superstitious. He still thinks it was his God that saved him; that otherwise he would have been killed! Even after he was captured he would cross himself from time to time."

Lao Tang's story gave me a good laugh too and I stepped up to take a better look at this superstitious American. Tall and weedy, the fellow walked with a bit of a limp, which made him look for all the world like a long crooked stick jogging along. He shoved his hands nonchalantly into the

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pockets of his trousers, trying to act as if nothing had happened. But it only made him look more comical, for he was spattered all over with mud and his hair was a tousled mess. His uniform was torn, the streamers trailing behind in the breeze. Thus he actually looked funny rather than casual.

After covering some distance on the highway we turned in towards a gully where we stopped to rest under a tree near the mountain slope. Just then the hum of an aeroplane motor was heard from the other side of the mountain and I turned to look at the airman. What a change had come over him! His eyes, which had been fixed and lustreless all along, suddenly lighted up and began shifting in all directions. Another moment and four enemy planes had appeared overhead, the one in front tilting its wings. Ho! The plane's signal was like a fire set under the airman for he straightened up as if he had met his sweetheart by chance and was about to throw himself into her arms. He stood on the very tips of his toes, both arms waving wildly at the sky. But not one of the enemy planes gave him so much as a sign of recognition; they went off in a line, only half completed a circle and then flew back over to the other side of the mountain. His hopes dashed, our captive's face turned pale, his trembling hands dropped to his lank sides and were roughly thrust back into his trouser pockets. His expression was that of a deflated rubber ball as he sat there on the ground, his head drooping, murmuring to himself.

He seemed to me to be an interesting fellow. I was just about to tell Lao Tang to ask him something in English when the zoom of engines came rushing at us from around the mountain again and immediately four enemy planes dived in front of us. Our ack-ack guns on the slopes went into action, spitting flames at them. We

watched the puffs of black smoke as our ack-ack shells chased the fleeing enemy planes throwing them into such a panic that they hurled down their auxiliary petrol tanks and bombs. Tilting their wings in their desperate effort to avoid hits by our ack-ack

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gun shells, they tailed off in three directions with the baleful sound of a person wailing.

Then all was clear and quiet in the mountain gully. But when we sat down we discovered that the airman was no longer with us. During the excitement he had ducked out and taken shelter in a crack in the rocks on the slope, and there he was with his rear end sticking out! This "hero" of the U.S. Air Force had been so terrified by his own planes that he had turned ostrich with his head stuck in the cranny of a rock! Lao Tang went up and gave his behind a smart slap, and removed him from his hiding place. He was frankly embarrassed as he clumsily straightened his collar, fixed his hair and brushed the veil of cobwebs and tree leaves from his face. His blue eyes avoided us, being fixed instead on a piece of rock on the ground, while his lips quivered slightly. Looking at the spectacle he made, we could not help laughing. And this made him only the more comical.

Through our roars of laughter we suddenly heard singing. We looked around and saw on a meadow below a precipice a little ahead of us our cultural instructor directing a group of our men singing army songs. Some Korean women were washing clothes in a brook at the foot of the mountain, and the beating of their paddles on the clothes kept time well with the singing. Added to this was the scene at the smithy we had set up midway of the mountain: flames leaping high and the "fireworks display" as our fighters pumped air into the forge with bellows and, with bare brawny arms glistening, hammered out the molten metal and were showered in turn with its sparks. All commonplace enough, but the U.S. airman was struck dumb by it. He stood there staring for a long time, then finally managed to stammer out,

"It never occurred to me — never occurred to me —"

"What never occurred to you?" Lao Tang prompted him in English.

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"I never imagined there were so many people still left alive after our planes' carpet bombing job!" Stunned, he hung his head as he went on murmuring to himself.

"Not only still alive but also carrying on their work as usual!" Lao Tang said this

with no little indignation in his voice. "This is the aftermath of your 'air superiority.' Now you can form a new estimate of it, can't you?"

The American did not reply, evading his question by asking another, though he himself seemed very doubtful of it. "Really, aren't you afraid of our planes?" he ventured.

Lao Tang laughed, and when he translated for us what the P.O.W. had asked, we all laughed heartily. Lao Tang then said to him, "Figure it out for yourself! Just tell us if you can what it is that should make us afraid of your planes? Take yourself as an example. You have chalked up thousands of hours in the air, haven't you? Your technique as an airman isn't bad, now is it?" The American nodded his head. Lao Tang continued, "But we expended only three shells to bring both you and your plane down and now you are safe in our hands. Wouldn't you say it is a rather good bargain to get a plane and an airman for three shells? We feel quite satisfied! Do you think we have anything to fear from such an air force? Ha, ha, ha — " Lao Tang broke into hearty laughter again and we all joined in. Our P.O.W. hung his head and looked uncomfortable.

"Come on, let's get going!" Lao Tang gave the P.O.W. a pat on the shoulder. "Your 'air superiority' isn't all it's cracked up to be!"

"Hm!—" The P.O.W. had nothing more to say. Hanging his head, he followed us meek as a lamb.

## **AIR FIGHT OVER THE CHONGCHON RIVER**

**LI HSIEN-KANG**

*Air Group Commander*

On October 5 we received urgent orders to cover the Chongchon River Bridge. As soon as the order had been relayed by the commanding officer, I speeded with a squadron of six fighters through layers of thin clouds, headed for our destination in the war zone. Flying at about 8,000 metres altitude, we could see the Chongchon River as a glittering and gleaming ribbon below us. I looked back and saw our planes flying in perfect formation.

On entering the war zone I issued the order, "On the alert!" and as we continued our flight I spotted some black specks on the other side of the river. It was

immediately clear what these were, for at that very moment one of our crew reported to me that enemy planes had been sighted.

"Dump the auxiliary petrol tanks!" was my order to all planes. Lightened for speed, we winged our way out to meet the enemy. Immediately the outlines of the enemy planes became distinct — more than 30 fighters and dive-bombers. the F-86 fighters flying at a slightly higher altitude than the F-84 and F-80. It was the fighters that constituted the gravest threat and we were tempted to tackle them first. But if we did, the bombers would be given the chance they wanted at the bridge below while we were tied up with the fighters. That was precisely what the enemy wanted us to do and precisely what we would not do. I then ordered our planes: "Smash into the enemy bombers!" and at the same time pushed the stick in my plane to plunge into a nose dive. With my

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squadron following me closely I disregarded the threat of the F-86's and dashed straight into the enemy's mixed formation whose strength was six or seven times greater than ours.

Never expecting this sudden head-on attack, the dive- bombers' formation broke up in disorder. To facilitate their retreat, they released their loads onto the barren mountain tops, sending up huge pillars of thick smoke.

Once the enemy planes had been thrown into confusion the fighting initiative shifted into our hands and our combat enthusiasm mounted. I issued the order to attack. Six of our Fighting Eagles then turned swiftly and rushed upon the enemy at top speed, thus striking more confusion into the ranks of the enemy "F's," which were already flying all jammed together. I took aim at the lead plane on the extreme right and waited till its grey body came fully into my sights. Everything ready, I waited till the F-80 came within shooting range; then by pushing a button I sent a string of steel fire balls into the fuselage, which instantly caught fire. With a loud noise, the plane exploded in the air.

The air battle was on! While I was in hot pursuit of a second enemy plane, I heard excited sounds over my earphones. It was the sharp voice of Airman Chu Fu-tien shouting: "We have brought down one! — and another one! —" To the left I saw three enemy planes emitting thick smoke, and one of them trailing a long black tail was swirling down to earth. How inspired I was by the victory scored by our comrades! I immediately jerked up the stick and taking advantage of my position, launched another attack. What had become of the "invincibility" of these air pirates? Hotly pursued by my machine, the enemy simply banked and rolled, not even daring to take a look back. They sometimes described the letter "S," sometimes just glided away — all tactics not of the enemy on the offensive but of

the enemy trying desperately to cover his own retreat in all directions.

We had smashed the enemy's bomber formation, but his fighters stole down upon us from among the clouds, taking

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advantage of their position. One of them caught my tail. At the same time my comrade planes were also locked in fight with the F-86's. In these circumstances I knew the best thing for me to do was to keep calm and steady. I curved down to the left and was immediately aware of the hissing of an enemy plane that had sped past overhead, the red tracers visible in the distance before it. But the enemy was not ready to give up yet, and in a few seconds his plane made a turn and was trailing my tail again.

"All right!" thought I, "if you really want a fight, I'll give you one." Exploiting to the full the superiority of my plane, I made a sudden climb so as to gain the dominating air position. My comrades followed in making a sharp ascent. When we had gained absolute positional superiority and were ready to launch our all-out offensive, the bunch of air pirates, this "trump card" of the U.S. Air Force — the F-86's, tailed it over the high seas like whipped dogs.

Tallying up after the fight, we found that we had destroyed two enemy planes and damaged another two. After the white vapour trail left by the retreating planes had cleared, the skies over the Chongchon River were again quiet azure. The bridge over the shimmering water remained to span it proudly like a giant snake. It was intact!

## **CHRISTMAS IN THE P.O.W. CAMP**

**FAN YUN-AN**

*P.O.W. Camp Teacher*

The 25th of December was drawing near. In consideration of the tradition and customs of the prisoners-of-war living in our camp — American and British — we prepared to celebrate Christmas in proper style.

Early in the morning of December 23, as soon as breakfast was over, P.O.W.s from the different squads went out to the countryside and brought back branches of pine and other evergreens, with which they built arches across the road around

the company's quarters as well as in front of the entrance to the room of each squad. Then they added coloured paper flowers and ribbons to the green arches; and finally, besides all these, a nicely-decorated Christmas tree stood prominently in the middle of the camp court. In high spirits, the P.O.W.s busied themselves with the preparations. "Hello" and "Okay" were heard here and there as they cheerfully called to each other while some of them whistled to themselves complacently. All through the day their faces beamed, and smiles lingered around the corners of their mouths.

Because northern Korea had but lately been overrun by the brutal American aggressors and practically nothing suitable for presents was obtainable there, we had been obliged earlier to have our purchasing agent sent all the way back to China to buy gifts for the P.O.W.s. Presently our truck driver, having broken through the enemy air blockade, brought back from cities thousands of kilometres away in China large bundles of Christmas presents for these occupants

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of our camp. Later, when we distributed the presents to representatives of the P.O. W. squads, their joy was beyond description. As they turned to walk back to their quarters with their arms full of sweets, peanuts, dainty biscuits and fresh, luscious-looking fruit, some exclaimed: "How wonderful!- while others said in excitement: "Oh! I can't carry them all!"

In the evening of the same day, a Negro soldier who had been brought to the camp not so long before from the front line came to my office with a worried look on his face and asked whether he would be allowed to see the play the next evening together with the white soldiers. When I asked why he brought up such a question, he blinked his glistening eyes, and with an expression of bashfulness mixed with indignation he answered: "That's very simple, Teacher. No Negro wants to endure the humiliation he'd have to go through at home, to see a play together with the white men." Then he went on to tell me how a Negro who went to see a show in America would first have to meet the hostile stare of the booking clerk; next, the usher would not even look at him when he collected his ticket, nor would he guide a Negro but leave him to grope around in the dark to find a seat for himself. A Negro would be more than lucky if the man who sat next to him happened to be another of his own race; but, if unfortunately he sat down beside a white man, the latter would most likely leave his seat immediately, swearing under his breath: "Damn that filthy, dirty nigger! . . ." But yet, such abuse was far from the worst a Negro could expect, for he might even be beaten up by the white man then and there. . . .

In a serious tone, I explained to him that everyone was entitled to the same rights as others, regardless of his colour, and that we had neither American style

booking clerks, nor such theatres in our camp but that all prisoners-of-war were given equal, humane treatment, regardless of nationality or race. He looked at me in surprise, then smiled wryly and left.

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For a long time afterwards I could not set my mind at rest. I kept asking myself whether he had understood what I'd said, doubted the sincerity of my words, or whether he simply could not believe that such things were possible in this world. Obviously this would be the first time he would attend a theatrical performance in the company of white men.

Throughout the following day, the 24th, a programme of music and other entertainment was broadcast through the whole camp.

On Christmas Eve there was a specially rich dinner. In addition to the usual three dishes and a soup, plenty of pork, fresh fish and plump chicken was provided. When the dinner was over it was nearly 6:30 in the evening, and I led the P.O.W.s off to the theatre and see the play that was to be performed by some of their own men. On the way to the theatre, however, I noticed that the Negro who had come to my office the previous night was walking closely behind me, followed by several other Negroes from other squads. The man still looked worried but he did not raise the question again, as to whether he would be able to see the performance together with the white soldiers.

It was quite a successful performance that night; the play had an excellent plot and the acting was quite stirring. The audience was well impressed and applauded it with loud cheers. A prisoner-of-war sitting just beside me, a member of the U.S. Marines before he was captured, told me with obvious excitement that this was the happiest Christmas he had spent in five years. For on all the other occasions he was either on sentry duty somewhere in the Pacific or dodging the freezing north wind in a dug-out at his base. Other P.O.W.s expressed similar feelings. On our return walk from the theatre to the camp, they talked, sang and laughed hilariously all the way. One of them, an American, said: "My! I've never had such a wonderful time. Why, this is just like being at home; not a bit like a . . . ." However, probably for decency's sake he halted right there and did not mention the

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words "P.O.W. Camp." As for the several Negroes, they smiled and chatted to me cheerfully outside the theatre after the show; there was no trace of their former doubt and uneasiness.

On December 25, the P.O.W.s paid social calls on their various friends while music

and other entertainment was broadcast all over the camp.

Early that morning snowflakes danced in the air and then drifted slowly down to earth, spreading over it a spotless, white carpet. When the clock struck eight, the P.O.W.s held a religious service according to their custom. They assembled, then took out the Bible and solemnly began their prayers by confessing the sins they had committed in Korea and thanking God for saving them from death.

Having completed their thanks to God, they were given more gifts, this time a silk handkerchief for each man with "Merry Christmas" printed on it in both Chinese and English. They put away this gift with great care, many of them saying that they would keep it as a souvenir for their mothers or wives when they went home.

When the celebration was over, these prisoners-of-war wrote upon the gate and walls of the camp:

"Best Wishes to the Peace-Workers, Thank You Very Much!"

## **GETTING THE EIGHTEEN TRAINS THROUGH**

### **SHIH FU-MIN**

*Deputy Squad Leader, Railway Corps, Hero Second Class*

We had spent the day making emergency repairs on a section of the line only a few kilometres from Gaichon Railway Station. At twilight, when we had just driven the last spike on a length of rail and were about to enjoy a good square meal suddenly several enemy planes flew over from the south and, taking advantage of the approaching darkness, stealthily swooped down and wantonly released some bombs. Damn it! The railway line suffered no hits but the railway bridge nearby had two sections of steel beams knocked out of it. The "throat" to the junction of three railway lines to the front had again been cut by the enemy!

Flaming with indignation, I had no appetite for the meal, but as soon as the company commander issued the order "assemble," we each picked up a couple of steamed buns and put them in our pockets. Additionally armed with a good-size wrench, we made for the bridge.

The sun had gone down behind the hill and a piercing cold wind swept over the river, roaring in our ears. We got to work and piled up the sleepers with the

dispatch of a bayonet charge at the height of battle, the sound of men digging with spades and picks harmonizing with their chants.

Absorbed as we were in this combat task we had not noticed the rising of the moon; but now it was already going down in the west. Our company commander and our political in-

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structor made rounds of inspection every few minutes. "Comrades, hurry up! We've got to work fast. Let's get the trains through as soon as possible!" Although it was in the darkness of night I could tell how our superior officers felt about the incident from the indignant tone of their voices. For the sake of victory, how anxious they were that the bridge, "the throat," should be repaired one minute, even one second earlier. . .!

Shortly before daybreak piles of sleepers loomed high and steel beams were laid across the bridge. The basic repair work was now practically completed; what remained to be done before trains could pass through were now only the finishing touches to the surface.

