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KOREAN WAR PROJECT 2ID-00200254

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COMMAND REPORT

(March 1951)

1. OPERATION WILLIAM

Moving steadily, the Regiment continued the general offensive on 1 March, 1951, against a fanatical and stubborn enemy. In log built pillboxes and individualemplacements on Hill 726 and adjacent ridges, the enemy, in spite of intense air and artillery fire, met the advancing elements with overwhelming SA, AA and mortar fire.

The enemy fire materially slowed the advance forcing the 2d and 3d Battalions to deploy over a wide area and use their fire power and control difficult. At 0900 hours, although the line had forced the advance to positions just south of the objective, Hill 726, that important objective was still held by the enemy defending force. Withdrawing to better night defensive positions, the line dug in for the night and prepared to continue the attack the following day.

Counterattacking during the early morning hours of 2 March, 1951, the enemy— in spite of heavy losses— made a slight penetration of the 2d BN positions. In order to contain and hold, Company H fell back to secondary positions inflicting heavy casualties upon the enemy force during the operation. Losses were in evidence the next morning, with over 50 enemy dead counted in the field, and equipment and weapons showing that they had been dropped and thrown away as the enemy retreated.

Holding their secondary positions until 0800 hours 2 March, the 2d BN attacked and regained their former positions in preparation for the continued attack on the Regimental objective, Hill 726.

Attacking again at 1000 hours 3 March, plans had been made for a pincher movement, with elements of the 3d BN to come in from the southeast while the

1 - See Appendix C-1 (nos. 60)
2 - See Appendix D-1 (no. 96)

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1st and 34 Bns attacked from the east and front. However, before this could be accomplished the commanding ground south of the objective had to be taken.

Using all supporting fires, the initial phase of the attack moved quickly forward -- contacting the enemy approximately 1000 yards forward of the jump-off positions. However, the enemy fell back on the commanding ground, tactically in excellent defensive position, held, halting the attack. Making a full-scale battle all during the day the Bns as darkness fell dug in at their present positions.

Moving forward the morning of 3 March, 1951, with all three Bns abreast: 1st Bn right, 2d Bn center, and 3d Bn on the left, no enemy contact was made until approximately 1400 hours. The 1st Bn after securing Hill 625 and proceeding north was engaged by an unknown number of enemy. Supported by elements of Tank Company and D Bty., 33A AAA, the Bn continued to advance until reaching the commanding ground where they were halted to provide fire support for the advance of the 2d Bn.

The 2d Bn advancing towards Hill 625 encountered heavy SA, AA and mortar fire momentarily halting the advance. However, as artillery, heavy mortar, and air strikes were called for and received the advance continued. Upon reaching the crest of Hill 625, the Bn received a determined enemy counterattack that soon turned into an all-out attack. Fighting, man to man, the Bn succeeded in holding until 2200 hours when the enemy broke contact and fell back -- beaten.

Meanwhile, the 3d Bn had advanced against light enemy opposition and had reached the north slope of Hill 726. Pulling back for the night, the Bn went into position in the vicinity of Telbokpo.

The entire operation was a perfect example in the use of supporting fires and fire and movement. The control and leadership, from squad on up to the Regiment Commander, with the resulting coordination and cooperation of attached units were outstanding during the operation. This was when both the Regiment and enemy were suffering large numbers of casualties.

With the securing of the lateral East-West road the rear CP, Regimental CP, and B Co moved around to join the forward CP in the vicinity of Kowung, close-

1- See Appendix B-1 (No. 66)
2- See Appendix C-1 (CI. no. 61)
3- See Appendix B-1 (No. 59)
4- See Appendix B-1 (No. 58)
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ing in at 1:30 hours.

Changes in Corps and Division boundaries directly affected the Regiment when orders were received that we would relieve the 16th ROK Regt. However, before this could be carried out the Regiment would first be relieved by elements of the 36th ROK Regt. This move to be accomplished as soon as possible.

Holding those positions of 3 March, the 3rd consolidated and prepared defensive positions. This preparation was under constant harassment, counter-attacks being launched by the enemy along the entire regimental front during 4 March.

A large-scale attack by an estimated 300-500 enemy against positions of Cos F and G at 1300 hours 4 March was the first. The fight, lasting until 1500 hours, was repulsed time and time again. When at last the enemy forces withdrew, an estimated 200-300 had been killed or wounded — no prisoner was taken.

Other and smaller attacks were made against the Em's positions, but as in the cases of Cos F and G, excellent defensive artillery and tank fire aided in repulsing the enemy. These fires accounted, in a large measure, for the numbers of enemy casualties.

