

**Looking Back After 50 Years**  
**Korea & The Marines**  
**The Forgotten War, I Still Remember**

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<b>Date of Birth</b>	<b>27 July 1930</b>	<b>Cleveland, Ohio</b>
<b>Korean "Conflict" War ended</b>	<b>27 July 1953</b>	<b>Korea</b>
<b>My First Son Was Born</b>	<b>27 July 1954</b>	<b>Cleveland, Ohio</b>

## CHAPTER ONE

### Pre - Military

My father's name was Mirko Krivo, my mother's name was Helen Balluh Krivo. My sister, Dorothy Krivo Schnur, was two and a half years my senior. My sister and I were depression babies. We never thought we were poor. We always had enough to eat, we celebrated birthdays, and it seemed like we had plenty of gifts at Christmas time. My father was a white collar worker, who took his job as an office manager and accountant very seriously. He was a dedicated employee. My mother was an extremely hard worker also. She had various jobs. My parents were divorced when I was five years old. Later on my Dad married again and we had a new brother, Richard, who was 15 years younger than the two of us.

Having divorced parents meant being shuffled back and forth. I went to six elementary schools, two junior high and two high schools. Among them were John Marshall High and Lincoln High School. I had paper routes, set pins in bowling alleys after school, worked as a glass cutter during the summer months as well as the Shipping Department. I joined the Cub Scouts and when I was 11 ½ became a Boy Scout. I really enjoyed scouting and it came in handy in the Marines. I knew my left from my right! I felt like I had a head start when we had close order drill, camping in the boon-docks, and working as a team. It was amazing how many people had a problem with the above. It was helpful to have any edge. The less the D.I. (Drill Instructor) was in our face the better it would be for us. I definitely saved a few gut shots.

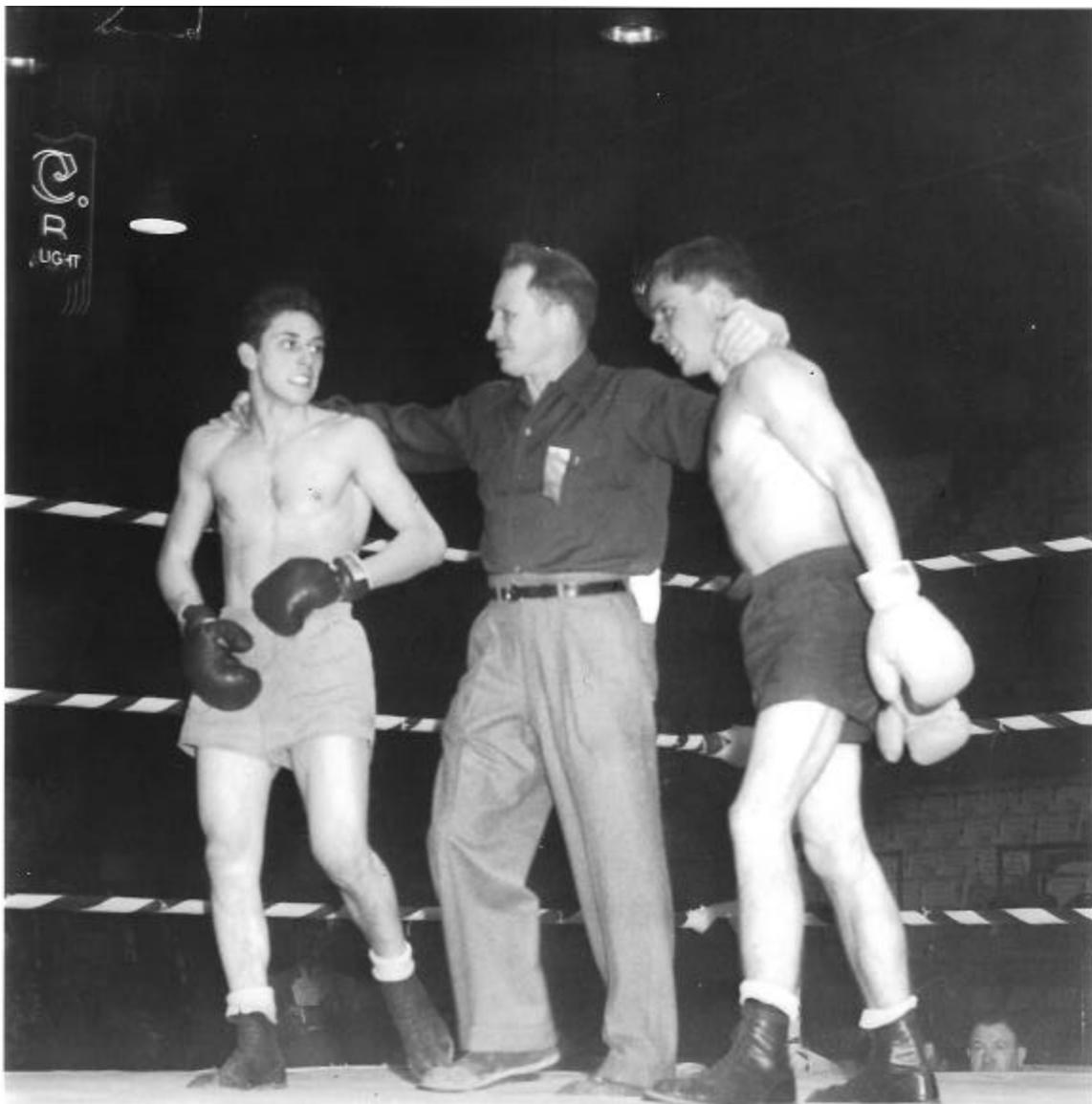
I had an uncle who served with the Marines in the Pacific. Once I saw him with his dress blues on. That's when I knew it was the Marines for me .