So our squad shifted to the work there, dragging and pounding the steel rails into position on the sleepers and making them fast. But when we came to laying the last rail, we discovered that though it was also a 370 kg. rail, it was 400 cm. too long to connect up with the adjoining one. What were we to do? The company commander noted that time was running out, and so he asked us just to place a switch between to fill the gap. He said just to put in a couple of screws temporarily and go back to work on them after the trains had gone through.

I still don't know what happened to me at that moment. Perhaps my hands were stiff with the cold, but it took me an awful long time getting just the first screw in. And with the second I could make no headway at all no matter how I sledged at it. Scrutinizing it closely, I found it was an outsize and would not fit anyway it was put. What I needed was a 120 mm. screw. but not one was to be found no matter how we searched. We were really hard put to it for a solution to our problem!

There was no chance of finding a solution on the spot, for an urgent phone call had come from the railway station that eighteen military trains from our motherland were already waiting to cross the bridge. Hey! With a sudden start I

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realized that this was the blockaded zone and if the eighteen trains did not get through before daybreak, anything could happen to them. I had not imagined that so much could hinge on one small screw!

To go back to the camp to find a suitable one was out of the question; the round trip would mean 20 kilometres over rough ground and now there was no time for it.

The political instructor called an on-the-spot Party branch meeting. The fighters were agitated and restless. Under the pale moonlight I saw the political instructor point to the bridge, shouting at the top of his voice, "— and now, just for the lack of a small screw train loads of ammunition brought thousands of kilometres from our motherland have been stopped at the bridge. Shall we let them be bombed there? No, never! We must think of some way to avoid that, at any cost. We must make the bridge passable for those trains so that all the supplies they carry will arrive safely at the front!" At this my brain was set humming and my heart stirring with one thought, "Just one small screw — the U.S. imperialists can't knock our bridge out with their bombs. How can the lack of a screw cripple it?" My whole mind was filled with the screw until suddenly I struck on a new idea. My eyes fixed on the wrench in my hand, I cried to myself, "I've got it! This thing is pointed enough to do for a screw! It will do the job. Let it serve for the time being!" I brought this suggestion up before the political instructor who, after some deliberation, asked, "Will the wrench do the job? What will hold it in place? Won't it slip?"

Without any hesitation I replied, "It won't slip because I'll hold it in place with my hand."

As the time for the trains to pass was drawing near and we could not delay another moment, the political instructor took my hand in his, saying, "Shih Fu-min, you may try!"

I was both enthusiastic and excited as I ran to the bridge and out onto one end of a sleeper. I lay flat on the bridge, while tight in my hand was the wrench, bringing the two

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steel rails into close proximity! No amount of shaking could separate them!

The company commander came around for a final check and asked me if I could surely handle it. I calmly said I could. "No question about it. Tell them to send the trains over!" I said confidently.

A little doubtful perhaps, the company commander patted me on the shoulder, saying, "Shih Fu-min, you've got to be very careful! You carry a heavy responsibility now!"

The fighters on the bridge scattered. The green light switched on and, with a long whistle, the first train puffed out billows of black smoke and proceeded slowly towards the bridge. With all the strength I had I wrenched the steel rails firmly together, so excited I could not get my breath.

"Ho — " the giant locomotive sped past as if driven over my head. Something grazed my shoulder, convulsing my whole body. It was the ladder that had gouged a big hole in my jacket, leaving me in excruciating pain. Steam shot square into my face but by now I was past all thought of danger. I just clenched my teeth and held the wrench firmly under control in my hands while the locomotive pulled the stream of wagons dizzily before my eyes. The vibration to my hands was so intense that it seemed the webs of my fingers would split.

Someone under the bridge cried out, "Deputy Squad Leader, be careful you don't get shaken off!" The company commander also shouted to me from the end of the bridge, "Shih Fu-min, if you can't hold on any longer, let someone relieve you!"

The first train was closely followed by the second, which sped quickly towards the bridge. Such a heavy giant! It seemed that I was holding in my hands not a wrench but the whole bridge; I wished I had hands all over my body to lift the train and place it all at once on the other side of the river rather than have to get it over piecemeal!

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The locomotive driver put his head out of the window and shouted sympathetically, "Comrade, hold on there. So dangerous!" I forced a smile as I replied, "Don't worry; just hustle along!"

The second train rushed smoothly over the bridge and was followed by the third. From both ends of the bridge came rousing cheers as the fighters waved and shouted enthusiastically. . . .

As time wore on the stress and strain became more arduous till my whole body was shaking and my two arms felt shattered, while my hands and feet were numb with cold and the vibration. The bridge seemed to be rushing along with the train when the steam whistle blew again, sending my excitement to highest pitch. A munitions train moved towards the bridge, shaking the roadbed so violently that it seemed to set the steel rails dancing as it rolled over them. The pain in my hands now shot straight into my heart. How I wanted to rest awhile and warm up my hands! But no, that was impossible! I would die rather than consider any such thing! I must hold on, and I must do it like a real hero braving fire and sword! Thus I privately inflated my ego! The company commander and the other fighters kept shouting to me, "Shih Fu-min, better let someone relieve you!" Using

supreme will power I dismissed the idea from my mind. "Never mind," I said as bravely as I could, "I can do it. I've got the hang of it now. Changing hands might make it difficult. Just wait. . .

Thus I lay on a pile of sleepers five metres off the ground for one and a half hours, fighting my hand-to-hand "battle" with my wrench as bayonet. Not until the last train — Number 18 — had rolled safely over the bridge did I draw an easy breath. It was only then, too, that I noticed the patch of brightness in the eastern sky. The sun was rising!

## **DOING A LOCOMOTIVE'S JOB**

**LU YUAN-TING**

*Company Commander, Railway Corps*

With the approach of spring our task of building new railways became increasingly urgent. To be prepared for any surprise landings the enemy might make in the latter part of spring or early summer, our division had finished the assigned roadbed twenty days ahead of schedule. Now, when the steel rails and sleepers were delivered, track laying could be got on with immediately.

One noontime the comrade in charge of stores for regimental headquarters came to our company with an order to go at once to the railway junction to load sleepers. Our instructions were to have a train loaded by dark the next day for a locomotive to pull out that night. Track laying could then get under way bright and early the third morning. Such was the plan. Considering the distance and the time required for loading the train, I calculated we would not have much time left for getting to the junction, which was a good distance away. I therefore set out without delay with two platoons of men.

The rugged and winding mountain path was difficult to negotiate, and darkness found us still some 25 kilometres from the junction. I issued simultaneous orders to the men at the rear to catch up and to those in front to proceed faster. This was despite the fact that the men were fatigued from the march, as we had not made any rest stops.

It was daybreak when we arrived at the railway junction. There we found the sleepers in neat piles but no train! "What

a fix to be in!" I said to myself. Was it possible the train had failed to come in? After consideration I was convinced ' that that could not be. Just then the fellow in charge of stores ran up panting, "Here we are with no train to load our sleepers on! As an air-raid precaution it has been hidden in a tunnel three kilometres away. . . ."

"And when will the locomotive come?" I cut in before he had finished his sentence.

"The locomotive will arrive only after dark. . . ."

"How can that be?" I interrupted again. We're to have it loaded before dark. . . ."

The storekeeper obviously appreciated our predicament for he looked so worried his face was bathed in sweat. But before I had finished explaining to the others what the situation was they seemed already to have reached a solution. "We'll go to the train and push it here! We won't wait for the locomotive to bring those 27 wagons here to the junction!" Thereupon they rushed down the hill like fierce tigers dashing towards the tunnel where the wagons were hidden.

Amid cheers and shouts the long train of wagons started rolling slowly towards the junction. But we had not taken into account the steep incline we would have to push the cars up. And to make the matters worse, the roadbed was icy. It was like walking on wax! Actually we were "retreating" one step for every two we advanced, and the wagons only inched forward. After struggling thus for what seemed a very long time, I straightened my back and looked to see how far behind we had left the tunnel. It was not more than 200 metres! Three kilometres of this would be a very long distance!

Many of the fighters had blisters on their hands and feet; some suffered abrasions, but none was willing to drop out for a rest. Before we had set out that morning each had eaten two bowls of porridge. But it must have by then all been used up, for it was not long till my stomach was "singing" for food. A glance around convinced me that most of the

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men were pretty tired so I gave the order to rest for a while. But as soon as we straightened up and stopped pushing the train started rolling backwards! All hands rushed back and braked it, but the fellows were not satisfied with that. Shouting - Come on! They're waiting to lay the tracks!" they started pushing again with renewed enthusiasm. "Aiya . .

push . . . five metres . . . aiya . . . push . . . another seven, . In this way we pushed that train of 27 wagons into the junction. By that time the hands of the

clock had converged on 12 and everybody was ravenous. We even felt a little dizzy and lay down on the ground to recuperate.

But what were we to do for eats?

That was the next question. . . . There was no food for the noon meal. What little rice we had brought we had finished in the morning. Our two cooks had scoured the countryside without locating any brother units. Nor were there any farm houses nearby. I said to myself, "Well, we've got the sleepers and the train together but loading them on is no light job. How can we do it on empty stomachs?"

While my mind was occupied with the food question the cultural instructor suddenly appeared with a handful of paper slips — the challenges of the fighters! Although their terms of expression varied, their opinion was one: "We enjoy the position of most beloved ones of our country, therefore we should do the most endearing deeds. The urgent task now is to get on with the loading. We cannot afford to wait till we are fed but must start to work immediately." Filled with enthusiasm, I stood up and expressed my unlimited solicitude for the men. Then waving a cheer, I shouted to them, "All right, since you say so we start the loading at once!" The men poured over to the junction and started moving the sleepers towards the wagons. I lifted one and the 70-80 catties that it weighed bore down most uncomfortably on my shoulder. With my empty stomach and two quivering legs I managed to make just one trip while the fighters had already finished two. Then someone noticed Fighter Wang

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Shou-yung carrying two sleepers at once and his example was soon followed by the others, thus speeding up the work 100 per cent. The men looked top-heavy and tottering but flew back and forth nonetheless, with nobody willing to be left behind.

Thus they loaded 9,450 sleepers onto the 27 wagons. I looked at my watch and found it was only 5 o'clock. We had fulfilled the task half an hour ahead of schedule!

It was an ordinary emergency task we had accomplished, but it was precisely in the performance of such an ordinary task that I fully realized the spiritual strength of our fighters— truly "the most beloved" of our people!

# THROUGH A SEA OF FLAME

LIU CHING-PO

*Transport Corps, Meritorious Fighter Special Class*

Awakened from a sweet dream, I looked out of the window drowsy-eyed. The truck had again disappeared from the slope! A broad smile wrinkling his face, Lao Wang was there with a bowl of rice for me. It was evidently Lao Wang who had made the truck "disappear" by putting it under camouflage.

When our troops started the attacks on both sides of the Han River, we of the Transport Corps had hardly had a good sleep for a whole month. Especially tireless was this old assistant of mine who worked almost continuously day and night. Each time I came back after carrying out a task he would say, "You must be very tired. Roll in and let me do the camouflaging tonight." When I took the truck out on night assignments he would always have a meal ready and waiting for me. As time went on he settled into this round-the-clock routine till, looking into his inflamed eyes, I said to him, "Lao Wang, you'd better get a little sleep yourself."

He seemed like an older brother as he placed the bowl of rice before me, saying as he did so, "Come on, eat! The rice is getting cold!"

The sun was going down behind the hills to the west and the air was filled with the fresh, chill breeze from the sea. I was sitting on the fender wiping the dust from the motor. With one foot resting on the running board, Lao Wang was polishing his "pet" — his "30" rifle.

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From out of the mountain gully emerged a group of Korean women who had been sheltering there the whole day from the air raids. Now they were coming back to their homes with the children, singing as they walked along. Their voices became clearer as they approached, filling the air with quiet joy and optimism. Absorbed in their singing, his rifle motionless now in his hands, Lao Wang said in admiration, "These are really national heroines! Listen! In such difficult times they still have the heart to sing!"

They kept waving to us as they passed. "You have worked hard! You have worked hard!" they sang out, and burst into peals of merry laughter.

After dark Lao Wang took the camouflage from the truck and wiped the windshield. After I let in the clutch and shifted gears the truck started up and fairly flew down the highway towards Uijongbu.

For several days the fighting at the front had been intense so the enemy was frantically bombing the rear. Wherever our trucks went, enemy planes followed. In the daytime even a dog on the road would be machine-gunned while at night there was no end to the enemy's dropping of demolition and napalm bombs even at the tiniest speck of light. But we kept up the deliveries of ammunition and food wherever they were needed. Not a single night passed but our motor convoy rolled along the highways to the front. With the snow pushed to the sides of the road in thick drifts, our way stretched before us like a long brown leather belt which we were able to follow even with headlights off.

After cutting through a pass in the hills we saw buildings ablaze. The city of Uijongbu was in flames, lighting up half of the sky. To get to our destination we would have to pass the blazing city for there was no way to by-pass it. I stopped the truck under a big tree a fraction of a mile from the fire. Lao Wang had covered the hood with a tarpaulin and was now back inside leaning against the door to watch the conflagration ahead of us. I put my head out and saw the sky

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full of enemy planes. From the way it looked the enemy was tightening his ring around the so-called "iron triangle." \* We both climbed out of the cab.

"Too many enemy planes! Maybe we can't make it tonight!" Lao Wang had no sooner made this speculation than he fairly screamed out, "Hey there! A plane's swooping down. . . ." A mammoth shadow swept over us and dropped two napalm bombs, setting more fires licking around us. "Another plane swooping down!" Tat-tat-tat . . . its machine-guns swept the highway as it topped the fires, spurting flame onto the road. Then another plane. . . .

I said to Lao Wang, "We'd better make a dash for it before the fires spread any more or we won't get through even if the plane flew away!"

"You're right! Go ahead! It looks as though this will be an all-night affair!"

As he murmured his assent he stepped into the truck, leaning against the door and looking outside however, cursing all the while. "And another! This little devil dares to swoop so low!"

Kang, kang, kang . . . more bombs thundering down into the flames. Burning planks flying in all directions and the road belching fire. The fires were spreading like wild and each second that passed made it more difficult to get through.

I patted Lao Wang on the shoulder. "Lao Wang," I said, "you slip over first. Wait for me on the other side. If I fail to make it, you go on ahead and report to base."

Lao Wang's wrinkled face showed firmness and determination as he gazed into the flames. But he gave no reply.

Again I urged, "I have complete confidence in your courage. It's better for you to go over first!"

"Can't do that," protested Lao Wang bluntly. "I'm your assistant. I mustn't leave you !-

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\* The "iron triangle" included Chorwon, Yonchon and Seoul.

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Seeing that Lao Wang was resolute, I compromised, "All right. You stand on the running board and show me the way then. As soon as there is a break we dash over. It's no use waiting here." Lao Wang agreed to this.

But there was no let-up in the enemy planes' bombing and machine-gunning. One, two, and then three planes swept by. Ten minutes more though and a fourth failed to show up. I quickly hopped into the cab and drove ahead at top speed. Lao Wang was there on the running board directing me like a traffic escort: "Step on it! Right turn! To the right!"

When we were about 50 metres from the burning section of the highway I looked through the wind-screen and saw a sea of flame, nothing else. Two bombs exploded a little ahead of us to the right hurling great clods of mud and splinters on the cab. I gripped the steering wheel and stepped on the gas. Lao Wang kept shouting, "Be careful! Boulders! Bomb crater!" I at once shifted into low gear to slow down.

Again we were enveloped in thick smoke and flame, our way obstructed with burning timbers and fires crackling everywhere about us. Our faces were scorched; tears gushed from our eyes. The truck ploughed through the flaming debris without a hitch however, the chains on the rear tyres singing in rhymes. Lao Wang kept shouting, "Hurry! Hurry up!" while I was so excited I think I stopped breathing.

