Reds Halt Rescue Of Downed Flyer West Of Kumsong

M/Sgt. Ed Waite
WITH U.S. 1ST MAR DIV (Pac. &S) — A Marine Corsair pilot, his plane disabled by enemy fire, bailed out over Communist territory west of Kumsong Sunday and is presumed captured.

The pilot, on a close air mission in support of the 2d Division, was seen parachuting down on the northern slope of "heartbreak ridge" at 2:28 p.m. WITHIN 15 MINUTES, a helicopter, directed to the scene by an Air Force Mosquito, was attempting rescue. The 'copter pilot, Maj. Edward L. Barker, of the Marine Observation Squadron, spotted the downed pilot in a foxhole, pinned down by automatic weapons fire.

Unable to land, the 'copter moved slowly over tree tops while the crewmen, Sgt. W. A. Readington, lowered a rescue slung within reach of the downed pilot. (The pilot was either physically unable to grasp it or refused it because of the heavy enemy fire.

FOUR COMBAT planes from the 1st Marine Air Wing arrived and flew cover while the defenseless helicopter made three more slow passes. A Marine L-19 observation plane circled low, searching the area. On the fourth pass, Barker found the foxhole empty.

The L-19 pilot, Capt. Sam Martin, spotted 30 Reds near where the downed pilot was last seen. Realizing the Reds were trying to lure the 'copter down, Barker and Martin had to abandon further rescue attempts.