After World War II I could not wait to join the Marines. When the war was over I was only 15, but as soon as my 17<sup>th</sup> birthday arrived I pleaded with my father to let me join the Marines. Seeing that graduation was only one year away he said he would let me sign up for the Reserves. So in 1947 I joined the United States Marine Corps Reserve and was honorably discharged in 1949. I never did get that diploma but later in the Marines I received a High School Equivalency Diploma; later I attended the Cooper School of Art under the GI Bill.

When the Korean War broke out in 1950 I tried to join my Reserve unit and was turned down. They said they were only taking NCOs or above at that time. After that I tried to join the regular Marines and was turned down because of allergies.

In January 1951 my cousin, Jim Gordon, said, "Let's go box in the Golden Gloves tournament. You will get your name in the newspaper, and you only have to go three rounds, and anyone can go three rounds." It seems to me we only went to practice twice and before we knew it we were boxing in the Golden Gloves.

However I didn't go home with a title. In fact my cousin and I lost our first bout. Jim fought at 145lbs. welterweight, and I, being a little lighter (135lbs.) I was in the lightweight division. Unfortunately for the two of us both of our opponents went on to win their weight class. Anyway, Jim and I not only had our name in the Cleveland Plain Dealer but I had an extra bonus. William Schaff, my opponent, had our picture taken in action in the ring.



For a short time I worked for Sears as a sales person. I wanted to be in sales if I could not get in the Marines. My dad said, "I don't care what you do for a living, but wear a shirt and a tie to work." That just about fit sales and the Marines.

In August, 1951, I received "Greetings" from my local draft board. I was sure it would be the Army for me. Along with a hundred men or so they distributed a form to fill out. It stated if you had your choice which branch of the armed forces would you choose? The Army, Navy, Marines, or no preference? Certain that everyone would choose the Marines I didn't think I had a chance of getting in. Well, when it was all tallied up, they chose only four men for the Marines. The other choices made by the men were one for the Navy, and one had no preference. Well, I got my wish . . . Diamond "Dice" Economy, who I knew in high school, and myself were chosen for the Marines. We both got our wish. I could hardly contain myself, I was so happy . . . until I got to Boot Camp! Prior to boot camp we were sworn in at a USMC recruiting station in Cleveland, Ohio. We were then given orders to go to boot camp at Paris Island. Prior to leaving, my dad, mother, and a real cute gal that I had met several months ago came to see me off; her name was Ruth Klaehn. Well, the other recruits and I first took a train down through the Midwest to the East Coast and changed trains in Washington, D.C. After several stops on the third day we were finally put on a bus and arrived that evening, August 16, 1951, at Paris Island. It was an uneventful trip until we were awakened about 5:30 a.m. We were all about to lead a totally different life.



## CHAPTER TWO

### Welcome to Paris Island

### Boot Camp, Platoon 356

We would find the difference between military and civilian life quickly, very quickly. The next morning we were formally introduced to our DI. That is a morning I will never forget. He introduced himself and it all went down hill from there. First they shaved us bald, then a cold shower, fumigated with powder for lice, and then we were fitted for uniforms. That's when I realized that the Marines were very special. They did not want you to leave Paris Island unless you looked your absolute best. (The marines had tailors who altered your clothes to make your uniforms fit perfectly.)

Later, after boot camp, we saw Army personnel coming from basic training. Their uniforms just did not fit as well as the Marines -- they looked sloppy.

In the meantime, I could not believe what I had got myself into. Yes, I wanted to be a marine, but at this time it looked like I may have made a huge mistake. When we went to classrooms, all marches were on the double, unlike the Army who specialized in long tedious marches, it seemed like we ran everywhere unless we were in close order drill. All through boot camp we never left the base, in fact we only had one night free when we were able to see a movie on base. It was a Mr. Belvedere movie, a funny movie. Can you imagine watching a funny movie sitting at attention and not laughing? Well, that was the case and we still enjoyed it. It made all of us a little homesick. The next time we were due to see a movie someone screwed up on inspection and the D.I. wouldn't let us go. We were very disappointed but we did learn he meant what he said.

Everyone had to see the dentist. I remember, while in the chair, I let out a very slight moan, barely detectable. I heard the dentist say to me, "Make one more noise and I will really give you something to moan about." It seemed like boot camp would never end.