As the period 4 March closed, the units of the Regiment continued to prepare defensive positions, dispatched contact and combat patrols, and formulated the plans for relief of the 16th ROK Regt.

Beginning at 1000 hours 5 March, the 1st Bn, 36th ROK Regt. started relief of the 1st Bn, 9th Inf. Due to the slowness of the relieving units, it wasn't until well after dark that the relief was effected.

Because of the slowness of the 36th ROK's relief, the Regiment was unable to proceed with the plan of taking over the 16th ROK sector on 5 Mar. However, one company of the Regiment moved to the ROK's 16th Regt. sector and relieved elements of that unit. The remainder of the Regiment remained in assembly areas for the night preparing to relieve the 16th ROK Regt. the following day.

Completing the relief of the 16th ROK Regt by 1:30 hours 6 March, the Em's occupied positions generally on line across the Regiment's zone of action.

1 - See Appendix C-1 (No. 57)
2 - See Appendix C-1 (No. 52)
3 - See Appendix C-1 (No. 53)
4 - See Appendix C-1 (O/L No. 64)
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The remainder of the period was spent by the Bns and separate units in preparation for an attack the following day.

II. "Operation PiP PiP"

Jumping off at 0730 hours 7 March, the 3d Bn led the advance followed by the 1st and 2d Bns at 0800 hours. Moving slowly over the mountainous terrain, contact was first made with an enemy patrol by elements of the 1st Bn. and almost immediately thereafter the 2d Bn encountered an estimated 30 enemy on objective 31.

The enemy, using 81, 60 and grenades, resisted stubbornly, giving ground only after supporting fires in conjunction with assault attacks had been launched against their positions. However, by nightfall elements of the Regiment were firmly established in defensive positions along the phase line "Arizona".

Again, the terrain became the number one problem of the Regiment—no supply roads and almost inaccessible lines of communications began to be felt. As the attack continued on 8 March, these difficulties were the primary factors that retarded the Regiment's advance.

In addition, each hill mass and ridge were occupied by small delaying forces of enemy, using 81, 60 and observed mortar fire, making the advance of the Bns and companies costly and slow. However, elements of the 1st Bn succeeded in gaining Hill 630, routing approximately 100 enemy and establishing positions for the night.

In the meantime, the 3d Bn had encountered and engaged the main enemy resistance, with the enemy firmly entrenched in key enclaves and almost inaccessible positions for attack. Advancing in the face of this defense, the Bn gained the E-W road and was ordered to halt while the 2d Bn was moved to blocking positions in the vicinity of Hills 630 and 327 for the night.

During the early morning hours of 9 March, elements of the 3d Bn received a series of attacks by an estimated company of enemy. These continued across the Regiment's front until approximately 0400 hours when elements of both 2d and 3d Bns were receiving heavy 81, 60 and grenades. The attacks increased in tempo until 0500 hours. So I was forced to pull back exposing

1. See Appendix E-1 (No. 66)
2. See Appendix C-1 (No. 66)
3. See Appendix C-1 (6/L No. 66)
Go I's right flank. However, Go K was moved into this gap preventing the enemy from exploiting his chance for a breakthrough.

Counterattacking, the elements of the 2d and 3d Bns retook their former 1-2 positions and the enemy broke contact.

Moving out in the continuation of the attack at 0200 hours 9 March, the Bns immediately contacted enemy forces. Again in log bunkers and emplacements using overwhelming fire power of 3.50, mortar and grenades, the enemy succeeded in halting the advance of the Regiment.

The attack was increased in tempo, with all support fires utilized, but, as darkness fell, the Bns were pulled back into a defensive perimeter for the night.

Reflecting on the tactics used by the enemy for the period of 1-9 March 1951, reveals that they were the type taught by the Russian military. Small delaying units increasing in strength as the Regiment moved northward—prepared defensive positions carefully camouflaged, counterattacks to gain momentary advantage in order to withdraw the defense troops, and finally, a final defense line to wear down and halt the attacking force — tactics that made it a long hard fight before they were conquered.

Using the 2d Bn to support the 1st and 3d Bns by fire the morning of 10 March, the Regimental objective, Hill 527, was taken and secured by approximately 0730 hours. The 3d Bn occupied positions on the objective while the other two Bns moved to the northern road leading to the 23d Inf sector, thus, tying all the Bns together along a general North-South line.

Continuous patrolling by all elements of the Regiment throughout the night failed to make contact with the enemy. On the morning of 11 March, the 1st and 2d Bns were shifted from the defense positions held, to the high ground west of the two lateral roads taking up blocking positions.

During the securing of the road net, the rear CP, Regt HQ Co and Med Co were ordered forward to join the forward CP in the vicinity of Mojungs-dong, closing in at 1300 hours 11 March.