Out of the flames at last we saw welcome glow ahead. Lao Wang shouted, "Hurry up, they're hanging out the 'sky lamps' for us!" Sure enough, a string of flares lit up everything on the road. "Rat . . . rat" a shower of machine-gun bullets followed by two bombs shook the truck so violently that we seemed to be struggling

against the waves on stormy seas.

"Lao Wang, check the load!"

"Nothing. Hurry up!"

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I pressed the accelerator down to the floor till the meter reading stood at "45." The wa-at . . . wa-at sounds now came to us from afar. One more turn and the truck was like an unbridled horse galloping on the plain.

"We can sound the 'all-clear' siren now!" I shouted, enthusiastically giving Lao Wang a tug for him to get inside the cab. Lao Wang slammed the door shut, threw out his chest and raised his voice, hoarse though it was, in his favourite tunes.

Two more mountain passes and out into the gully we had arrived at our destination! People were already running towards us, laughing and chattering. The commanding officer there shook hands with me, "Comrade driver, you've done a good job!"

"Comrades, you have been working very hard!" I returned as I helped Lao Wang remove the tarpaulin from the truck, lower the plank at the rear and get the unloading underway.

"Hurry up and get the stuff off! This comrade has to take the truck back tonight!" the commanding officer urged. The fighters jumped onto the truck and started handing down sacks.

"White rice from the motherland. Really, not an easy thing!" one fighter cried out.

"Just one minute there; this bag's sprung a leak!" another fighter exclaimed, pointing to the stream of fat grains trickling out.

"Aiya! There's a hole — a bullet hole in it!" a third fighter said.

Lao Wang, who was also on the truck, continued, "This was torn by a splinter. . . . A machine-gun ripped this. . . . Turning to me he said, "Lao Liu, come here and see how they've pitted the planks!"

When the unloading was about finished four wounded men on stretchers were borne down the slope and placed near our truck. A comrade who I knew was a health cadre from the

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Red Cross kit he had slung over his shoulder came and shook hands with me:

"Comrade, would you take these wounded back with you to base hospital?"

"But of course! Put 'em on board."

As we started to pull out the fighters waved and shouted, "Safe journey!"

"Get back safely!"

## PART FOUR

## CHANGES WITHIN NINETEEN MONTHS

**TANG FENG-HSI**

*Squad Leader, Hero Second Class*

As we lay in ambush in a mountain gorge near Kaho-ni a damp communication trench was all the "bed-room" we had to sleep in.

I looked up at the hills ranging over a distance of two kilometres and found the whole scene quite familiar. Nineteen months before, in October 1951, the enemy were furiously carrying on their so-called "autumn offensive." Our little combat unit had been defending the place for three days and nights. Under the bombardment of the enemy's overwhelming artillery fire we had suffered heavy casualties because of lack of heavy arms. As the sole survivor of the entire unit I took an oath before my fallen hero-comrades to hold out to my last breath. But what a difficult job it was to hold the position at that time! We had practically no artillery at our command, and even supplies of ammunition for our machine-guns and rifles were low. Also, we did not have such impregnable tunnels in those days as we did today. Nevertheless, I had managed to defend our line for a whole day and night. It was not until the deputy company commander had come in person to hand me the order to withdraw from the higher command that I reluctantly left the position.

I never imagined that after nineteen months I should be fighting here again. Superficially nothing had changed —there were the same undulating hills and the same rolling waters of the North Han River winding at their feet. But the

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overall war situation had changed completely. In the past we had been on the defensive and the enemy on the offensive. Now, things were reversed. In the past the enemy's artillery had fired on us and we had no recourse but to crouch in our bomb shelter. But now we were equipped with aircraft and artillery, a gift to us from our people. Large numbers of heavy guns, a potential force in the rear, were ready to fire once the general attack was launched and would reduce any enemy position to a sea of flames. Adequate supplies were now flowing steadily from our native land to the front. Our dear compatriots were coming right to the firing lines to encourage us and, as we set out on our marches against the enemy, would warmly shake hands with us. They would write on our hand-grenades such inspiring words as: "Your motherland looks to you!" With our own hands we had

built impregnable defence works as strong as walls of bronze. During long years of fighting, we had greatly raised the level of our tactics and technique. As for me, I had been promoted from a common soldier to a squad leader. Now I would resolutely lead my spearhead unit to recover the lost positions.

At 21:44 hours, at the flare signal sent up into the air, hundreds of our big guns roared in unison. A mass of flames rose from the southern hills of Kaho-ni, illuminating the whole sky in a splendid glow. Innumerable shells exploded simultaneously, shaking the earth to its very vitals. Stones came cascading from the hilltops to tumble into the ravines where we were in ambush. It was the heaviest bombardment by our artillery I had ever seen. Such things were unthinkable nineteen months before.

The path for attack was now open. At 21:50 hours, stepping over a network of shell craters and crossing the tumbled-in trenches and the blown-up barbed wire fence, we dashed towards the "Ridge of the Lone Hill," allowing the enemy no chance to lift his head. I had the machine-gun unit posted at the top of a high hill, having ordered the men to give cover to the whole squad so that they could continue to

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push ahead. And then Comrade Shih Chi, the deputy squad leader, and I each led a small fighting unit to close in on the enemy's rear.

Later, in one of the communication trenches, Comrade Shih and I met again. Exchanging data, we learned that our two small units had together wiped out only a dozen enemy soldiers — apparently the enemy had been driven into their underground tunnels by our artillery fire. We decided to load our fighters with adequate ammunition and order them to search out the openings of enemy tunnels, and prepare for underground warfare.

When the matter was settled Comrade Shih and I parted once more.

The small unit under my command soon discovered the entrance and ventilation hole of a tunnel. The aperture was very small indeed, yet from it bullets were spitting forth at us with a vengeance. Some slugs from a carbine almost hit me. "Blow it up," I shouted to Li Hsi-chih, and he set off a powder packet, immediately blocking the entrance to the tunnel with rock and earth.

Enlarging the ventilation hole with my hands, I threw in a hand-grenade, then leaped into the tunnel through the thick screen of smoke thrown up by the explosion. I lit inside on something soft and found myself tumbling over a puppet Rhee soldier who had been stupefied by the concussion. I asked him in Korean if there were more enemy soldiers inside and he answered in a stammer, "In . . .

side, quite a lot."

At this I at once threw in another hand-grenade, which brought forth cries of despair. Then a sharp reprimand soon restored the deathlike silence. Evidently there was a puppet officer in the tunnel still tyrannizing over his men even though his nest had been all but destroyed at our approach. As there was no sign of his coming out, I hurled a third hand-grenade inside in great fury, shouting loudly in Korean as I did so, "If you don't surrender your arms I'll kill all

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of you." That prompted a reply. "We surrender! We surrender!" came the scared cries as guns came hurtling resoundingly out the hole. A petty officer of the puppet Rhee troops and eight of his soldiers then filed out, their hands lifted high. The puppet officer pointed at the inside of the tunnel, saying apologetically, "He is a bad egg. But he's as dead as a doornail now."

I put the prisoners of war in the custody of my comrades outside and then carefully searched the tunnel. It was about 30 metres long, with a room in it, probably the headquarters of a puppet army platoon. I squeezed myself into the room and, with a flashlight, saw a puppet officer lying to one side. His face horribly mutilated by the grenade, but in his hand was still the lash he had used to beat his men. At the questioning of the captive soldiers by our liaison officer it was learned that he had indeed been the leader of a puppet platoon.

In the meantime our other small unit under Comrade Shih had finished their fight in another tunnel. They had killed four enemy soldiers who had resisted to the end. Then we went about the work of repairing the tunnels and making preparations against enemy counter-attacks.

Everything was calm and orderly again as we sat in an underground tunnel refreshing ourselves with doughnuts and canned fruit. We talked animatedly about the power of our artillery. As I looked at my comrades eating heartily and conversing joyfully, I could not suppress a laugh of satisfaction. When my comrades turned to me and said, "Squad Leader, why all the merriment?" I made this reply: "What I have seen today contrasts so with things in the past. During the fighting in 1951, I was once burning with thirst and all I could do was to moisten my tongue on a wet stone. Now we have canned fruit and doughnuts! What a change in the past nineteen months! Things are certainly looking up every day!"

**FIGHTING SHOULDER TO SHOULDER**

**TANG TSUNG-YAO**

*Fighter*

When I heard that we were to take part in the counteroffensive on South Yuldong Hill, I felt as happy as a child on New Year's Eve and longed to have a talk with someone. I wanted to give expression to the joy I felt, discuss my part in the battle — in short, to exchange encouraging words with someone close. So I thought of my elder brother, Tsungting, who had joined the army together with me.

My brother was in the First Platoon, and I was in the Third. But as we were busy making preparations for the battle, we had little chance to talk together although we belonged to the same company.

One day, returning from a meeting at company headquarters, I ran into my brother on the way. Though I had been yearning for a chat with him for days, when we met at last, I was at a loss what to say! Elder Brother was not the talkative sort; he was a man of action rather than of words. How could he be prevailed upon to talk over with me the things that were burning in my heart?

But while I was hesitating, my brother himself opened the conversation. "So we're to play our part in the battle after all," he said. Only then, from the joyous animation in his voice, did I know that he was no less eager than I to get into the thick of battle! "Tsung-yao," he continued excitedly, "let's challenge each other. . . ."

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"I was just thinking of the same thing. . . ."

We talked as we walked along and soon came to a secluded hillside wooded luxuriantly with pines. There was no sound there except for the rumble of big guns and the roar of planes, which were incessant but distant.

"Well, here's a quiet spot!" Elder Brother said, sitting down on the soft grass. I sat down beside him. "What is it you want to talk over with me?" he asked.

"I want to know what your thoughts are on the fight coming up," I answered eagerly.

"Oh, nothing in particular! But you have progressed faster than I. You have won a

merit and joined the Party; while I, as an elder brother, feel quite ashamed of myself. . .

I was moved but could find no fitting words to console him with. "There's nothing much to getting a third class merit," I said. "It would be glorious though to render distinguished service on the battlefield. A man is best proved in battle. I believe you will soon be admitted into the Party!"

Thus we talked for some time, and before parting my brother said to me warmly:

"Well, see you next time on the battlefield!"

"Yes, see you on the battlefield!"

"I wish you success!"

"Same to you!"

My brother was gone, but I stood there for a long time, thinking. This talk had left me with a deeper understanding of my brother than I had ever had before. Two days later I received a note from him challenging me to outdo him in the fighting. Certainly I would not lag behind, so I sent him a reply at once accepting the challenge.

The battle began. My brother's platoon launched an offensive from East Peak, and ours from West Peak. The two peaks became alive with an unbroken series of loud explosions. We were converging on the same target from two different directions.

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Approaching the enemy position, we were stopped on a bare slope by volleys of enemy machine-gun bullets, which, striking against the rocks on the hill, sent sparks flying in the air. The leader of the Ninth Squad, Li Kuo-fu, rushed forward with a pack of dynamite, but he was badly wounded before he could reach the enemy stronghold. It was evident that we must destroy that pillbox or we should suffer heavy losses. So I advanced swiftly towards the fortification, bending low and holding my tommy-gun firmly fixed. At the entrance I emptied my gun into the stronghold at the enemy soldiers who were firing frantically. The enemy machine-guns were silenced immediately.

It was dark in the pillbox; but switching on my flashlight, I found, in addition to several corpses, the mouth of a tunnel. There must be enemy soldiers hiding in it. Yes, I must rush in and finish them off! But my comrades had already moved forward, leaving me alone behind. Could I handle them by myself? Looking into

the dark gullet of the tunnel, I hesitated. Then I suddenly remembered my brother's challenge and was inspired with new courage. My tommy-gun in readiness, I rushed into the tunnel. It was pitch dark, and I had to make my way along with the help of the flashlight. At a bend in the tunnel I discovered another shelter in which three enemy soldiers were hiding. They had been startled and were getting ready to shoot with their carbines. Switching off my flashlight at once, I moved crab-wise to conceal myself and simultaneously fired my gun at them, emptying half the clip of bullets into their shelter. All three were killed.

I pushed on, then suddenly heard someone shouting in a shrill voice from the depths of the tunnel: "Who goes there?" I instantly stooped down, placing my forefinger on the trigger of my tommy-gun.

"Who goes there?" the man shouted again. This time I recognized the voice.

"Is that you, Tsung-ting?"

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"Ha, ha, so it's you, Tsung-yao!"

It was really most unexpected that we two brothers should meet in an enemy tunnel like this! I rushed up and gripped my brother's hand. Speechless with excitement and emotion, we stood for some time, our firm handclasp saying what our lips could not. Finally my voice came out, if faltering and small:

"How is the battle going on?"

"Excellently!" replied my brother.

But we were still on the battlefield, with the enemy yet to be exterminated in toto. It was no time to chat as we had done so happily under the pine trees. So we parted after exchanging just these few words.

When the battle was finally over and we two met again I learned that my brother's deeds were more extraordinary than mine. He had fought from East Peak to Main Peak, and then up to West Peak. His squad leader, Comrade Ho Yung-hsien, had been wounded at the very outset of the battle, and at the critical moment my brother had stepped forward to take up his duties, leading the squad to demolish seven enemy strongholds and wipe out more than thirty enemy soldiers. This had paved the way for the advance of the rest of our troops.

At the end of my brother's brief narration of the fighting I raised my thumb and said:

"Wonderful, it's you who performed the marvels after all!" "Nothing wonderful about it; I should do better in future!" remarked my brother, betraying a little shyness.

With the approval of the authorities, Elder Brother was awarded Merit of the First Class, and I Merit of the Second Class and we both attended our division meeting in celebration of the victory. Soon after that Elder Brother was accepted as a member of the Chinese Communist Party.

## STORY OF A KOREAN GIRL

**CHEN SU •**

*Publicity Assistant*

Peals of gunfire rolled from the front in quick succession. The seemingly endless rain now came on hard, now slackened a bit, only never stopped. Having just left the first-aid station from where the wounded were being transferred to the rear, I was hurrying to the field hospital to visit the wounded fighters there.

Besides the men of our transport corps coming and going on the road to the front, there were native Korean stretcher-bearers, clad in their traditional white. Although they moved along with no little haste, they never passed each other without exchanging cordial greetings. As I hurried along, I suddenly heard footsteps behind me and four Korean girls swept past, bearing a stretcher. Bare-footed, their trouser legs rolled to their knees, they trod cautiously through the mire of the treacherous road. So as to spare the wounded comrade as much jolting as possible, the girls swung along in smooth rhythm, taking the ruts in the road in their stride so that the man lay as though asleep in his own bed. Even so, the plump girl at the rear right corner of the stretcher was apparently still not satisfied that the patient was comfortable, for she kept a firm grasp on the stretcher pole with her left hand while with her right she held the quilt in place lest a drop of rain should fall on him. Her tousled black hair fell closely around her ruddy face, while sweat and rain trickled from her brow. How in my

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mind she embodied the heroism and beauty of the Korean women! Obviously they had covered a long distance without any rest, or perhaps they had not rested at all during the whole of the long journey. Greeting them in Korean, I called, "Don't

you feel tired?" The plump girl replied with simple directness, "Not at all; it's you Volunteers who must be very tired." I cast a grateful glance at them and hurried to the cave which was our field hospital.

The nurses were busy at the entrance admitting the wounded soldiers. I did not want to disturb them, so I just slipped in unnoticed.

There in the cave I made my rounds of the wounded fighters. They all asked about the fighting at the front and requested to be sent back there. I was deep in reflection on the noble character of our wounded soldiers when I came to a seriously wounded man named Jan Hua. Thrice wounded in battle, he had refused to leave the front and had finally captured the enemy position after wiping out five enemy firing points. Tough as he was, he could not refrain from shedding tears when I spoke a few words of comfort. At first I thought his wounds were again giving him pain and talking too much would hurt him so I started to go. But he stretched out his hand to take hold of my coat as he said, "Comrade! Don't go away yet. I wept not for the pain but for thinking of Su Hwa Sub, the Korean girl stretcher-bearer. She. . . ."