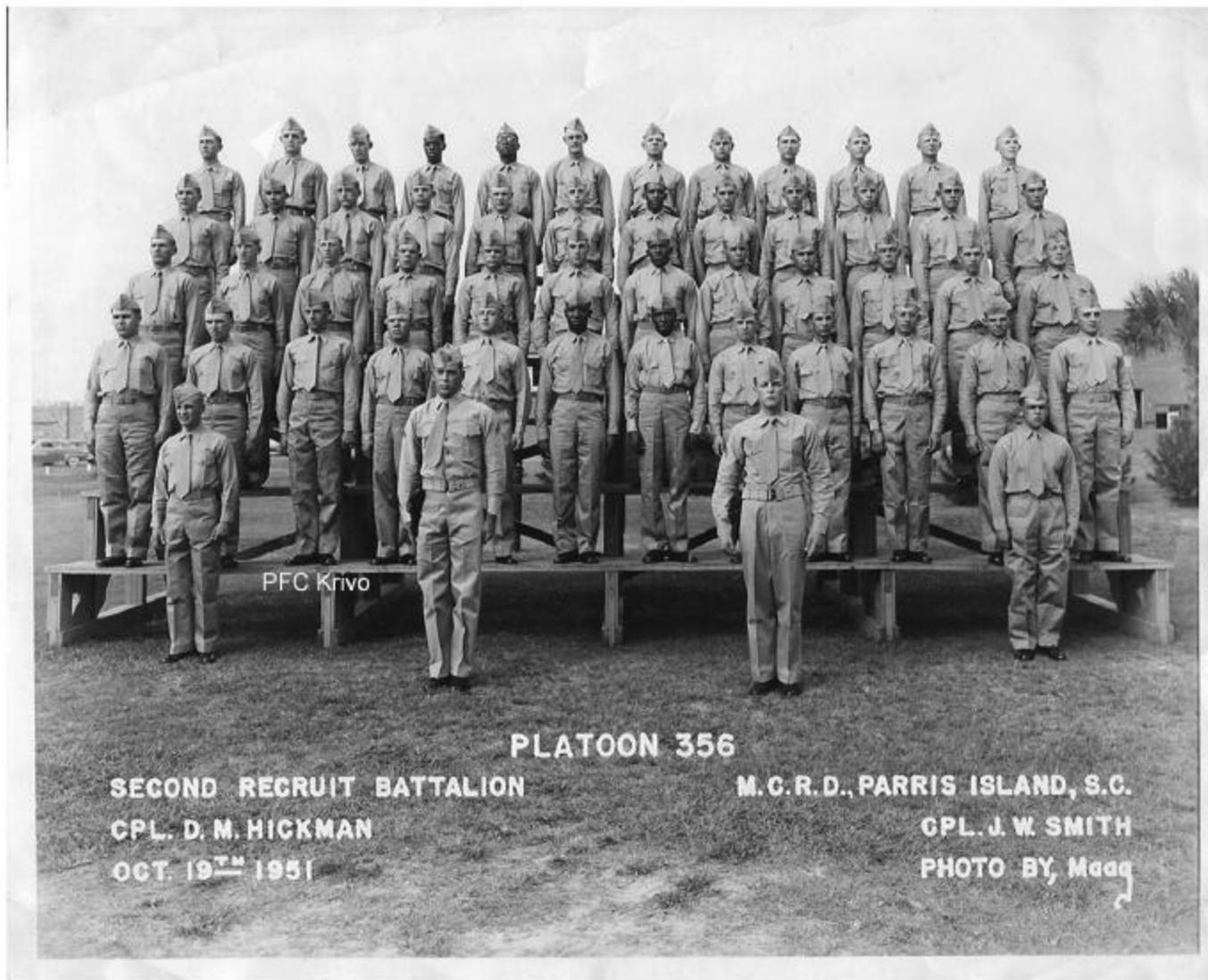
After it was over I looked back and saw what had been accomplished. We were taught to take orders, and could take several hard punches in the stomach from the D.I. while standing at attention. I became a marksman on the rifle range, learned to sing the Marines' hymn at the top of my voice while being gassed, in a closed room, was taught how to run and hit the deck over and over again. We also found out no matter how well we cleaned our rifle, it was the dirtiest one my D.I. had ever seen, that went for the bayonet too.

We were down to our last several weeks. I was on “fire watch duty.” Every marine gets to walk the fire watch. You patrol through the barracks and the head to be certain there is not a fire or anything that could go wrong while the troops were sleeping.

It must have been about 0200 (2 a.m.). While walking through the barracks one of the men on a top bunk started screaming and shaking. I thought he was epileptic because he continued screaming and shaking all over. The DI came racing out. He hollered, “You’re just bluffing.” He immediately grabbed the man’s ankle and began to pull him out of the top bunk. As the DI pulled his ankle he immediately grabbed the bed so he would not fall. I couldn’t believe that the DI jumped up from a sound sleep and, in less than 10 seconds, he had the situation totally figured out. He knew the marine was faking or he would have fallen on his head. The DI brought him up on charges and he did not graduate with us, maybe not at all.

When it was all over and I got out of boot camp I was no longer a “pissy ass civilian.” I was now a Marine and very proud. I was then assigned to 0300, which I soon found out was the infantry. During boot camp we were asked what our choice of duty would be when we graduated. My choice of duty was to be a sea-going marine. I was told I would have to serve in the Fleet Marine Force, FMF. (I didn’t know it at the time but 0300 was the FMF). My second choice was Supply. I found out most people got what they asked for. Unfortunately, I got what I asked for but did not know what I was asking for. About a year later I had an opportunity to read through my papers and learned that I was “adamant” about the FMF and 0300 were the same thing. .... It wasn’t long before I had total respect for anyone who had an MOS 0300 number. One motivating factor was that if the people who graduated from boot camp before me and, if I were just average, I would make it through too. There were times I had my doubts.