Continuous patrolling, both motorized and foot, was maintained by all elements.
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elements of the Regiment throughout the period 12-15 March. Patrols from the 2d and 3d Bns were being dispatched to reconnoiter area along possible routes of approach as far north as the Phoenix Line. The 3d Bn was given the mission of maintaining contact, in addition to recon patrols, with elements of the 38th FOK Regiment.

This unexpected "break" period was utilized to the fullest by all elements of the Regiment. Reorganization, resupply, maintenance, and presentation of awards being the order for the period.

The Regimental and Bn motor and maintenance sections performed miracles, as if they were every-day affairs. Second, third, and even fourth echelon work was done to keep the motorized elements of the Regiment rolling.

In an impressive and colorful ceremony on 15 March, 1951, Major General Clark L. Ruffner, Commanding General of the 26th Infantry Division, presented to four men of the 2d Bn awards for outstanding courage and valor.

With an appropriate setting of Korean hills and rice paddies in the background, they had just finished fighting over, their Bn standing at attention in their honor, the following men received the awards from the General: H/Sgt Clovis R. Taylor, 265; H/Sgt William G. Long, 26; Sgt. Roland L. Buent; SS; and Sgt. Walter J. Leane, 26.

The attached platoon of 2d Div Engrs, under the command of 1st Lt. Gerard H. Martin, put forth good efforts to keep the Regimental MSR passable throughout the period. The absence of roads to the Bns was a direct liability to the tactical movement, but, by unceasing work day and night, Lt. Martin and his platoon managed to construct trails and passable routes for the movement of supplies to the frontline troops, an effort that was instrumental in the defeat of the enemy within the Regiment’s zone of action.

The logistical problem for the period 1-15 March was as serious as the tactical. The Regiment, fighting over some of the worst terrain in Korea during this period, found the tactical mission threatened several times by the difficulties of resupplying the frontline troops.

The country consisting of high rugged snow-covered mountains, impossible rivers, and a non-existent road net was an additional enemy. The only avenues

2 - See Appendix C-1 (No. 70)
of approach were by foot and/or trails, treacherous and uncertain. The lack of adequate vehicles such as M-39's, tank wrecks, etc., was one of the contributing factors that had to be overcome. However, all had to be conquered to supply the line units with the necessary equipment available to complete the Regimental mission.

Forward supply and base dumps were set up. First at the Regimental CP, then smaller dumps were established at points close to the front—many times within 300-600 yards of the actual fighting. This method was intended to keep a fairly steady flow of supplies from the rear to the front.

During the first few days, foot carriers were employed to keep the forward dumps filled, but this method was makeshift at the best. As the tempo of the attack increased, all track vehicles were pressed into a supply service and the carrying parties were then used from the forward dumps to the frontlines.

Thus, by the use of track vehicles and carrying parties, the necessary supplies were kept moving to the fighting men of the Regiment. As the Regiment moved northward, other tactical and logistical problems were met and solved for the successful completion of the Regiment's mission.

Springing in back of the 35th Inf. the Regiment was ordered to follow their advance of 15 March. The movement was hampered and the normal difficulties of movement over Korean roads increased by the necessary moves of the Division artillery units and AAA elements.

The road, Najeong-Don-Posong-ni, was in poor condition—slides, mudholes and detours adding to the difficulties of the Regiment's movement. At this road was the main H-3 axis, the enemy had mined it to a degree that had not been encountered before. One stretch of approximately 25 yards had over 14 mines, some of which were constructed double and/or triple. However, by 1,000 hours most of the Regiment and attached units had closed in to their assigned areas with the CP located in the vicinity of Posong-ni.

Keeping in contact and moving forward 16 March the 1st Bn was ordered to occupy positions south of the 35th Inf. Moving north the Bn took positions 1—See Appendix C-1 (p. 71)
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generally along the line from Hill 570 to Hill 719, closing in at approximately 1500 hours. The 2d and 3d Bns consolidated their positions and dispatched patrols throughout the Regiment's zone of action, contacting the units on the right and left.

With the 37th FA Bn located some distance away from the Bns, it was necessary to provide protection, and, upon orders of the Regimental Commander Company F was moved forward to provide that protection.

A swiftly withdrawing enemy and with the 35th Inf. continuing its advance, the Regiment moved forward on 17 March. The mission was to secure the high ground north of the lateral road along the Idaho Line, and to provide security patrols within the Division Zone.