Tears again glistened in the eyes of Comrade Jan Hua. Satisfied that I had sat down, he told me the following story with great animation and excitement:

That very morning Su Hwa Sub with her team of stretcher-bearers had borne Jan Hua away from the front. But as they were proceeding along the highway seven enemy planes had suddenly swooped down, strafing savagely. During the very brief interval when the enemy planes were turned away to get into position for another dive, Su Hwa Sub had made the girls lie flat in the ditches along the highway while she

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herself lifted Jan Hua onto her back and made for the pine woods. Then again the unearthly shrieking had rent the air, and the enemy planes had again swooped down. She had laid Jan Hua on the ground, and without the slightest hesitation sheltered him with her own body. A few blasts and she lay buried in mud and rock debris. But, shaking off the clods and chips of rock, she again flung Jan Hua onto her back and ran straight towards the pine woods through the heavy smoke. Once there, she carefully wiped the mud off Jan Hua's clothes and changed the bandages through which blood had seeped from his wounds. When the enemy planes had disappeared she told her comrades to get the stretcher ready to carry Jan Hua away safely to the hospital.

Having heard this moving narration, I began to understand why a battle-hardened man like Comrade Jan Hua should have shed tears. As I said good-bye to Jan Hua,

stooping to make my way out of the tunnel, I still had the image of that heroic Korean girl in my mind.

Meanwhile, the entrance to the tunnel was again crowded with men and women of the native Korean stretcher-bearing corps. I stopped a Korean-speaking liaison officer and asked if he knew of Su Hwa Sub. He seemed surprised at anyone asking. "Why, Su Hwa Sub! Our model stretcher-bearer! Why, who doesn't know her? There she is, there!" I followed the wave of his hand and saw no other than the plump ruddy-faced girl I had met on the way. On the stretcher beside her was a small flag on which was inscribed, "Su Hwa Sub's Team of Model Stretcher-Bearers."

## **KEYED UP FOR BATTLE**

**CHEN KE-NAN**

*Regimental Commander*

It was a T-shaped tunnel where our headquarters was located at the time, our observation post being at the foot of the "T," from where Height 949.2 was in clear view. Though I was wearing a heavy coat I still felt quite chilly. For water was seeping into the tunnel. We were in total darkness except when the beam of a flashlight cut through it momentarily. Men were moving double quick under tension; a mis-step and they would bump their heads against the dripping walls.

Arduous as it was moving back and forth, our fighters kept ducking out of the tunnel for a look at the sky. I knew well their state of mind, for this was their usual mood before an attack. They were impatiently awaiting nightfall and the thunder of our artillery. Besides sharing with the other comrades their longing for victory, I had some misgiving as to the safety of our units lying in ambush along the enemy's outer line, so I wanted to go out for a look too.

The sun still hung high in the sky when information came from several observation posts that more than ten enemy planes had bombarded the northwest slope of Panghiang (Squared-off) Hill, dropping bombs on the borders of the ambush area.

I hurried to the observation post to find out what had happened to our units waiting in ambush, but by the time I got the telescope out the planes had already flown away. Nothing was left but a pall of smoke curling above the gullies,

so dense that the best telescope was of no use to me at the moment. My heart could have been no more crushed if the bombs had fallen squarely on it! If only I could take wing and fly to our fighters! My brain was plagued with apprehension. Why of all places did the enemy planes choose this spot as their target? Did they know of our impending attack? Had the bombing caused any casualties among our ambush units?

With these questions burning in my mind I went back to headquarters and immediately asked to connect with the Third Battalion by telephone. Minutes passed and still no answer. It was enough to drive one mad! Probably the telephone wires had been snapped by bombs. I would have to sit down and make a cool analysis of the situation.

After all, the enemy had sent only some of his planes over to drop a few bombs around the area, while his artillery continued taking pot-shots as usual. If the enemy had discovered us he would have concentrated all his fire on us. So our ambush units had not been exposed to the enemy after all! Why then did the enemy drop bombs?

People were fussing over the telephones in the tunnel by the dim light flickering of oil lamps while from the far end came the insistent tick-tack of the wireless telegraph. Flashlights beamed now and then.

But I was determined not to be disturbed by the surroundings and to concentrate on the present problems facing me. At long last I drew the conclusion: "It is only in vengeance that the enemy planes have made this raid on us. As a matter of fact, they have made such air raids routinely since Panghiang Hill and Height 883.7 fell into our hands. Today it is only because the safety of our ambush units is uppermost in our minds that we can't help dwelling on the worst."

The telephone rang. Our operator picked up the receiver and said "Hello!" into it and then handed it to me. "Third Battalion speaking," came out of it — the long awaited call from our ambush units had come at last! My heart pounded

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in expectancy. That call would verify or disprove my conclusion and tell us the actual condition of our ambush units following the bombardment.

I immediately recognized the voice of Comrade Chang Wen-hua, Chief of Staff of the Third Battalion. Its even calmness eased my heart at once, though two incomplete sentences were all he said.

". . . Enemy planes bombed indiscriminately . . . flew away after a few random releases. . . ."

I hastened to ask, "How about our ambush units? Any casualties?"

"No one so much as stirred. Our comrades were all completely composed. Only Ho Shao-lin, a fighter in the Sixth Squad of the First Company, received a head wound. A real hero he! Badly wounded as he was, he lay motionless as a boulder. We found him later with his hands planted to the ground — he had been scooping a hollow out of the earth under him."

"Ah, then is his life in danger?"

"He is already . . ." his voice suddenly dropped. There was a pause as if he was trying hard to restrain his emotion. and then he continued, "Our comrades were roused to fury, impatient to charge Height 949.2 at once. But they held back, knowing that if they did, the success of the whole battle would be imperiled."

Emotion almost overwhelmed me as I hung up the receiver. Of course I was greatly relieved and proud that our ambush units had been so brave and self-assured that they had not been desecrated by the enemy. But it was with a heavy heart that I thought of this comrade, another of the immortal hero Chiu Shao-yun type. I would remember Comrade Ho Shaolin for ever!

At sunset the enemy was still unaware of our ambush units. Darkness gradually fell. In the rainy Korean summer the moon and stars rarely appear and this night was no exception.

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Our personnel in the tunnel headquarters all stuck to their posts, telephone receivers in hand, eyes glued to watches. There was an hour yet before the start of the scheduled battle. I ordered the artillery commander to get everything ready in the shortest time possible and to contact me by telephone every five minutes. I also instructed the chief of staff to tell all the infantry and artillery observation posts and signal stations to synchronize their watches.

Solemn silence reigned in the tunnel, every man at the peak of tension that moment before battle. From the observation post I kept my eyes fixed on Height 949.2. Though the battle was to begin in only ten minutes all was quiet on both sides. I took up the telephone receivers directly connected with the operations and artillery sections, my eyes on my watch. Still two minutes to go; one minute, then ten seconds, and now three. . . .

"Time! For our victory, to avenge Ho Shao-lin, valiant son of our motherland, open fire!"

## SENDING FOOD UP TO THE FRONT IN THE RAIN

SHENG TEH-HUI  
*Cook*

With a pack carrier on my back, I headed for the forward position on Mount O-un. It was getting on for ten o'clock, already some eighteen hours since the troops had eaten before they began the attack the previous evening. I was filled with a sense of urgency to get the food to the front, because you can't expect troops to hold their positions on empty bellies.

A drizzling rain fell incessantly, and I was soon drenched to the skin. The seven canteens of boiled water and those of rice and vegetables were heavy enough to begin with; now the added weight of wet clothes I felt as if I were carrying a load of rocks. In no time the sweat was pouring off me. I felt hot and cool at the same time as the rain-drops mingled with the sweat on my face.

I made my way through a communication trench up a slope full of shell craters. Suddenly an enemy jet plane appeared in the sky, diving steeply towards me through the low-hanging clouds and mist. I immediately lay down under a projecting stone slab. No sooner had I done so than a sudden blast rent the air and the ear-shattering quick-firing of guns broke out overhead. Immediately afterwards two bombs exploded about twenty metres away up the slope, throwing up clods of mud which fell all over and around me, spattering my face.

I struggled to my feet, wiped my face with my handkerchief, and inspected the pack carrier. Although the canteen was spattered with mud, on lifting the cloth cover, I saw that the

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rice was still white and sparkling, like a heap of pearls, and heaved a sigh of relief.

The nearer I went to the forward position, the less familiar the terrain became. My anxiety was increasing when I happened to run into the company commander returning from the front line, his raincoat fluttering around him.

"Are you bringing food to the front? Ah! Good! They're expecting you!" He slapped me on the shoulder cheerfully, pointed forward, and warned me repeatedly: "See?

The section near the new positions, the enemy machine-guns are shooting thick and fast. Be careful!"

I continued forward in the direction the company commander had pointed out, with but one thought in my mind —to get the food to the men as soon as possible. I had not thought the road would be so difficult to travel. The communication trench was full of soupy mud, in which I sank up to my knees. My shoes stuck in it and were almost sucked from my feet: with difficulty I pulled one foot out, but the other sank deeper. For a long time, I made very little progress.

Suddenly bullets came sweeping over me, and I instantly threw myself down, thinking, "This is the place the company commander told me about. It means I'm near the forward position."

The mud soaked right through my clothes, and I felt rather chilly. As the rain hit the pools of water its pattering sounded right in my ear. I seemed to be floating on water, only the pack sticking out of the mud, and as I feared the drinking water would get dirty, I fastened the canteens on the pack carrier. Suddenly I remembered that I had with me a letter of greetings from the company; I quickly took it out, wrapped it up, and put it where it would not get wet.

"Rat-tat-tat!" The machine-gun rattled again. Oh, what was that so hot on my back? Was I wounded? I lifted my head slightly, and felt with my hand, to discover that a canteen had been hit and the hot water was gurgling out

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"This won't do. How many years will it take me, crawling this way?"

I tried to stand up and hasten forward, but the ground underfoot was too slippery; I could go no faster. I had covered only a short distance when some smoke shells exploded in front of me. "Oh, oh," I thought, "the enemy is going to shoot this way!" Anxiety seized me. I looked around, but found no place to hide. I hastened to crawl a few steps to the right and pulled some enemy corpses after me to make a temporary cover. Just as I had finished doing this the bombardment started. It roared on for a full five minutes, shrapnel flying all around. The acrid fumes were so fierce I could not open my eyes. "How much time I've lost already!" I scolded myself, "I must hurry up!"

Straightening up, I ran forward with a rush, and rounded a bend close to a ledge. Gradually voices became audible. A short distance ahead I saw the 2nd Platoon leader. Ah! The men were all in a depression repairing fortifications! Some were shovelling wet earth over the flames of incendiaries. Eventually I reached my destination. I took a deep breath, and shouted cheerfully: "Comrades! Here I am!"

All fighters turned quickly, surprised and happy. "Lao Sheng! How are you?" Seeing me, they threw down their shovels and crowded around me, the mud squelching underfoot. This one shook my hand, that one helped me take off the pack carrier. As too many cooks spoil the broth, it took some time before I could get my heavy load off. Looking at me, they all laughed and said, "The God of the Kitchen has become a God of Mercy!"

The leader of the 2nd Platoon gripped my hand as he exclaimed, "The barrage is so fierce, even one of the canteens was hit; you must have had a tough time!"

"It had me a bit worried," I replied. "I knew you were very hungry, and I was held up so long on the way. What's new? Has the enemy started their offensive?"

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"They'll get into action soon. But there's been no move yet."

They took the food and began wolfing it down. I took the sweets and the letter of greetings in my hand, thinking to have a little fun with them. I waited until they had almost finished their meal and then raised my hand high, waving and calling out: "Look, comrades! What's this?"

The men all tried to get it, but the 2nd Platoon leader's hand was the quickest, so it was he who first took the political instructor's letter. By this time the paper wrappings had been torn off the sweets, and before long everyone's jaw was bulging. All were quiet as they listened to the 2nd Platoon leader reading:

"Dear Comrades! After a night of violent fighting you have retaken Mount O-un from the enemy. This does you great credit.... The sweets sent to you along with this letter come from our great motherland. While you are eating them, you must bear firmly in mind the remembrances of our people and those of the Korean people. . . ."

Everyone listened seriously; the crunching of the sweets quietened down. Only then did I look closely at each comrade. The battle the previous night must have been really fierce, for their clothes were covered with mud and bloodstains, while their faces were blackened with powder smoke.

"Let the higher command be at ease!" the 2nd Platoon leader pledged. "We are determined to fulfil their wishes!" And so saying, he took out his pen and wrote a few lines on the back of the letter. "Take this back; this is our unanimous vow!"

I looked at what he had written. "We will resolutely fulfil our duty, and achieve honour for the motherland!"

It was getting dark, and they urged me to leave, saying the enemy was about to open fire again. But their high spirits were so contagious I was reluctant to leave. I wanted to stay and fight alongside them against the enemy. They seemed to read my thoughts: pushing and shoving they accompanied

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me to the valley. Finally in spite of myself, I had to sling the empty canteens over my back. I shook hands all round and moved off.

When I returned to my post, firing flashed on Mount O-un, accompanied by the unceasing roar of the guns — the men there were carrying out their promise!

## **A TELEPHONE OPERATOR IN THE FIRING LINE**

— Excerpts from diaries and memoirs

Braving the enemy's fire and each carrying some forty cattles of wire and other material, we advanced with our counter-attacking unit, setting up the wire on the way. Just as we had reached the covered trench newly captured from the enemy, before we could sit down for a breather, the company command post started moving ahead again. When I glanced at the coil I was startled to find that of the several kilometres of wire we had brought less than fifty metres were left, we had already advanced so far. But it seemed that it was only the beginning of our victory and no one knew how much further the troops would still advance. With what were we going to continue our task? I was so worried that I sweated profusely. Then I used my brains a bit and hit on a way. Crawling out of the covered trench, I started to rummage for the enemy's wire left on their front.

Our gunfire, however, had been so fierce that it had turned the enemy's position upside down, burying the wire. Only bits of wood and fragments of barbed-wire entanglement from the enemy's destroyed field works lay scattered here and there, causing me to trip repeatedly. At last I gave up walking to crawl and grope about. As luck would have it, I succeeded in salvaging odd lengths here and there which made up a substantial coil. When the company command post reached the main peak, we had been able to lay the wire up to our destination.

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While the company commander was reporting the situation to the regimental commander on the phone, I looked at my tunic which was torn to shreds. When my comrades found me, begrimed and spattered all over with mud, they said that I looked the very picture of a clay Buddha.

### **Wu Tse-yuan**

Squad Leader of the Telephone Operators

\*

A volley of shells exploded across our line of wire. Hurrying over, I found a large pit gaping in the communication trench while the ends of the wire were missing. There was no alternative but to fumble around with my hands to locate them. Within two minutes my hands were grazed and torn, but still I couldn't find the ends. Suddenly my hand touched something. Pulling it out, I discovered it was only a piece of a tree root. In exasperation I threw it away. Now the shooting had become thick and fast; the enemy was counterattacking again, but here we were still unable to connect the line. I saw red.

Fortunately, greatly to our convenience, the enemy sent up a flare. By its light, I found one of the ends. It was suspended from the dry branch of a tree. After some difficulty I succeeded in pulling it down. Then I located the other end too, but the lines weren't long enough to join. Thinking that I would connect them by adding another length, I clamped one end with my teeth so as to leave one of my hands free. But the instant my teeth touched the wire, my mouth became numb. My instant reaction was to spit it out. Then it dawned on me that our commander was putting through a call, and if I didn't hold on, his order wouldn't reach our company's command post. So I quickly gripped the other end firmly also, letting the current pass through my body. The shock of the current made me dizzy and I swayed violently, being hardly able to keep on my feet. I was aware, however, that if I fell I would break the connection. I knew I must not fall.