PFC Krivo

**PLATOON 356**

**SECOND RECRUIT BATTALION**  
**CPL. D. M. HICKMAN**  
**OCT. 19<sup>TH</sup> 1951**

**M.C.R.D., PARRIS ISLAND, S.C.**  
**CPL. J. W. SMITH**  
**PHOTO BY, Meag**



GRADUTATION DAY  
OCTOBER 19, 1951

## CHAPTER THREE

### Boot Camp Is Over! Ten Days of Liberty!

#### Private First Class Krivo

I could not get home and to Cleveland fast enough. I had a great time, visited with Mom and Dad, but mostly with Ruth. My folks wrote frequently but Ruth wrote every day, and I wrote Ruth almost every day. When my ten days leave first started it seemed like it would last a long time, but the time flew by. As everyone knows there is a lot of swearing going on in the marines. We all had wondered how we would control it when we were back with civilians. I was doing very well until one day, while Ruth was in the car with me, another car cut me off. I let out a string of cuss words that even a marine would blush. Till this day, I never swear in front of Ruth. It was great seeing old friends. Each evening was better than the last. To say I was proud to be a Marine was an understatement. I was able to see my relatives, go to church with my Dad and Ruth, visit friends, and do a little (LOT) of partying, and before I knew it was time to go back. Time has never passed so quickly.



## CHAPTER F O U R

### Advance Training

### Camp Pendleton

### Oceanside, Southern California

We fired an assortment of weapons, carbines, B.A.R. (Browning Automatic Rifle), M1s and the 45 pistols, in which we were able to become quite proficient. We tossed hand grenades, crawled under live machine gun fire, and through barbed wire, we threw our bodies on top of concertina wire and, most of all, learned to keep our asses down!

When we first arrived at Camp Pendleton, Oceanside, California, it seemed like a vacation after boot camp. Twice we were supposed to go up to Big Bear Mountain for cold weather training but the weather was so bad we only got halfway up the mountain and had to turn back. By living in Cleveland all my life and dealing with bad weather every winter, it was not a surprise to me; however, we had people that had never seen snow in their entire life and this could be a problem for them, especially the winter. (Korea had one of their most brutal winters the year before.)

We were able to have a few weekends off and go to the numerous towns around Camp Pendleton, including Tijuana, Mexico, San Diego, Las Angeles and Oceanside, California. It seemed like we never had any money. No wonder, we were just getting over \$75.00 per month! I remember sleeping in an all-night movie to save on a hotel bill and cleaning up at the U.S.O. This was always was a good time to write to Ruth, Mom and Dad. Unfortunately, they cleared the movie out by 5 a.m. Anyway, I was able to save \$5.00 and get Ruth's name tattooed on my left forearm.

Near the end of advance training, we didn't know how it happened -- we must have been brainwashed, but we were ready for Korea.



## ADVANCE TRAINING



## ADVANCE TRAINING

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Last Leave Before Korea

We were given seven days' leave. This meant we would be home for New Year's Eve. I went home by bus, changing Greyhounds from the west coast at Toledo, and the weather started sleeting and snowing. There were two busses going to Cleveland. Everyone was shoving and pushing to get on the bus. The driver said not to panic that both busses would leave about the same time. Well I took the second bus. About an hour later in the bus that had left earlier the driver lost control and the bus was lying on its side. Our bus kept on going to Cleveland. My Mom and Dad saved money for me to fly back to California. I could spend a little more time at home. (They knew I would be leaving for Korea when I got back to California.) I really appreciated this plus Ruth and I were able to spend a little more time together. Again, we all had a wonderful time and the time went so awfully fast. She continued to write daily and sent some great pictures of herself.

When I got back to Camp Pendleton we had orders to move out in a few days to Korea but on the last night most of us went on liberty. Yes, we all drank too much. When I got in it was 15 minutes to reveille. I jumped up on to a top bunk, with my uniform still on and I went to sleep. The next thing I knew this marine was shaking me to get up (it was his job to see that everyone was awake and ready to go to the mess hall). I felt and my clothes were already on and so I could sleep another five minutes. He started shaking me again. Half asleep, I turned in the bed and kicked him in the shoulders and he went stumbling back and into the other bunks. He ran and got the Sergeant. I jumped out of bed as soon as the Sergeant came running in. Because we were preparing to leave for Korea, he said "Report to me aboard ship. I will deal with you then."