Moving in the morning 17 March the 2d and 3d Bns, with the Regt'1 CP and Headquarters group, departed the old area at approximately 0800 hours. The road from Paldong-ni to Pungsan-ni had deteriorated so badly during the past several days, that large sections of the road had become all but impassable. This, added to the fact that almost the entire road is one way, made the move both hazardous and slow. The last elements of the Regiment closed in the new area at approximately 1530 hours, a distance of 12 miles taking a little more than eight hours for the move.

The 1st Bn, upon being relieved by the French, joined the Regiment moving into blocking positions just south of the Regt'1 CP.

Continuous patrolling, both motorized and foot, was maintained by all elements of the Regiment throughout the period 18-21 March, with patrols reports submitted hourly to the Regt'1 CP. In addition, recon patrols with the specific mission of finding, checking, and pinpointing all possible routes to and from the sector were dispatched.

In the meantime, those units who were not engaged in patrolling and preparation of positions conducted training, both of the old and new men. Stress was placed upon crew-served weapons, and familiarization firing by as many men as possible on the various weapons used within the BDT was given. Along

1 - See Appendix O-1 (To. 71)
2 - See Appendix O-1 (To. 76)
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with this a program was instituted to allow all key NCO's to become familiar with the adjustments of Hvy Mort and Artillery fire.

The only enemy contact for the period was on 19 March when a small patrol from Co E encountered and engaged an estimated 20-30 enemy. After a brief fire fight in which a number of enemy were killed or wounded, the E Co. Patrol withdrew. Later artillery and air strikes were called for and placed on the area.

The enemy continued to withdraw north and, in order to effectively patrol the Regimental Zone, Co C was ordered to establish an advance patrol base at Changmal. Moving out early the morning of 21 March, C Co with secured units, closed Changmal at approximately 1130 hours—establishing a base and dispatching patrols north to the Texas Line.

Continuing north the following day, 22 March, C Company established positions on the commanding hills in the vicinity of Hill 511. In the meantime, the rest of the 1st Plt, with supporting units, were moved up to Changmal passing through and taking up positions on Hill 425 and the adjacent ridges overlooking the E-W road in the sector.

Shifting and consolidating positions on 23 March, the Hes continued their patrols activities sending contact patrols to the 36th Inf and 27th ROK Regt respectively. No enemy contact was reported for the entire period. The enemy apparently retreated faster that patrols could keep up.

With the displacement forward of the Hes and supporting units the Regiment's front now extended from north of Changmal, south along the Macheon River, to the vicinity of Kandelji. When on 26 March, the Regimental CP, Hq & Hq Co. and Med Co moved forward to the vicinity of Kandelji — placing the Regiment within 20 miles of the march objective, the 35th Parallel.

Reports from higher headquarters and through S-2 showed that the enemy was retreating rapidly northward, breaking off contact immediately when made. In fact, such was the enemy situation, that the troops spoke of the enemy retreat as "Operation Operation Bagun".

1 - See Appendix C-1 (No. 77)
2 - See Appendix C-1 (No. 79)
3 - See Appendix C-1 (No. 77)
4 - See Appendix C-1 (No. 36)
5 - See Appendix C-1 (No. 22)
6 - See Appendix C-1 (No. 75)
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Again the 1st Bn moved north toward Hill 379 on 25 March, and, on the following day, driving ahead, occupied positions on Hill 331. In this move the Bn engaged an estimated force of 23-50 enemy who, under artillery and air strikes, were dispersed.

The remainder of the Regiment moved this same day, 26 March, occupying positions north of Sabang-ni on Hills 295, 300 and 376.

After securing Sabang-ni and the surrounding area, the Regt'1 CP, Hq & Hq Co. and Med Co were ordered forward. Moving out at approximately 0600 hours from Kunsan, the CP, Bn trains, and attached units closed in the vicinity of Sabang-ni at 1100 hours — placing the Regiment 12-14 miles from the 38th Parallel.

The period 27-31 March saw the Regiment engaged in contact patrols with friendly units to the right and left, covering the rear of the 38th Inf. Security and recon patrols were dispatched on a 24-hour basis with hourly reports from each submitted to the Regimental CP.

Then when the weather turned warm and rainy the 1st Bn and separate units were used to keep open the MSR within the Regimental Zone, constructing and repairing so as to keep the flow of equipment and supply constant.

"Operation Ripper" and the month of March had come to an end. Rotation with all its promises was, if not a reality, coming. The Regiment was slowly building up to full strength for the first time since landing in Korea. It had been a tough month — weather, terrain, and enemy did their best, but with the lessons that had been taught and learned the hard way, the officers and men of the Regiment could look back with pride and forward with confidence.

1 - See Appendix B-1 (No. 76)
2 - See Appendix C-1 (No. 84)