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whatever the cost! The commander's voice must pass through without a hitch.

After a few minutes when the talk was over I slumped to the ground, utterly exhausted. So, while lying there, I was able to connect the wire.

### **Ho Tsung-chen**

Telephone Operator

\*

Returning to the shelter after joining the line, I fell asleep. All of a sudden, the thunder of guns woke me. With a start I opened my eyes, and buckling on the walkie-talkie to my back I dashed towards the exit.

"Chou Yu-chin! Chou Yu-chin!" someone shouted after me.

For a second I stood uncertain, then it dawned on me that I had already connected the line. Picking up the receiver I wound up and found that I could get through all right. "You are going crazy about connecting up the line," said my comrades, laughing.

**Chou Yu-chin**  
Telephone Operator

\*

I was in charge of the telephone exchange — the nerve centre of wartime communications.

Day after day the battle continued, and all the way through I spent every night in the exchange. Although our group consisted of three members, two were constantly employed tramping outside day and night checking the line, so that I was the only one left to work by the exchange. It was nothing unusual for me to sit up for several hours, or even a couple of days or so. But on the fifth day I was dead beat. All my remaining energy now was pitted against my main enemy — drowsiness.

While sitting there I would suddenly collapse and think my eyes were still wide open although I saw nothing but pitch

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blackness and there was a droning in my ears as though I were half-deaf. The machine had no alarm bell. Even dozing off for half a minute might miss many important calls. I tried in every way to arouse myself from this sleepiness. For instance, I would talk to a familiar comrade through the phone, but our topics of conversation were soon exhausted. Next I took some picture books and read and read until the people in them began to dance before my eyes. then disappeared altogether. Then I fished out a mouth organ and blew away on that, but after a few minutes I blew the same note on and on without even being aware of it. Oh,

how drowsy I felt. What wouldn't I have given for just a ten-minute nap! But, at this time, I just couldn't close my eyelids for a second!

How could I guarantee I would keep a steady eye on the switchboard when I was in such an utter state of fatigue? If only an alarm bell had been attached to the exchange! But that was out of the question.

Clutching my head, I stared vacantly at the jacks on the panel. Suddenly an idea flashed into my mind. I placed the plugs on my arms so that when a call came the current would jerk me out of my sleep and thus nothing would be lost. In this way I held on till the seventh day. In the end, when my duty was over and we had carried the day. I was so excited I just couldn't sleep at all!

**Chao Li-wen**  
Telephone Operator

## **TAKING CROSS HILL**

**LI CHING**  
*Divisional Commander*

It was raining and the atmosphere, already heavy with the imminence of a great battle, was now made even more oppressive. An ominous stillness reigned over the command post, where Comrade Kao Chan-chieh, the political commissar, and I lay on our bunks. Weeks of intensive preparations had tired us out physically, but our minds refused to stop working. There were so many problems.

"Have we taken into account every detail connected with the impending operations?"

"Are the lower commands informed of all that they should know?"

"Have we made provision against all conceivable contingencies?"

It seemed that nothing had been overlooked. All the preparatory work had been done to the best of our ability. Or was this really the case? Wasn't it mental inertia to feel so content with oneself? But even if there were omissions or other shortcomings in our preparatory work, would there not be adequate time to fill in or make them up? It was now only twelve hours to 21:00, when artillery shelling

would start.

Water came dripping down rhythmically in little drops from the ceiling of the tunnel. The telephone on the long wooden table was ringing and the staff officer on duty took up the receiver. "Hello, hello!" he said into it, then hung it up. He seemed a bit irritated for a moment as he mur-

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mured to himself, "Another check-up, eh?" Then his voice softened. "How duty-conscious the communications men are!" And he bent over the table without a word.

My train of thought being cut short by the phone call, I turned over on the bunk and said in a whisper, "Lao Kao, are you asleep?" The political commissar turned and, facing me with his eyes half-open, replied, "No, darn it! Can't get a wink of sleep." It was as I thought — he couldn't sleep either!

Another twelve hours and the battle would be in full fury. This time we would hit at no less a redoubt than Capitol Hill, on the fortification of which the U.S. and Rhee armies had spared neither effort nor expense in the past two years. There the defence works were strong and intricate. Connected by tunnels, they formed a complete tactical complex. It was no easy job to take positions of this kind! But whatever the difficulties, there was no alternative to complete victory. The instructions of the corps commander were unmistakably clear: "It's not simply a matter of taking an enemy regimental position, but what is more important is the effect of the operation on the talks at Panmunjom. The enemy must be brought to reason at the conference table!"

Faced with a task of such magnitude, how could one help weighing time and again all the problems? I recalled that several days before I had been out to Height 746.5 to make a personal survey of the local terrain. In selecting the route of our assault against the main peak, I had made repeated surveys from several different points with the aid of a stereoscope. On the basis of these surveys I decided on a straight-line assault against the main peak through Heights 241 and 224. Though Height 38 seemed a more favourable assault point in many ways, it was too far away. Launched from there, the battle might become an inch-by-inch struggle. Besides, the local terrain was such that the enemy would most likely mistake Height 38 as the target of our main attack.

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So to further mislead him I had sent some fighters to lay a trap for "tongues" in the neighbourhood of Height 38. As our fighters were saying amongst themselves, "There'll be a hell of a noise where there's no fighting while a fierce battle will be

raging where there's dead silence."

The telephone rang again and into my ears came the placid voice of the army commander:

"Any signs?"

"Nothing except a few pot-shots from their machine-gun." "It's raining now. Will it interfere with our plan of attack?"

Hesitating for a moment, I replied: "It certainly will affect us a bit. But the soldiers have lain concealed under the very eyelids of the enemy since last evening. Time admits of no change now."

The commander now spoke more emphatically: "Of course our plan cannot be altered now, but we must try to minimize the adverse effects of the weather."

Why, of course! The matter must be studied from all angles. I had taken into account the disadvantages of a rainy day for an infantry attack and had told the soldiers to make provision against the slippery ground, but I had not considered how the range of our artillery fire would be affected by the rain! The skies were certainly coming down now. To have taken into consideration merely the effects on the soil — this was certainly not enough.

I immediately sent for the commander of the divisional artillery and said: "Can we fire some trial shots now? The rain will definitely affect our range."

The artillery commander knit his brows and, appearing somewhat ill at ease, replied, "No trial shots can be fired now. There isn't enough time. Besides, the visibility is too poor. The whole mountain range is wrapped in mist."

What were we to do then? At last we decided to fire a few shells from one piece on those mountain crests within

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our range of observation. Then the firing data could be corrected and checked and sent to all our artillery outposts.

Having settled this, I found it hard to put the artillery out of my mind. I recalled an incident of 1951 when we smashed Van Fleet's "autumn offensive." The enemy had organized an attack of two-battalion strength on our first-line platoon. As the enemy were getting into their assembly area I directed several volleys of rapid fire against them with a total expenditure of about 120 rounds. That very evening the army commander rang me up and said disapprovingly, "You've expended a bit too

much ammunition today!" At that time I felt a little hurt, thinking: Wasn't the concentration of two enemy battalions a worthwhile target? Besides, wasn't a good part of the enemy mowed down? It seemed as though the army commander had detected precisely what was in my mind. There was an instant change in his voice as he said: "Oh, comrade, it really could not be accounted as waste, but you must know that we are short of supplies."

Scarcely two years had passed but the situation was completely altered. In the present battle we had emplaced 120 guns to each kilometre of front line so that in a rapid-fire bombardment of 25 minutes more than 20,000 rounds of ammunition could be hurled against the enemy positions. If the fire used in supporting attacks and in repulsing enemy counter-attacks were taken into account the total would reach 70,000 rounds. What a tremendous change! But for this change we had traded two years' hard and bloody struggle. As a commander, I must treasure our gains and guard against the slightest waste. I must get the most from my guns at the least cost. But why had I not taken the necessary precautionary measures in time? I was certainly not unaware of the effects of weather changes. What could I say then except that I had simply been mentally lazy?

The telephone rang again. It was the commander of the regiment assigned for the main attack calling to synchronize

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his watch. I was a little impatient with him. Couldn't he have gone to the staff officer on duty for that? After giving him the time, I was about to hang up the receiver when it occurred to me that my tone had been cold and indifferent, and that it might dampen the enthusiasm of the men. So I added: "Is there anything amiss with the ambush?"

The regimental commander sounded exhilarated as he reported: "No, nothing. Only that a few enemy soldiers have roamed down from Height 38."

"Has anything leaked out?" I inquired.

"I think not. Single enemy soldiers have turned up where detachments of them used to be very active. They are not in battle formation — just six or seven of them strung out in a long line. It seems they are not on patrol."

He was sure-toned enough, but somehow it seemed that a grain of misgiving was lurking behind his words. So I further enjoined:

"See to this new circumstance yourself. Get all your weapons ready. Tell the men to keep cool. If anything should be detected by the enemy, don't fire. Take them alive." Then I added: "Take precautions against all emergencies. Everything must

be done according to plan!"

A minute later the staff officer on duty came in again with his report: "The enemy has fired a few shots on our tank positions. They may have scented out something."

Our tanks were concealed in an old enemy target area, and now that our tanks were there, I was especially uneasy.

"Oh! But isn't that their same old target area?" I pursued.

The staff officer stuck to his opinion, saying: "But this time the enemy seems to be making trial shots, using smoke shells at intervals."

I grunted and went on weighing up the situation. "When our tanks moved into position last night the movement was well concealed and, though our position is close to the enemy,

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we poured a heavy barrage on him while our tanks were manoeuvring so that their rumbling was completely drowned out. It is impossible that the enemy made out anything." But to provide against any eventuality I ordered the staff officer to observe more closely and try to ascertain the pattern of enemy gunfire so that our actions should be soundly based.

The staff officer assented and was on the point of leaving when I stopped him, saying, "Give the following order at the artillery command post: Should the enemy artillery concentrate fire on our tank positions, let the two battalions assigned for counter-battery duty neutralize it immediately."

The situation cleared up in about a quarter of an hour. The enemy artillery fired sporadic trial shots on several other targets, using smoke shells at intervals too. And more shells landed near Height 38 where we had laid our trap for "tongues."

This new circumstance bore out the deposition of the P.O.W., a chief artillery observer, captured two days before. His deposition was to the following effect: 1) Once the hills bordering Kaho-ni to the south were in C.P.V. hands the flanks of Cross Hill would be exposed, forcing the enemy to change his plan of firing. 2) The Rhee divisional commander had been to Cross Hill to survey the local terrain. According to him, Height 38 and its vicinity would be the main objective of our attack. 3) Consequently there had been a change in enemy deployment there — from two battalions abreast to three battalions abreast.

A careful study of the enemy's trial shots and the P.O.W.'s deposition led us to the

conclusion that the enemy had been completely hoodwinked. Not only had they not discovered our tank positions but they were equally unaware that our main assault would be directed through a point between Heights 241 and 224 and that we had decided on the tactics of driving straight at the main peak and "hitting at their vitals." Ah! You cunning enemy, how you have been deceived!

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The rain was now coming on hard and trees on high ground were tossed in the storm. In the evening twilight enemy searchlights, like pairs of frightened eyes, darted here and there over our positions. The enemy guns too were firing without aim onto no man's land.

The staff officers in the command post were now seated at their designated places. Telephone calls followed hard on one another — people calling to check the lines and radio transmission and to synchronize watches. Artillery Command directed that every battery make a last-minute check on the shelling plan. Reconnaissance Section received numerous phone calls from the advance observation posts and auxiliary observation posts as suspicious signs in the enemy positions were reported. The atmosphere of the command post was now far more brisk than during the day. All were waiting in high spirits to meet the oncoming storm.

Just then the chief of staff strode into the tunnel, exclaiming: "Everything is ready now. Blow, East wind, blow!"

What he meant by "East wind" was of course the H-hour. For when it came, hundreds of our guns would roar and our infantry would storm the enemy positions in the wake of the gunfire. But only when everything was ready could the "East wind" play its part. Was everything truly ready now?

Suddenly I recalled the instructions of the deputy commander: "The main peak is the key to Cross Hill and the objective of our main effort. If we should fail to capture the main peak by nightfall of the first day of operations we'll have a tough job on our hands."

It was obvious that if the main peak were not taken by the first night we would have no alternative but to shift over into defensive action on newly-held ground and seek to take it the next day as best we could while at the same time beating off enemy counter-attacks. Or we might take it the next night. Thus casualties would mount and much more ammunition would be expended. In the event of the

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enemy throwing in his reserves the whole thing might end in a stalemate with the

final outcome unpredictable.

Of course we were not unprepared against such a contingency, but the alternate plan would not be resorted to if it could be helped. And though it had long been our practice to be prepared for the worst, my mind could not easily accept such a possibility and I stubbornly kept ruling it out.

I lit one cigarette after another while mentally checking on every detail of our preparation for the main peak assault. Then I gave the following order to the staff officer on duty:

"Look once more into the preparatory work of the Fifth Company, who are to spearhead the attack against the main peak. See to it that they have with them all the communication equipment as prescribed and that they have mastered the signals for directing the concentration of artillery fire on the main peak." I rose to my feet and only then found my cigarette butt burning my fingers.

A minute later the staff officer on duty reported: "The Fifth Company is equipped with three sets of walkie-talkie, each with an auxiliary operator. When their four Very pistols simultaneously fire up and backwards two or more times with red and green flares, they are calling for concentration of artillery fire against the main peak. This is a special signal: our artillery comrades know it well." The staff officer deliberately stressed the word "special."

I felt quite amused and said: "So you call this a special signal!"

"The main peak is the key to the whole battle." replied the staff officer with a smile.

When the hands of my wrist watch indicated 20:50 hours I heard the chief of staff shout: "Notify switchboard to order all telephone operators to keep vigil. Receiver to receiver. Maintain continuous contact. No receiver to be hung up." The atmosphere of the command post instantly grew tense. Every voice at every telephone was calling the men on duty at the other end of his line. In the field diary appeared the

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following entry: "20:50. Instruction for telephone operators to keep vigil."

"Well, the curtain'll go up in a minute!" said the political commissar to me with a knowing smile.

At 21:00 sharp, suspending all my deliberations, I shouted over the telephone: "Fire!" and instantly all hell broke loose. Missiles from the rocket throwers, the tank-mounted guns, the howitzers and the mortars lost all identity in one general

boom. The staff officers on duty talked to each other in excited whispers: "It's quiet enough here but in the enemy positions things are pretty lively!"

"The enemy soldiers are probably tap-dancing in their trenches. The officers though are probably very quiet — their communication centre has been cut off, so 'the brass' have nothing to do but wait to be taken captive."

The staff officer on duty at our artillery command post reported: "We've extended our fire to second-line targets!" I looked at my watch. 21:05. It was time for our first-line troops to launch their assault against the enemy front-line positions.

It seemed to us that time had passed at snail's pace the day before but had now taken wing. The second five-minute rapid fire bombardment had ended and a ten-minute lull intervened. The staff officer on duty reported: "The troops have begun the assault on the second-line targets."

"Keep a special lookout for the special signal!" I enjoined.

Our artillery fire was now thinning out, and had become neutralizing fire at a uniform speed. The enemy seemed to have just awakened from his dreams. He was beginning to hit back.

Another nine minutes were gone and still no special signal.

What was the matter then? According to the original plan the attacking companies would begin to manoeuvre from their mustering area to their assault positions before the first volley of rapid fire. The distance between these two points, 1,200

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metres, could be covered in less than twenty minutes. Now almost twenty minutes had elapsed and the attacking companies should have arrived at the assault positions. What then had happened to the special signal? Could it be that the officers in charge had fallen in action and or the flares had all been spoiled?