My Grandmother



My Father

## CHRISTMAS LEAVE 1951



Ruth Klaehn

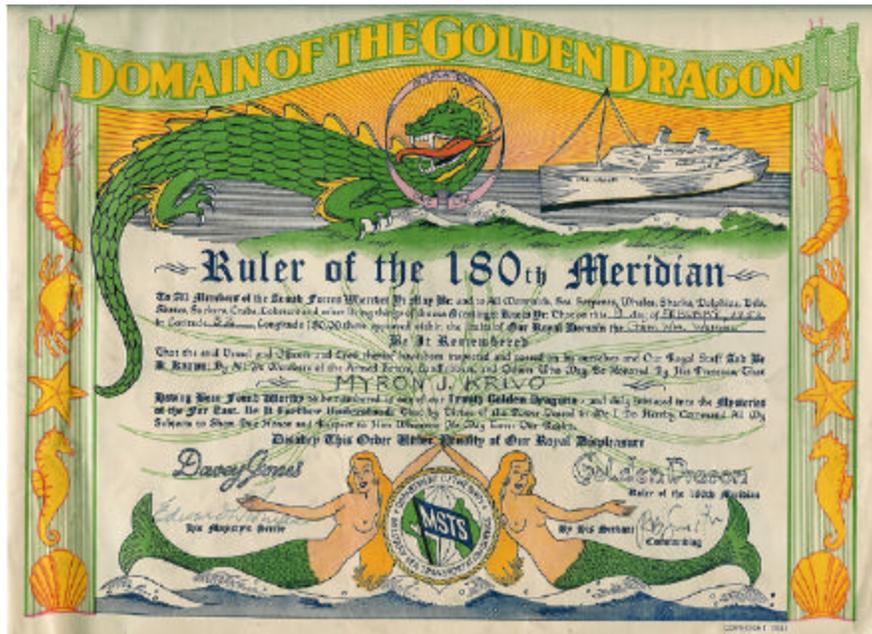


Ruth Klaehn

## CHAPTER SIX

### Transport Ship Wm. S. Wiegel to Kobe, Japan

As soon as we all got back from our seven-day leave we started packing again. We would be part of the 17<sup>th</sup> draft on board the Wm. S. Wiegel; a well-traveled troop ship. The only thing that was worse than the quarters was the food, (now I know why they call it a mess hall! It was awful! It didn't take me long to find that marines may be the best trained, but there was a lot to be desired from the mess hall. It was not gourmet cooking by a long shot. I shouldn't complain; I had not had "C-rations" yet. I believe it took 13 days from California to Kobe. I still remember crossing the International Date Line. We were all given a certificate, and to this day I still have the document.



On our first night out I reported to the Sergeant who told me to stand fire watch at the bow of the ship. It sure taught me a lesson because, as you may know, the bow of a ship dips with every wave. It didn't take too long before I was seasick. We finally docked at Kobe and it was to be our last night ashore before going to Korea. I can still hear Nat King Cole singing "Mona Lisa" through the loudspeakers in the middle of the street. Again this would be our last night out. We went to one of the local bars, and there were many to choose from. Several marines and I picked one and started drinking sake. After about an hour we thought that the drinks might be watered down since no one had a "buzz". We decided to leave and, as we walked out of the bar, everyone fell to the deck, every one. It was over 30 years before I drank sake again. I started my Korean tour with a major hangover.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### The Big Show

Korea 17<sup>th</sup> Draft

*Location: Eastern Asia, the southern half of the Korean Peninsula bordering the Sea of Japan and the Yellow Sea.*

*Climate: Temperate, with rainfall heavier in the summer than the winter. Known to have severe WINTERS.*

*About the size of Indiana.*



This is what we have been waiting for. We will soon find out how much attention we paid in the last six months. Will we be Marines or “wanabees”? We would soon find out. We landed in Korea, and it seemed to me that we had to stay behind the lines at least 48 hours.

We were put in tents in a place they called Camp Muddy. It was a great name because it was snow that had turned into mud. If you tried to go from

one tent to another you almost lost your boots; the mud would form a suction and your feet would want to come out of the boots. What we saw next was incredible.

There wasn't enough action for some people. Two guys were horsing around and playing cowboy. They drew on each other; and one accidentally shot the other in the hip. There was a lot of confusion. They took one to Sick Bay and that's the last time I ever saw either one of them. A few months later we were ordered not to carry any personal weapons, only Marine Corps issue; I am sure that incident had a lot to do with it. You would find it hard to believe how many "accidental" discharges, there were.

About that time we were issued brand spanking new boots. They called them "Mickey Mouse Boots". I didn't care what they called them, after what we heard about frostbite from the shoepacks, even before we entered Korea. We understood that the Navy designed these special boots for the Marines. We were told you could sweat a cup of water a day. That sounded great to me! I always felt if your feet were warm, you would be warm all over. We heard that Army personnel would buy these boots for 100 hundred dollars.

That's pretty good when your pay was only \$75 per month. I did not hear of any takers. The Marines kept their boots.

In Paris Island and again in advanced training we had to learn how to make your knapsack and blanket roll meticulously. Many hours were spent on it. In Korea they gave you a pack board and a waterproof bag, about the size of a sea bag. We tossed all our gear in, tied it to a pack board. This was easy and worked out fine. I had always wondered why we spent so much time packing the knapsack. It was great to keep us occupied in the Boy Scouts but we're passed all that by now.

My mail caught up with me; Ruth was still writing every day, she also sent some great pictures and everyone said she was beautiful. I thought so too.



(I carried this photo all through Korea)

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### Eastern Korea Mountain Ranges

At dusk we were told to saddle up, make sure we had everything we needed, especially all our warm clothes, extra socks, M-1 rifle, bandoleers, hand grenades, and whatever else we could think of. I took my camera.

About this time it was getting quite dark, and we started a combination climbing/walking up the mountain. It was getting darker. You could barely see the person in front of you. I'm not sure how long it took to get to the top of the mountain. It must have been a couple of hours and we were winded, because we'd had no exercise since we left California. People were falling, dropping their gear and not retrieving it. What a mess! I, caught a canteen, and when we reached the top of the hill I shouted "Whose canteen is this?" No one answered. I thought how could anyone lose a canteen and not claim it. . . ?

I was about to get a new address: Fox Company, Second Battalion, Fifth Marines, First Division. I didn't know it at the time, but found out later that I was with one of the finest group of fighting Marines. They really had one of the greatest histories in the Corps., F-2-5- 1<sup>st</sup> Division.

Well, we finally made it to our bunkers and were told we would be on 100% watch. That meant we would stay up all night. One thing I could never get used to, 50 and 100% watch, we could live 33 1/3. We were all so tired and we were not able to sleep during the day, but somehow we got used to it. About that time we were introduced to C-Rations. They were terrible; I couldn't believe the U.S. was paying good money for these canned food products. After a while there were only two things I could eat, sausage patties and beans & franks. However, there was one favorite, the Chocolate Disc. We would break it up, add hot water to it from a sterno stove, and make the absolute best hot chocolate you ever had, especially on cold days.

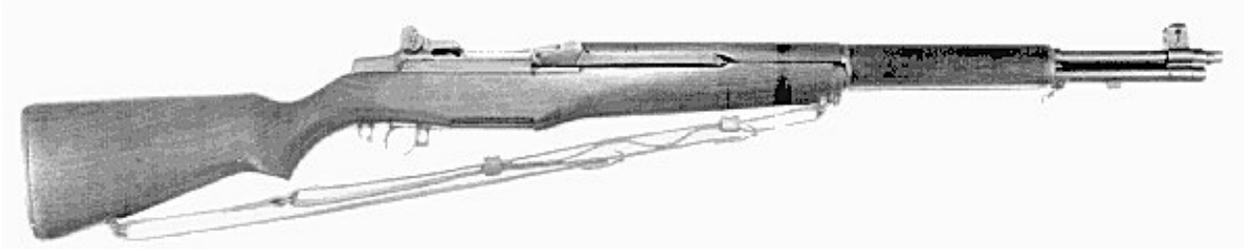
That's when I met Private Mike Shyberg. He carried a B.A.R.. This guy looked like a poster boy for the Marines. When we first met I didn't know anyone. Mike took me under his wing and made me feel like one of the guys. Today we are still the best of friends. At the same time I met Cpl. Kurkendaw. We were all on the same fire team (four men made up a fire team with a corporal. in charge: two riflemen, one assistant BAR man and a BAR man.) As much as I liked Mike, I detested Kurkendaw. He let that extra stripe go to his head. When Mike went Stateside the first thing I asked for was the BAR. I am sure many of the guys thought that I was crazy wanting to carry that heavy weapon. At the time my weight was about 145 lbs. The BAR was 18.5 lbs. with ammunition and with the bipod came to forty pounds. Also there were times when we would carry bandoleers, hand grenades, plus a full pack. It was not unusual to be carrying almost half my

weight in gear, but when the “shit hit the fan“ everyone wanted a Browning Automatic Rifle.

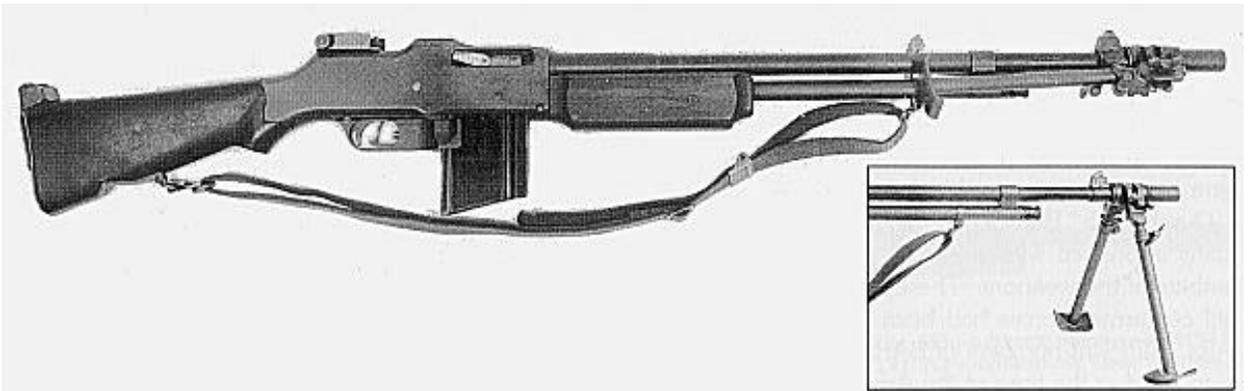
*This is one of the many reasons we felt the Corps does a better job in combat than the Army. The Army infantry squad of nine men was tactically organized around a single BAR. The Marine squad of 13 men was organized around three fire teams, each organized around a BAR. The much greater firepower of a Marine platoon with its nine BARs over the Army platoon with its four BARs was a great combat advantage.*



# WEAPONS USED IN THE KOREAN WAR



**US Rifle Caliber .30 M1 Garand**



**M1918A2 BAR (Browning Automatic Rifle)**



**M1A1 Thompson Submachine Gun with 30 Round Magazine**



**PPSh 41 - 7.62mm Soviet Submachine Gun (Chinese Burp Gun)**

## CHAPTER NINE

### The Front Lines

We had the KMC (Korean Marine Corps) to the left of us, and facing us on the next mountain was the North Korean Army. You could see the enemy from our bunkers, running through trenches and bunkers. A guess would be 1,000 to 2,000 yards from our position.