But our situation admitted of no speculation: If we withheld the bombardment of the main peak until the signal was given our attacking forces would have been held down too long in their assault positions. Casualties would mount and the most favourable conditions for winning the battle might change. I had faith that through whatever difficulties my fighters could push on to the assault positions. So I resolutely shouted to artillery command: "Fire on Number 25 according to schedule!"

The fury of the guns was now directed against the main

peak, which in no time was wrapped in a sea of flames. "Signal from Height 241 received — target captured." "Number 224 captured at 21:37."

"Numbers 38 and 245 occupied."

"We have captured Numbers 227 and 221 and are now fighting in the tunnels."

This meant that the several attacking units had all been making headway according to schedule. Still there was no report from the sector of the main effort. I had directed the staff officer on duty to ask for information several times but each time a negative report was sent back. An hour had passed. Combat reports from the other units were becoming more and more circumstantial, giving the number of captives, the kind and amount of booty and even the names of the heroes and their deeds! Even this however failed to take the heavy load off my heart. I picked up the telephone and made a direct call to the commander of the regiment assigned for the main assault. His reply betrayed some impatience too: "The situation on the main peak is still un-

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clear. I've sent a staff officer to make direct enquiries but he has not yet returned!"

"Any signs?"

"Before an hour I heard automatic shots and hand-grenade bursts in the direction of the main peak, after which all was quiet. The enemy has not yet directed his gunfire against the main peak. . . ."

According to this, our attacking units had already launched the assault. Both the automatic shots and the hand-grenade bursts testified to it. And they must have got into close quarters with the enemy. But experience told us that whenever we had captured an enemy position he would invariably fire back at it. Why then had the enemy refrained from shelling the main peak? To this there could be only two explanations. The first was that the enemy was also uncertain whether we had taken that position, and the second was that we had forced ourselves into the enemy positions and been driven back. I knew though that it was well-nigh impossible for our troops to be driven off any enemy position once they had gained a foothold on it. Nevertheless we must take every eventuality into account so as not to be caught unawares.

"No, we must not wait any longer. We must throw in the reserves!" The words slipped from my tongue.

"Yes, we must. Any delay might cost us the victory." I was instantly backed up by

the political commissar, who was sitting by my side.

So I phoned my instructions to the commander of the regiment assigned for the main assault. They were to the following effect: Throw in the last remaining reserve company. But first dispatch a group of men to reconnoitre the main peak. If it is still in enemy hands, continue the assault. If part of the enemy positions are taken, assist in wiping out the last stubborn enemy remnants. If all the enemy positions are captured, assist in beating off any enemy counter-attacks and exploit the successes already gained. I

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then sent word to Artillery Command to have all the guns ready for a second bombardment of the main peak.

Spirals of smoke eddied up under the ceiling of the tunnel and, like thin trailing clouds, floated lazily towards the tunnel mouth. All of us were heavy-hearted, waiting in great anxiety for information from the main peak.

At long last came the reports of the regimental commander. This time his voice was high pitched with elation, which soon communicated itself to me. I hung on every single word and each minute detail. Even his superfluous words seemed now pardonable to me. What thrilling news!

The story was that the Fifth Company had captured the enemy surface positions within five minutes and quickly disposed of the enemy in the tunnels. When our men were manoeuvring into their assault position both the company commander and his deputy had been severely wounded. As a result the signal for rapid-fire artillery bombardment had not been sent up on schedule. The leader of the shock platoon, Jen Chih-ming, had volunteered to act in their place. Under cover of our heavy artillery fire he had led the troops against the enemy positions. During the ensuing fighting all the walkie-talkies had been knocked out, leaving no means of communication with the rear. After the enemy positions had been occupied, they had managed to send up flares, which however failed to gain sufficient altitude to be distinguishable from other signals. Besides, the guns had cast a haze of smoke over the whole scene. When the reserves reached the main peak they found Jen and his comrades already singing in the captured tunnels.

The atmosphere in the command post had now completely changed. Lively chatter revived as the heavy-heartedness of a moment before vanished like the morning mist.

The chief of staff said of Comrade Jen Chih-ming in playful rebuke: "That young fellow! How he teased us oldsters! Off celebrating the victory while we were sitting here on pins and needles."

Rising to my feet, I responded to the chief of staff. "Yes, what a tormentor he is!" I said.

The political commissar joined in too, exultantly, "These anxieties have really been worthwhile. We have not sullied the glorious history of our division. Victory is now in our hands!"

## **FIGHTER OF STEEL**

— An Account of Comrade Jen Hsi-ho's Heroic Deeds —

### **CHIANG HUAI-HSIEN**

*Platoon Leader*

Our troops had just launched their attack when the carriage of our heavy machine-gun was smashed by enemy artillery.

No sooner had the gun been put out of action than bullets from the enemy machine-guns came thick and fast, blocking our path of advance.

Impatient, the battalion chief of staff at the head of the attacking forces called out, "What's the matter with the machine-gun? Quick! Silence those enemy guns! Hurry!"

I think my impatience was even greater than our chief of staff's. The situation seemed like a knife in my heart, demanding immediate action. What should we do? Bring up another machine-gun? There was no time. Place our carriageless gun in a trench or on a ridge and fire from there? Thus we could start shooting, but the gun would lose its manoeuvrability in taking aim. A solution to the problem was pressing! Everyone could see that another minute's delay could not be brooked. It would mean increasing our casualties and in the long run affect the outcome of the battle.

At this critical moment a large dark figure emerged from my rear. He swooped down on the still hot machine-gun and lifted it onto his own right shoulder. Then in a commanding tone he shouted to Chia Lai-fu, "Fire!"

From his voice and appearance I knew this man to be fighter Jen Hsi-ho. When he saw that Chia Lai-fu hesitated to resume firing, he gave him an assuring smile and said, "Go ahead and shoot. I guarantee you'll find my shoulder a better carriage than the metal one!"

But still the machine-gun remained silent. Chia Lai-fu couldn't bring himself to let his comrade-in-arms bear the kick of the gun and pleaded earnestly with Jen Hsi-ho, "But you can't stand it!"

Jen Hsi-ho grew impatient and there was a change in his voice as he said. "Aren't we both Communists? Aren't we both striving for the good of all? Then you're not to worry about whether I can stand it. Go ahead and shoot!" All this time he had never let go of the searing hot barrel nor taken his two fierce eyes from the fire-spitting enemy machine-guns.

I knew Jen Hsi-ho well. For the sake of the Party he was willing even to sacrifice his life. This was his firm determination he had expressed at a Party meeting before the battle. Now, when the success of the battle was at stake, no one had the right to deter him from his noble act. I looked once more at our path of attack, now blocked by enemy fire, and cried out in anger, "Fire!" Bullets flew thick and fast like rain in a storm.

Still shooting, Chia Lai-fu appealed to Jen, "My good comrade, lean forward a bit. It's a little better forward."

"Sure! Ease your mind and get on with the firing! See! I'm a live gun-carriage!" It was actually so. With the gun on his shoulder, he wheeled around to the right and to the left, aiming the muzzle at the firing points along the enemy front wherever they happened to be. Chia Lai-fu's marksmanship was also deadly accurate. In a short while he had silenced the machine-guns at two enemy firing points.

"Fine marksmanship! Which machine-gunners did it? We must get them a citation!" the chief of staff shouted enthusiastically. Our troops swept forward in one great rush.

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Jen Hsi-ho was shouting at the top of his voice from beneath the machine-gun, "Steeled fighters of the proletariat, fight till the last breath! Charge!" His strong, eager voice, accompanied by the howl of the machine-gun, encouraged and inspired the men as they dashed forward fearlessly.

From my battle experience I estimated that the machine-gun had fired a good 2,000 rounds. Going up to Jen Hsi-ho I examined his hands and shoulders. Both hands were seared and his shoulders a mass of burns and purple-black blood

blisters, while cartridge cases flying out from the machine-gun had gouged his back, reducing it to a gore. Deeply moved, I embraced him and found myself covered with his blood. How could he have stood it! While the machine-gun was being fired, what tortures he must have suffered! It must have been like being scorched with fire and gouged with knives — every joint, every nerve must have quivered with excruciating pain.

Without a word I lifted the machine-gun from Jen Hsi-ho's shoulder and placed it on my own, as he had done. Then I ordered Chia Lai-fu, "Fire!"

Chia Lai-fu didn't dare to disobey my orders, so the machine-gun rattled on. But before a few dozen rounds, Jen Hsi-ho grabbed the gun back again, appealing earnestly, "Platoon Leader, your job is to direct the platoon. You had better let me handle the gun!" And with a violent jerk he had the gun back on his shoulder. "Fire! Victory is at hand!" he said with determination.

After the occupation of Position 46, we were waiting for further orders near the second line of barbed-wire defences. Everyone was busy digging foxholes when Youth Leaguer Yen Tien-pao said solemnly, "I suggest we ask for a citation for Jen Hsi-ho."

"I agree!" said Medical Orderly Chang Feng-hsiang. After examining Jen Hsi-ho's shoulders and hands, he said, "The machine-gun must have seared him to the heart, and yet he

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held on unflinchingly. He is really a tough son of the proletariat!"

Yen Tien-pao determined to find a way to relieve his brave comrade. He twisted off pieces of wire from the battered barbed-wire entanglements, got together a roll of them, then carefully bound together the smashed pieces of the gun carriage, saying exultantly to Jen Hsi-ho as he tested it for firmness, "Now you can have a rest — you must!"

Shortly after, we received orders to cover the troops attacking Position 45. This position was pocked with well-concealed firing points connected by underground tunnels which our artillery had great difficulty in destroying. It wasn't long after our wired-up machine-gun again resumed firing that we attracted the attention of the enemy and in the hail of bullets that followed, Comrade Chia Lai-fu lost his life. Jen Hsi-ho immediately took over for Chia Lai-fu, shouting as he continued the firing, "Avenge Comrade Chia Lai-fu!"

A bullet hit his left arm but seemed not to trouble him. "Platoon Leader, will you bandage it for me?" was all he said.

I rushed up and saw immediately that the wound was very serious. The bone had been fractured, leaving the arm to swing limply and helplessly at every move of his body. I bound up his arm at once and called Yen Tien-pao over. While Yen Tien-pao was reporting to me for duty, Jen Hsi-ho was still firing the machine-gun with one arm.

Yen Tien-pao urged, "Your arm is in bad shape, Comrade, you'd better hand the gun over to me quick!"

"Wait a minute, first let me make good my pledge!" Jen Hsi-ho was still holding fast to the stock and trigger, firing on the enemy with his teeth clenched.

Again the enemy concentrated all his fire power on Jen's stubborn machine-gun, dead set on destroying it. Seeing that Jen Hsi-ho had four fresh leg wounds, Yen Tien-pao couldn't restrain himself any longer but grabbed Jen Hsi-ho's

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machine-gun and started sweeping the enemy positions with rapid fire. Chang Feng-hsiang of the Medical Corps ran up and began hastily to dress Jen Hsi-ho's wounds. Suddenly a shell burst in mid-air. Chang threw himself over Jen Hsi-ho to protect him, but Jen was again wounded in many places.

Jen Hsi-ho could no longer move. Blood streamed from his wounds and his body, tough as steel though it was, could take no more. Several times he tried to stand but each time he fell back again. Finally he lay prostrate and said to me. "Platoon Leader, you go and direct the men in battle. Don't worry about me! Platoon Leader, we must take the main peak!"

At dawn of the second day I went to the regimental first-aid station to see Jen Hsi-ho. He lay there, his pulse extremely weak from loss of blood, and I clasped his big ice-cold hands tightly in mine. It was not till he had gazed at me straight in the eye for a long time that he finally said with the greatest difficulty, "Oh! It's you, Platoon Leader! You have come again to see me! But you must go to the men!"

I have no words to describe my intense feeling at that moment. What a fighter he was! Even when he was on the verge of death concern for victory was still uppermost in his mind. I tried my best to suppress my emotion as I said. "Don't worry, my good comrade. We have already fulfilled our task. We've taken the whole of Cross Hill and also destroyed an enemy force of almost a full regiment strength."

A faint smile flickered across Jen Hsi-ho's face. Then his head sank onto my breast

and his breathing ceased. Thus my dear comrade-in-arms, the heroic fighter Jen Hsi-ho, died. But he will be for ever remembered by his comrades and the people!

## **"AIM AT ME!"**

**SUN SHAO-CHUN**

*Communications Platoon Leader*

It was broad daylight. The whistling and roaring of bullets and shells continued to issue deafeningly from the flank of East Mountain along Height 281.1. The previous night a small detachment of our men had attacked the enemy camp under cover of darkness and, after wiping out the enemy guards on the summit, had met with an unexpected counterattack which had cut off their retreat. The enemy had poured tremendous gunfire and massive infantry into his repeated counter-attacks so that the fighting had continued throughout the night. Now our detachment was closely encircled by the enemy. And though we continually countered their counter-attacks no less stubbornly our casualties were mounting.

Such was the condition that created such anxiety for our comrades' safety in all of us in the command post. The encircled men could not hope to make their retreat by day and so would have to withstand the enemy's encirclement for one more day. Whatever attempts we should make to send reinforcements or to launch another counter-attack would have to wait till evening; for to get any number of men through the heavy network of enemy gunfire and penetrate into the enemy lines by day could only result in heavy casualties. All those at headquarters — particularly the regimental commander — knew what should be done and done immediately, but we were in no position to do it. We

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would have to concentrate all the force of our artillery fire to cover our own position till sunset!

"Tientsin Two! Tientsin Two!" Yu Shu-chang's call came through my receiver. He was the radio operator of my platoon and had accompanied the detachment in their attack the night before. He had never once lost contact with us, reporting the situation at the front, asking for artillery aid, requesting directions and detailing heroic deeds. His strong voice, slightly husky now, was familiar to all at headquarters. How that voice gripped our hearts now! Regimental Commander

Sun Pin was sitting next to the receiving set, all attention on Yu's repeated calls. Everyone else stood round looking at me expectantly.

Taking advantage of daylight the enemy fought all the more ferociously. Our situation became steadily more critical. Then Yu's agitated voice gushed from the receiver: There was only one man left on the field and that was Yu himself.

Regimental Commander Sun Pin rose to his feet and took the receiver from my hand. "You gave the enemy Second Division a sound thrashing last night," he said to Yu. "At relatively little sacrifice you inflicted heavy losses on the enemy. You and your comrades-in-arms have rendered an, invaluable service. Every single minute you hold out contributes to the success of the counter-attack along the whole front. . . ."

At the commander's words Yu cried out: "Comrade Commander, I understand." Then as if making a vow, he continued: "As a member of the Communist Party I will hold out to the very last. I will live or die with our position!" The regimental commander showed deep emotion as he said: "My good comrade! I thank you in the name of the whole regiment. This is a sign of your loyalty to the motherland."

"I am at the service of my motherland!" responded Yu. Then the commander detailed for him the plan of co-operating with the artillery to wipe out the enemy.

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After that the battle for Height 281.1 on the slope of East Mountain was carried on by our radio operator Yu Shu-chang aided by the gunfire of the regiment in the face of whole squads of invading enemy troops. Relying on the implicit self-confidence of the commanding officer, the gunners and the communication corps, and on indestructible heroism, we firmly held the field, carrying on a relentless and cruel fight.

I adjusted my earphones again and again, holding my breath lest I should miss a single sound; I must capture every word. Now the only aid I could render my comrade-in-arms was through this radio receiver.

Yu Shu-chang was calling: "Tientsin Two! 8251 calling. Two platoons of enemy soldiers closing in from Targets Two and Four. Request fire!"

Our battery responded to his call and after a heavy shelling, we again heard him shout: "Bravo! Well done! The enemy have fallen in heaps. Quickly load on shrapnels. Fire the shrapnels!"

A little later he shouted again: "Quick! Train the gunfire on the depression to the right. Let mortars do the job."

"The enemy soldiers are running away. Pursue them along Targets Two and Four with gunfire. Shoot them from the rear!"