In the meantime, for three or four days they brought an MI tank up the mountain; we could hardly believe our eyes. This huge tank sitting on top of the mountain. It sat for almost two days when eventually we saw three North Koreans running like hell through the trench on their way into a cave. I had heard that an MI tank can hit any target within three rounds, they made a believer out of me. All of a sudden the tank fired a round at three North Koreans and missed, fired another round that just missed, and the third round followed the enemy right into the cave. We did not see any movement of any kind after that. It was great for the morale. In the meantime that was the fastest we had ever seen a tank move. We also had the Navy firing over our heads hitting targets in front of us. We were told that the small rounds were the price of Chevy's and the bigger ones would cost as much as Cadillacs. We wished they would shoot off few less rounds and give us a new Cadillac when we got home. I am still waiting.



It was getting to be March and we were ordered to come down from the hill and get some fresh clothes and TAKE A SHOWER. They did not ask us twice, we were definitely ready!

As we mentioned, we were on the east coast and so we packed our gear and would then be headed for the west coast. Instead of mountains we would be heading for rolling hills and flat land. On our trip to the east we were taken on 6-by trucks. This was not first class -- it had no class! It was one of the most uncomfortable rides I had ever had. We were really squeezed in. We could hardly wait to get to our destination. The good news is a Red Cross truck served us doughnuts and coffee. I could not believe it, it really hit the spot. It almost felt like we were having doughnuts at the local coffee shop, unfortunately, that moment only lasted until we finished our coffee and we were back on the 6-bys, heading west.

## CHAPTER TEN

### The Outpost War

#### 38th Parallel

#### No Fire Zone

This was totally different from the east coast. The season started changing. Instead of high mountains, we had rolling hills. Instead of snow and cold, we had Spring, and rain, and warmer weather. It was great shedding some of the layers of clothing that almost became a part of you.

Once we got settled it was not all that bad. We were in bunkers close to the 38th parallel. We ate C-rations or walked about two miles to a temporary mess hall, once in a while we would hop a ride on a jeep. Except for occasional patrols we were not over-worked at all.



I was in a card game one day and was having great luck. It was so good. I won a 38 Combat Master Piece , it was a great pistol. An idle Marine is not a good Marine, I am sure that's what officers thought. Every few days we would go out looking for trouble on the 38th parallel. It was almost comical. If we were not playing for keeps, we would be in a no fire zone and then a half-mile or so we would go out and look for Communist Chinese.

Usually we would go early in the morning and look for the enemy returning from harassing our bunkers. One particular morning as we got ready to go on patrol, we were told that we should turn in all hand guns or private weapons that were not issued to us (my pistol fit that description) so before leaving on patrol I packed up my pistol, put Cosmoline on it and wrapped it up with a piece of cloth after taking the bullets out and turned my weapon in.

As we started out on patrol two people were assigned to go with us, a Lieutenant and the other was a Sergeant. We were not sure but we think they were on recon, they were definitely green. We had 15 men on patrol, including the recon people. I was near the end of the column. However we could hear Sergeant Shipley, our squad leader, asking the Lt. and the other sergeant not to take the point. The Lt. said "I am in charge, if I want to take the point, I will take the point."



We were surrounded by rolling hills at that time. I was just at the top of a small hill and the marine at point was just going over the next hill right in front of us. As soon as they crossed the hill machine gun fire broke out to my right, two or three hundred yards from where I stood. I immediately hit the deck. I saw exactly where they were shooting from. I took the BAR, put the enemy in my sights but the BAR would not fire. I must have got dirt in it when I hit the deck. Somehow I was the only one who actually saw where the Chinese were shooting from. I tried to get the weapon to fire again. My pistol had been turned in before I left on patrol. One of the guys had a small oil can, I squeezed it over the BAR, which loosened it up and I began firing in the direction where the shots were coming from. The Chinese did not return fire; they must have moved out. At the same time the point went over the next hill and a firefight broke out. Sgt. Shipley started to call for more marines to help him go back over the top and rescue the Lt. and Sgt.

By the time we got over the hill they were gone. We looked all over the area and didn't see them.

As any Marine knows we don't leave our wounded, dead or missing. We searched and searched and we were unable to find any trace of the men. After 45 minutes or so we went back to the no fire zone. The Captain was livid; he sent us back out there with more men and we must have searched for another two hours, with no luck. Moral of the story, don't try to do something that someone can do better, or let the point man do what he was trained to do. Korea was no place to have your ego get in the way of common sense. We continued to go on patrols looking for trouble; if we couldn't find it, the enemy would. We preferred to find the Chinese. Quite a few times we walked through the no fire zone close to Panmunjom. One afternoon we saw Army Military Police guarding an entrance to Panmunjom,. It was a real dichotomy, the MPs guarding the entrance, as if they were about to march in a parade, it was almost comical. On the other hand we were going on patrol, to actually do combat with the enemy less than a mile away. That particular day, we went several miles into No Man's Land and we were just about to start back into the no fire zone. We started to cross an open field when the enemy began to lob mortars into the open field that was our escape route. The sergeant told us to run and weave, hit the deck every 20 paces, and not to take the exact same path that the Marine in front of you took. It worked; not one casualty! On the way back passing the gates at Panmunjom, one of the Marines started barking like a dog, the Lt. called out and said "Stop barking at the doggies" and, of course, as that was hollered out, every Marine shouted to the man behind him, "Stop barking at the doggies." You had to be there. It was really funny and took our minds off how close those mortars came to us. We also learned that to be hit by a mortar round is difficult. If you don't stand up, the only way you can get hit is by a direct hit, if you are lying down. That was good information that helped me later throughout Korea.