"Good! Withhold fire! Stop! Thank you, comrade gunners!"

Thus Yu Shu-chang called our artillery into effective use to repel the enemy's repeated onslaughts and annihilate them. His excited voice seemed extraordinarily powerful at headquarters, where we were quietly listening to his exultant battle reports. At times, when our gunfire was suspended, he seemed to forget that he was hemmed in by the enemy's heavy firing and would shout joyously into the walkie-talkie: "Ha! Ha! They are scattering in all directions, screaming for all they're worth!" The regimental commander ordered that the staff officers inform all other troops of Yu's exploit, of how he was directing the gunfire so skilfully and wiping out the enemy. So every corner of the field was taking a

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tremendous interest in Yu's fighting and all walkie-talkies were tuned into his wave length.

I could find no words adequate to describe my feelings at that moment. I was deeply concerned for my comrade-in-arms and at the same time extremely proud to have such a fighter in my platoon. I felt a strong tinge of remorse that in all those days before the battle I had not become better acquainted with him, his fighting spirit, his ideas and ideals, his needs all these I knew little of. I had not so much as even shaken hands with him when he left for the front. . . . And now? Now I could only wait, not knowing what was going to happen to him!

The regimental commander asked me to tell Yu to speak lower so as to save his energy. His "Yes!" in reply was as pleasant and natural as his answers to orders in the platoon, had always been.

After his mild "Yes," his tone changed again to a shout:

"Tientsin Two! Fire at once on the slope of the hill!"

As I was going to ask for specific details, a loud explosion came through the walkie-talkie. I called immediately: "3251! 8251!" but got no answer. I kept on, drawing in a long breath to give force to my call: "8251! 8251! Tientsin Two calling. Over at once!" But still there was no answer.

One minute passed. Two minutes, three . . . a whole five minutes had elapsed, and yet no answer. Beads of sweat burst out on my face.

Silence reigned in headquarters for a moment. Then someone from an observation post reported that enemy soldiers had been discovered on the hill-slope and the continuous explosions of hand-grenades were heard.

The staff officer who was writing the "battle log" gripped the pen, and as though talking to himself asked doubtfully: "Have we lost the field then?"

My head buzzed. I looked at the watch to note the exact moment.

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"Tientsin Two! Tientsin Two!" Suddenly my earphones came to life again.

"8251? Is that you? . . ." I cried in joyful surprise.

Our regimental commander leaned forward and I saw him gesture to the staff officer to stop him from recording the "field lost" part. At the same time he came up to me saying, "Ask him at once what happened!"

But Yu reported before he had been prompted. From his voice I knew that he could hardly talk for shortness of breath. He reported how a bunch of enemy soldiers had stolen up to the very edge of the pillbox, and how he had hurriedly jumped out to give them a few hand-grenades as he had no time to direct the gunfire. Then we heard how the bunch of roughnecks had all been sent scrambling back again.

I pressed the earphones hard against my ears lest the precious voice should be cut off again. However, before we could reply, he shouted, "Here they are again!" and the voice broke off for the second time. A few minutes later he reported breathlessly that he had driven back another crowd of the enemy that had crept up near the pillbox, but that now he had only one hand-grenade left.

It was clear that each successive enemy counter-attack was more fierce than the last and that Yu's position was increasingly perilous. No one knew it better than he himself. But he tried his utmost to be calm as he kept up communicating with us in a lively tone as if to encourage us. But try as he might, he could not conceal either his growing hoarseness or the exhaustion in his voice. I knew what herculean effort it took to triumph over his own mental and physical torments. What indomitable will-power he exercised to endure all this! And yet more serious trials were in store for him.

All the while the regimental commander was standing by my walkie-talkie, listening to every word Yu said and giving him advice.

It was noon when the enemy launched their fifth attack on the slope of East

Mountain. Yu Shu-chang reported that

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enemy troops were coming towards the slope of the hill from three directions. He shouted:

"Attention! Attention! Fire on Targets Two and Four at once !"

"Attention, there are enemy soldiers in the depression to the right. Quick fire!"

"Enemy soldiers are within 70 metres of me. Give them a sound thrashing!"

in the continuous angry roar of the artillery Yu's voice grew louder and more insistent:

"Bombard up to 50 metres of this pillbox. Quick! Quick!"

"How many metres?" the regimental commander was eager to confirm.

"Fifty metres. And hurry!"

The regimental commander had yet another question. "How thick are the cover of your pillbox?"

"No. 1, and no more questions! Quickly fire the big guns! The heavy ones!"

The regimental commander waved to the officer in charge

of the artillery who in turn spoke into the telephone: "Quick fire !"

"No. 1," Yu called again, "the gunfire is too far away. The enemy are coming in great numbers; aim nearer, nearer!"

"Will 40 metres do?" asked the regimental commander. "Not near enough!"

"Thirty metres?"

"Still nearer! Quick!" "Twenty?"

"Yes! Twenty will do," the determined reply rang over the phone.

The regimental commander understood. He said to himself in great agitation: "No use to ask any more. Our

brave comrade would only say 'nearer' even if the shells were crushing his own skull. . . ."

"Fire at once!" Yu called repeatedly, "the enemy have closed in on this pillbox. Fire at once! Give them all you've got! Bombard the pillbox!"

"What? What?" the regimental commander jumped to his feet.

"Comrade artillerymen, use your big guns! Don't consider me; fire at the pillbox; fire at me!"

A lump rose to my throat and I was unable to utter a word.

". . . All you've got, comrade artillerymen, the enemy have scaled the pillbox," continued Yu. "Shell this pillbox! For the sake of victory, aim at this pillbox and fire. Fire! Fire at me!"

"Yu Shu-chang, Yu Shu-chang!" I kept calling his name. "Commander, comrades, my dear comrades! Farewell! . . . For victory! . . ."

His words were followed by a deafening explosion and then deathly silence.

I grasped my walkie-talkie and called in frenzy: "Yu Shuchang. Yu . . . Shu . . . chang! . . ." But there was no response. I ran the needle along the dial of the radio receiver with hair's-breadth precision, not missing a single reading, but still there was no sound except the static, now strong, now weak. The firm, calm inspiring voice was heard no more!

Meanwhile the observation post had sent in a report that a column of black smoke had arisen from the pillbox, most probably produced by grenades. The enemy soldiers were scattering all over the flank of the hill. . . .

The regimental commander opened his bloodshot eyes wide, took up the receiver angrily and shouted into it: "Comrade Artillery Corpsman, a rapid-fire shelling of the hill-slope, quick!"

A flurry of shells followed on the echo of his words and immediately the big guns were roaring in unison burying in a sea of flame the enemy soldiers who had managed to

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crawl onto the top of the hill. The walkie-talkie operators of our different artillery units still had their ears glued to the receivers, eagerly listening for the voice of the hero, while actually the news of his sacrifice was already known to the comrades on the various artillery positions and they were awaiting the word to avenge him. Thus the booming of the guns seemed to be a thundering

reverberation of our hero's voice.

Our avenging gunfire was kept up until after dusk when our infantry launched a second counter-attack. Clusters of enemy soldiers who had been crouching on the slope of the hill were defeated and annihilated. They never did succeed in regaining a foothold on the field. When our countercharge detachment went up, they found evidence of the day's hard fighting. Enemy corpses lay so thick that they fairly covered the plain. The pillbox that Yu had so valiantly defended to the very last was in ruins with five or six enemy corpses blocking the approach. Close by the entrance lay the remains of our martyr. In his hand was part of a grenade handle while beside him, spattered with blood, was his battered walkie-talkie.

## **A SURPRISE ATTACK ON THE "WHITE TIGER" REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS**

**YANG YU-TSAI**

*Deputy Platoon Leader; Hero of the Korean Democratic People's Republic; Hero of the Chinese People's Volunteers First Class*

The steel helmets and clumsy, uncomfortable boots of puppet Syngman Rhee's troops didn't feel at all good to us scouts. Nevertheless, these special outfits helped us enormously in making a surprise attack on the enemy one night. Braving the rain, and shouting "Pali! Pali! \* from time to time we doubled along a muddy highway in the rear of the enemy. Of all the troops penetrating to the rear of the enemy, only we, the "disguised attacking squad," had the privilege of shouting a few words in Korean to give vent to our excitement. The main force behind us marched in silence.

We were now nearing the Bridge of Good Courage, not far beyond which were the "White Tiger" Regimental Headquarters. I became tense and ordered the squad to be on the alert and make ready for action.

Suddenly there was a stir at the rear of the file and Han Tan-nien, our liaison man, brought up a prisoner wearing the helmet of the "White Tiger" Regiment. "This fellow had taken us for his own kind; he'd followed us for a long time before the enemy shot up a flare and we discovered him. . . ."

I asked him for the watchword that night.

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\* "Hurry up!" in Korean.

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"Kolumoupa," answered the captive, his teeth chattering.

To pacify him, Han Tan-nien talked to him for a while. When he had calmed down a bit, we questioned him in detail about the location of his regiment's operations office, the radio station and the quarters of the guard platoon. His answers were in accord with the information we had obtained beforehand. It seemed that he had told the truth. Doubly reassured, I gave the order for the whole squad to thrust quickly into the enemy's regimental headquarters, halting for nothing on the way.

After we had proceeded for some time, two batches of enemy lorries, totalling about fifty, fully loaded with reinforcements, lumbered along; but we ignored them and slipped through the ditch rank with weeds.

At the approach to the Bridge of Good Courage, we could see the dim figures of enemy sentinels moving about. I hesitated but Chin Ta-chu, another liaison man, took a few steps forward and shouted smartly at them: "What're you doing here? The watchword!"

"Kolumoupa!"

The two enemy sentinels looked at us for a moment. Then the one in front, holding his rifle, shuffled towards us. It looked as though he intended to check us.

An idea flitted across my mind — to do away with them! Looking back, I saw that on the sly our scouts were pulling out their daggers. At that very moment, however, Han Tannien emerged from the rear of the file, and striding up to the sentinels with a haughty bearing, with one arm akimbo, he ranted at them: "What the hell are you fussing around here for? Can't you see we have an emergency job on hand? Make way for us, you nincompoops!"

At this outburst the sentinels slunk back quickly. I then waved my arm and the scouts quickly passed over the bridge.

It was plain sailing after that. In no time at all we reached the mouth of the gully where the "White Tiger" Regimental Headquarters lay.

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The roads there were exceptionally smooth, but the one leading to the gully, being

barred by barbed-wire road-blocks, looked particularly formidable.

I was about to call a halt to arrange for action when, following the drone of motors, half a dozen lorries with their headlights on, loaded with enemy soldiers, came straight towards us. The Syngman Rhee puppet troops on board were shouting unintelligible words. At that instant, firing burst out behind us. It may have been our main forces intercepting the other two batches of enemy lorries that had passed us earlier. At this the oncoming lorries halted, blocking the mouth of the gully. It seemed as though they were trying to analyse the situation. It was a critical moment which allowed of no delay. I gave the order for quick action — two men dealt with one lorry apiece and made a clean sweep of them. The ranks scattered at once. The rattling of automatic rifles and explosion of grenades drowned the roaring of the motors.

The Syngman Rhee puppet troops were knocked out of their wits by our sudden attack. Howling madly, they jumped off the lorries like meat dumplings falling into a cauldron; there was no telling whether they were dead or alive. We showered lead upon them. They were at a loss where to hide themselves. "Hey! What are you doing? We're all one family!" some of them cried. Confound them! These fellows were still dreaming in their last moments! We finished them off, lorries and all, in a couple of minutes.

Taking advantage of the confusion, we dashed into the gully and headed straight for the operations office, the radio station and the enemy guards' quarters in three separate teams. It was decided that at the first signal shot fired by the team attacking the guards, shooting would start simultaneously. Not a single enemy was to be allowed to escape.

I led the third team in a charge on the operations office which was flooded with dazzling electric light. Even from a distance we could see, in the light from the room, that a num-

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ber of people were moving things from it. At the door two lorries were parked. The bastards! So they were preparing to do a bunk! Hiding ourselves in the shade of a grove, we looked towards the house. A gaunt officer standing beside a map was on the phone, while a stout fellow holding a baton paced the room. A few others were seated around a table, their eyes glued to the man on the phone. They looked like officers. Probably the gaunt fellow was inquiring what had happened at the mouth of the gully.

Before we had time to take in any more, the signal shot rang out. "Fire!" I shouted, and fired at the sentinel standing at the door and the men who were

moving the things. With one bound Pao Yueh-lu ran to the window and hurled two grenades inside in quick succession. Immediately following the two explosions, the lights went out. The room was instantly filled with smoke and the air was full of screams. Two men with dishevelled hair vaulted out of the window but were mowed down by Pao Yueh-lu and fell to the ground beneath the window. Blocking the door, Li Chih hurled more grenades into the room, then opened rapid fire. Silence quickly ensued inside. Pao Yueh-lu and Li Chih entered the room right away, one through the window and the other through the door. When they switched on their torches, they found several enemy officers lying disorderly on the floor just as they had fallen, some dead and others gasping their last. The radio operator who had been sending a message was dead at the transmitter. A telephone was ringing.

After dealing the remnants outside who were rushing panic-stricken for cover, I entered the room. Pao Yueh-lu was in the act of taking down the banner of the "White Tiger" Regiment from the rectangular iron stand at the corner. Fastening it to his belt, he said: "It'll be evidence in case that son-of-a-bitch Syngman Rhee again refuses to acknowledge defeat!"

Li Chih was looking in another corner. Opening the door of a wardrobe he gave a roar. The garments hanging there

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began to shake. He gave them a flip with the snout of his rifle. The clothes slipped down, revealing a trembling enemy officer, with upraised hands. It was the chief of the personnel section of the "White Tiger" Regiment, who identified the one lying in a pool of blood at the door as his commander.

The battle lasted only ten minutes. When our three teams met, each of them brought along their own prisoners. We made a speedy check and found no enemy had escaped except a few puppet troops. It was a pity that the commander of the "White Tiger" Regiment and a U.S. Army adviser had been shot dead on the spot instead of being captured alive.

## **A HEROIC AMMUNITION CARRIER**

**TING KUO-HUA**

*Squad Leader*

It was the night of July 13, 1953 that we launched our offensive on Height 461.9.

Soon there was scarcely an inch of ground not under fire, with the enemy blocking our path of assault with furious bombardment. Enemy shells flew so thick that we had to speed across the field to avoid being hit. But the stretch under barrage was so extensive that I found myself with my mouth already hanging open gasping for breath, and the heavy machine-gun on my shoulder weighing a ton before the end was in sight. I turned to our ammunition carrier, Comrade Li Chuan-heng, to make sure that he had not fallen behind, loaded as he was with the formidable weight of boxes of machine-gun bullets and was relieved to see him following close on my heels.

We made the dash to the bank of the Kumsong River at one go. The waters were swirling. I ordered Li Chuan-heng to cross ahead of me so that I could see that he got over all right; but without any help whatsoever he pushed through the swift current with a box of ammunition on each shoulder, leaving me to marvel at his verve and skill!

When we were advancing through an open strip on the other side someone tripped over a land-mine, setting it off instantly. Li Chuan-heng staggered and tottered, but he quickly steadied himself and caught up with the rest as if nothing had happened.

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"Li Chuan-heng, you're not hurt, are you?" I ran up to him and asked in a whisper.

"I'm all right!" he answered shortly with a toss of his head, and marched on.

The shock brigade formed by comrades of the Ninth Company had opened fire. An enemy machine-gun replied by firing upon them from a dominating height. It was time we moved up, so our squad of heavy machine-gunners broke into a resounding run. I saw Li Chuan-heng limping along with the rest. He was wounded, there was no doubt about that, and apparently his wound was quite serious.

"Li Chuan-heng!" I called to him, "Run for shelter and rest a while! We'll come back for you when we've taken the height."

"Don't worry!" he gasped, "It's not so bad, I can keep up!" After which he limped along all the faster. This fighter had such a stubborn vein in him that once he had made up his mind a team of wild horses could not stop him. So I said nothing more and sped on.

We had reached the foot of a hill when a shell exploded square in front of us sweeping Li Chuan-heng off his feet. I rushed over and found him lying on his face making no sound whatsoever, half buried with earth thrown up by the explosion.

"Li Chuan-heng! Li Chuan-heng!" I tugged at him forcefully, shouting his name over and over, unable to control my emotion. But no matter how I shouted, he gave no answer. Seeing his head so limp on the ground I breathed. "He is dead!" Then releasing him, I shouldered my machine-gun. "Comrade Li Chuan-heng! I will avenge you!" I vowed, standing before him. Then I dashed towards the height, which was ablaze with shot and shell while my heart was burning with avenging fury.

Throughout the night I fired my machine-gun vengefully. Whenever and wherever the attacking units needed help then and there my gunfire would sweep across. I did not even wait for signals.

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The taking of the height was not a hard job. Under cover of darkness we had already annihilated two enemy companies entrenched there. But equally swift were the enemy's counter-offensive squads, which appeared on the scene before daybreak. We would have to shift over to defensive fighting, and for this we must rebuild the enemy's fortifications according to our own needs. And we must do this without delay.

The enemy counter-offensive continued till daybreak. Their every desperate attempt at counter-charge was met with a crushing blow; but our supply of machine-gun bullets had meanwhile run out.

It was then I remembered the two boxes of bullets carried by Li Chuan-heng. When I laid him down, I had been in too much of a hurry to bring them along and would have been unable to, anyway, with the machine-gun already on my shoulder. I had intended to send for them as soon as we took the height, but it had never occurred to me that the enemy would come so soon.

Now it was too late. The enemy counter-attack was still going on, not only without any sign of abating but with every sign of intensifying. I discovered that a heavy machine-gun without bullets is more useless than a stick, for a stick may be used in fighting at close quarters.

I sent our ammunition carrier, Kung Chia-yi, to search for ammunition left by the enemy and he came back with a few hand-grenades but not a single machine-gun bullet. Of course we could use hand-grenades, but now was the time for a machine-gun to play its role. How could a few hand-grenades do the work of a machine-gun!

I was consumed with remorse. As squad leader, I had to answer for discontinuing the firing of the machine-gun. The pity of it made me seethe.

The attacking enemy troops were coming up again but we could do nothing but watch them moving into the range of

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our silent machine-gun. Our nearby machine-guns struck up a rattling crescendo, sending the enemy rolling higgledy-piggledy towards the hill slope in front of us. How splendid it would have been had our machine-gun suddenly joined in and poured lead on them! But we had no lead! We could only wait for the enemy to come closer and then use the hand-grenades.

"Machine-gun! Machine-gun!"

"Fire! Fire! Quick!" the riflemen and tommy-gunners of the Ninth Company shouted in anxiety.

I was fit to be tied. I scratched my ears and rubbed my cheeks, simply beside myself with agitation. It was then that Kung Chia-yi snatched a few hand-grenades and was on his way out of the dugout when I got hold of him.

"What are you trying to do?" I demanded sternly.

"I'll get 'em if I break my neck doing it!" he shouted, wide-eyed, his face distorted in anxiety.

"No!" I shouted him down. I knew if he were to fling himself at the enemy he would be shot down before even so much as getting near them and it would be for nothing at all.

The enemy were closing in on us. I supported myself on my elbow beside the machine-gun, mechanically lining the hand-grenades along the rim of the dugout.

"Squad Leader! Ammunition!" a familiar voice shouted as a box of machine-gun bullets was pushed over to me.

The sight of the shiny bullets clipped snugly along the belt sent me into ecstasies of joy. Not waiting to find out where they had come from, I swiftly clicked the end of the belt into the machine and let fly.

Like so many haycocks in a storm were the approaching enemy troops swept down the hill one after another.

"Excellent! A capital stroke!" the riflemen and tommy-gunners who had just censured us for not opening fire burst out in approval.

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I kept shooting until the enemy soldiers rolled back down the hill. Then I turned round to ask Kung Chia-yi, the ammunition carrier, where the bullets had come from.

But my mouth was only half open when I saw beside me a soldier leaning against the wall of the dugout. His face was grotesque with mud and blood furrowed through by the sweat running down it. His tattered tunic too was clotted with dark red blood. His eyelids were scarcely parted and he was breathing in short gasps. There was another box of bullets on the ground beside him, the cover removed and the shiny bullets clipped neatly along the belt in a glittering strip.

"Li Chuan-heng!" I cried out, startled, for it was none other than the ammunition carrier who had "died" at the foot of the hill. I flung my arms around him and called his name excitedly:

"Li Chuan-heng, it's you! Oh, it's you!" But I could not go on from there as nothing more would come to my lips.

"Squad Leader!" Li Chuan-heng said with great exertion, opening his eyes to look at me. "Squad Leader, I've failed in my task! I couldn't keep pace with the troops! I fell behind!"

Not until then did I get a good look at him. His hands were encrusted with blood, the palms ripped open. His trousers hung in ribbons about his legs like the cloth strips of a mop. And his legs! There was scarcely an inch of good flesh from knee to instep on either of them. The sight was eloquent enough, leaving little to explain. This ammunition carrier, after being caught in the blast of the shell, had fainted dead away. When he regained consciousness he had crawled up the mountain slope despite his excruciating pain. He had endangered his very life by climbing that distance in his seriously wounded condition, to say nothing of the weight of the boxes of ammunition on his broken, pain-wracked body. One could only imagine how many times he must have fainted and fallen during the agonizing ascent! But inspired by his

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lofty sense of duty towards the cause, a feeling of glory in his task, and above all by his noble love for the motherland, he had succeeded in getting the ammunition to its destination, overcoming every hardship with his astonishing persistence and adamant will.

I was so moved by his heroism that great tears rolled down my cheeks and fell on his shoulder as I held him warmly in my arms. "No, my good comrade! You didn't fall behind. You were just in time. You caught up!"

## WHEN THE ARMISTICE AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED

NI YU-JU  
*Radarman*

In July 1953, we were assigned to station in Tanchon County on the eastern coast of Korea to search and keep a watch over the U.S. air thugs coming from the Sea of Japan.

Tanchon County lies off the northern part of the Eastern Korean Bay. Our barracks gave onto the famous Sea of Japan. At dawn and nightfall, as the tide rose and ebbed, dark green waves chased each other over the sea, growling, lapping at the shore, churning up wreaths of milky spray and thundering continuously. To an ear unused to it, it sounded like a unit of coastal artillery bombarding enemy warships. . . .

Near midday on the 27th, having seen that everything was in proper order, I went to the front to report. Having crossed a patch of rice field and reached the main road, I saw the liaison man of our company who knew the Korean language riding towards me on a bicycle. Before I could hail him, he had already seen me. Applying his brakes abruptly he waved what appeared to be a roll of newspapers in his hand.

"Ha, ha, young man, here's good news for you!"

"What is it? What are you so happy about?"

"I'll tell you what! The Armistice Agreement's been signed!" He sprang on his bicycle again. "But — " he added, "it won't be in force till 22:00 hours," and was off again like a whiff of smoke towards the barracks.

"The Armistice Agreement's been signed!" That was really most welcome news, but it had come so suddenly. A

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radarman had to keep a cool head at all times. Until the agreement was actually in force I would have to maintain my vigilance. As I walked along, I turned over in

my mind the enemy air activity during the last few days. No, they were becoming even more belligerent of late. There wasn't the slightest sign of Peace!

When I entered the control room after arriving at the front, the comrade who had been on duty told me there was trouble afoot. I set the machine going. "Tick, tick, tick. . . ." I was immediately plunged into the atmosphere of battle. I turned on the fluorescent screen. Ah, things were quite different from what they had been on other days. The sky was thick with the air thugs It looked as if they would collide if they weren't careful. Fixing my eyes on the screen, I quickly adjusted the "receiver," turned the knob of the fluorescent screen and manning the engine, shifted the antenna about all the time, as I searched in all directions., The enemy planes were aggressive but very crafty. Before the first batch was gone there came the second and the third, so that there were always dozens of them wheeling round in the sky. Then there came another flight even bigger which flew so low that the planes seemed to be skimming the surface of the sea. Obviously they were attempting to take us by surprise. When they were about 20 li from our front, they suddenly began to climb. Fixing my eyes closely on these accursed winged thugs, I reported to "No. 1." A moment later, when "No. 4" had taken over the watch over this batch of "goods," I turned to the second and the third. . . . Now there were several batches to be watched. Suddenly "No. 4" reported: "No. 2, No. 2, the first batch of these big beggars are in the east, bombing the bridge. . . ." Just then from quite near came the thunderous explosion of bombs. Even our room vibrated violently. but I was so absorbed in observing the movements of the enemy planes and so busy in reporting the findings that there was no time to care about anything else. Suddenly the enemy planes interfered by sending out electric waves in an attempt to con-

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fuse us. How stupid! At the commander's order, I at once counteracted the enemy's interference, kept dogging them and sending out reports. Information meant victory. I had to keep reporting quickly. . . .

The enemy planes were driven off. Turning off the machine, I glanced at the electric clock. A quarter to four! Rising, I felt weak with exhaustion. Nevertheless, was quite excited as I looked at the battle record and the information I had sent out.

As I walked off from the front, the setting sun dazzled my eyes. Closing them for a moment, I opened them again. To my utter consternation, everything before me had changed. Over Tanchon County in the distance, red flames were dancing while black smoke blotted out the sky. Amid the explosions of time bombs could be heard the crashing of houses and the screaming and wailing of women and children. A solitary brick wall by the station was all that remained of the building

so familiar to us. People were hurrying in and out salvaging articles and moving the wounded. Then I turned my eyes to the rice fields around our position and saw more than a dozen scattered craters from which smoke was still rising. By one ridge lay an old Korean woman, with half of one leg gone. On the earth near her head was a pool of dark red blood. Suddenly I realized that the explosions I had heard in the control room had been caused by the bombing of the enemy planes right over our heads. I stared bitterly at the sea stretching away, surging and befogged, looking all the more gloomy. . . .

"The Armistice Agreement's been signed!" The liaison man's words again flashed across my mind. "Armistice? So you call this a genuine armistice?" I hurried back to the barracks. Nobody was there except the sentinel. Upon inquiry I was told that when the battle had ended they had all gone to fight the fire. It was all still but for the clear voice of the announcer coming from the radio set reporting news from the motherland:



Long live the militant friendship between the Chinese People's Volunteers and the Korean People's Army! --- *A friendly gathering between the Chinese and Korean fighters after their victory*

Agreement has been reached on the Korean armistice which was signed by the representatives of both parties at Panmunjom on the 27th and which is to be in force as from 22:00 hours on the same day. . . .

So it was true after all! Still I dared not believe it. I listened more carefully. There were more news about the armistice. I felt bitter anger as I recalled the scene I had witnessed a moment ago. How despicable the U.S. imperialists were! Although they were forced to sign an armistice after being defeated by the Chinese and Korean peoples on the Korean battle front, they could not reconcile themselves to defeat. Even in the last few minutes or even seconds before the agreement came in force, with bombs and napalm bombs they still destroyed the last few houses left standing and slaughtered women and children who were about to enjoy peace. This led me to a deeper understanding of the essence of U.S. imperialism, which is war. Meanwhile, I was deeply conscious that as a fighter of the Chinese People's Volunteers I must not only strive for peace with blood or even at the cost of my life, but also to stand guard with redoubled vigilance at my own fighting post in defence of peace.

## **THE FIRST TRAIN TO ARRIVE AT ICAESONG**

**CHEN KEH**

*Deputy Head of the Engineering Section of the Railway Corps*

We were up early and already busy on July 31, the fourth day after the armistice was declared. The engine driver made a great show of polishing the locomotive and decked it all over with coloured streamers and ribbons, making it look like a floral sedan fit for a bride.

"We've been in Korea for three years," said he, "but the locomotive has always stayed in the caves. This time we are the first to visit Kaesong — the gate to peace. It's only right that we should make it look smart!"

All preparations for the run had been made. I went to the iron bridge across the Ryongjin River to check up on the repair work. There, after a burst of intense

labour, the last rail and the last sleeper were being laid. Suspending themselves from the steel girder by means of ropes, the fighters were tightening up the last screws.

"Please check, we guarantee first-rate quality!" they shouted as I approached.

"We guarantee we'll make a success of our very first peaceful construction job!"

"When'll the train come along? We're waiting to see the first train!"

In great excitement. I strode from the northern to the southern end of the bridge. Before the armistice. the enemy

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had poured hundreds of tons of steel on this imposing 19metre-high, 404-metre-long bridge, so that all that remained of it was a naked frame. They boasted that it would take no less than three months for it to be overhauled and reopened to traffic. Now we had given the lie to their arrogance. Instead of three months, it had taken us a matter of three days and nights to put this steel bridge on its feet again. On this morning — the 31st of July, the first Kaesong-bound train was due to cross it. We would show the people of the world that the fighters of the Chinese and Korean People's Armies were not only heroes in battle, as publicly acknowledged, but also among the ablest in the world in peaceful construction.

The slight trembling of the rails grew into a very real jolting as the train neared the bridge. As it passed over the bridge at the gentle speed of ten kilometres per hour, the men of the railway corps lining both banks of the river, waved their tools, and burst into loud cheers.

"Take the news of our achievements in construction to Kaesong with you!"

"May Kaesong be a city of peace for ever!"

"Long live peace!"

"Hurray!"

The train came to a halt on the southern bank of the river. Deputy Divisional Commander Wang of our railway corps who was standing there invited Brigade Commander Kim of the railway corps of the Korean People's Army, which was fighting shoulder to shoulder with us, to get on the train. Listening to them chatting familiarly, I avidly watched the scene unfolding on both sides of the railway.

The shrill note of the whistle aroused the hamlets, big and small, along the route. White-haired granddads and grannies, boys with satchels in their hands, girls in brightly coloured skirts, women with pottery jars on their heads, able-bodied men working in the fields — all ran across the crater-studded

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fields to both sides of the railway, waving their hands at the coming train and shouting "Hurray!"

At Tosong station, thousands of Koreans were holding a meeting in the square, heartily cheering victory and the armistice. As the train passed, the spirit of the gathering reached a climax. Raising their coloured pennants on high, the people shouted: "Long live peace!"

The happiness of everyone on the way moved us deeply. We went to the door of our carriage to wave to the crowds as we passed. The engine driver blew the whistle repeatedly.

"Kaesong!" cried out Brigade Commander Kim impulsively. I glanced at my watch. It was eleven-thirty. I didn't know why my heart beat violently and my eyes moistened. The cruel war had lasted for three years before victory was won. Now I had come to Kaesong in the first train. The peace that was acclaimed by people all over the world had not come easily. It had been won at the cost of many Chinese and Korean people's blood.

Kaesong was only fifteen *li* from Panmunjom. When the train reached the extreme southern end of the railway, it whistled for more than ten minutes, as though intending it to be a demonstration. "Let our enemies prick up their ears and listen," said the driver gravely, "our train has arrived at Kaesong !"

The loud sustained note of the whistle shook the ancient city. People surged into the station from all directions and encircled the train. Wide-eyed, they looked at it with thankfulness talking all the while. Patting the locomotive gently, an old lady murmured something. The liaison officer told me she was asking whether the train had come from Pyongyang. When he replied in the affirmative, tears welled up in her eyes and she kept repeating: "Pyongyang! Pyongyang!"

More and more people gathered. In the twinkling of an eye, the quiet station had turned into a sea of humanity. People jumped and shouted. An army man started to sing a

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martial song which was taken up immediately by everyone. The singing increased

in volume until it reached such a pitch that it resounded, like the peal of spring thunder, in the high mountains.