When we got back to our bunkers we found a stream of water coming out of the hill. We went to get our canteens and when we got back the Lt. shouted not to drink that water as it is coming from the head (toilet). From that time on, I always drank approved water that they said was OK. On one of the hottest days we were issued flack jackets (bulletproof vests). It was great protection but because of the heat many men walked with them open. I later found out this was not a good idea. I know of one marine who was on point. The enemy jumped up and shot him with a "Burp Gun"; two bullets entered his stomach, went through his stomach and hit the back of the vest, and started coming back out. Two bullets, four wounds. After that I kept my jacket closed. (*Check Cleveland newspaper article on bulletproof vests*)

We rotated with other squads continually and went on patrols. One evening, just as it was getting dark, we went on our first night patrol. We had a few "guests" with us but at this time I cannot remember who they were. This was one of the darkest nights that I could remember. This time I was at the rear of the column with my BAR. It seemed we had walked four

or five miles when the Lt. quietly, almost in a whisper, said, "Spread out. Don't make a sound and let's wait for the enemy." We must have waited close to two hours; I have never seen Marines this quiet for so long a period. I really couldn't hear a sound. All of a sudden, I found out later, this Marine is looking eyeball to eyeball with a "gook". They both started firing, then everyone was shooting, and hand grenades were flying. The Lt. hollered, "Shag ass!!!" The bad news was I arrived in holding up the rear and that meant I would be the last man out. It seemed forever before every- one got out of there. My Sergeant, my asst. BAR man and I personally counted everyone before we started to return gunfire at the enemy. It was amazing; we did not lose one marine. We will never know what losses the enemy took, if any. I would find it hard to believe they went totally unscathed.

After that we spent some time in the rear digging what was going to be the Kansas Line. If the Chinese should break through the front lines, we would have a retreat position. I did not believe they were serious about this. We felt they wanted to keep us busy, plus the Army started it before we got there. We couldn't believe that a Marine would have conceived this. We are not trained to go backwards -- we were trained to always go forward. It was times like these that the value of boot camp experiences and advance training paid off. You don't realize how much you have learned until a situation comes up that you haven't discussed or simulated prior to coming Korea. Sure there will be some surprises but looking back we were well trained.

After we got new skivvies we went further back to the rear "to crap out" and take it easy and we received our beer ration. When I first got to Korea we would get beer to the front lines. Then they found out that some guys would hoard them, saved them up, get drunk, and pass out. That was the end of the beer ration in a combat zone. However they did take good care of us in reserve. Our Lt. even threw his bottle of whiskey in along with our Japanese Asahi beer. While most everyone was having a rowdy evening, Kurkendaw and I met out back of the tents. He was all talk, and the stripe did not hold any special value that night. Every time we would meet after that he would never look me in the eye. Later, I found out what he was made of. Before we left the reserve area he wanted get out of our unit to go to a non-combatant unit. He had some lame excuse about stomach pains. The corpsman sent him to sick bay; we never saw Kurkendaw again.

Our new Lt. called an inspection. "We will be having an inspection. The Captain and the Major will be joining me. You have 15 minutes to prepare. Don't let me down." The inspection was almost over when the Major stopped behind me and said "What's this? There was a small utility bag attached to my duty belt that had a camera in it. I replied, "A camera, sir." "Do you want to take pictures of dead marines?" I answered, "No, sir!" The new Lt. immediately took notes on the incident. I found myself digging a hole for a new head while the rest of my outfit were in the tents enjoying their beer ration.

One of the funniest things that happened while we were in reserve was in the outdoors head. I'm just guessing, but it seemed to me that this head was approximately 4 x 10 ft. It was all dug out and a wooden frame was put around two rows of four toilet seats. Each day they would throw gasoline in the hole and then light it to make it as sanitary as possible. He didn't have his matches with him. to start the fire. After closing all the toilet seats he went to get some matches to start the fire. While looking for matches, another marine opened the toilet seat, sat down, and had a cigarette. When he dropped it between his legs there was an explosion; it blew him right off the seat. He had no idea what happened! Everyone else could not stop laughing.



(Tom Lauria and I in the Reserve Area)

Before we knew it we were ready to leave the reserve area. The night before we left Sgt Shipley had a meeting with his squad, alerting us that this assignment was not going to be a picnic. He told us to load up on bandoliers and hand grenades. This could be a real mess. We were going to Outpost Yoke. At the time it didn't mean much to any of us, but ended up being a hill that we would not soon forget. Just as the Sgt. was finishing our meeting a drunken corpsman came stumbling in (I have always had the greatest respect for all corpsmen. This guy was worthless). "Hey, Shipley, quit snowing the troops. It can't be that bad. You just like to hear yourself talk." At that point I said "Why don't you get the hell out of here?" Barely were the words out of my mouth when the sucker punched me. He hit me right in the mouth. I leaped on him, took him to the ground, and started to punch him. It took four or five men to get me off of him.

What was so irritating to me was that Shipley was one of the finest men I knew, and, for this guy to harass him, was more than I could stomach.

Eventually I lost my front tooth.



## BUILDING BUNKERS



Nothing like home cookin'



Mike Schyberg



Mike and I



Frank Lipp



NEAR THE 38TH PARALLEL



Johnny, Ron, and John Shirv (my asst. BAR man)



Ron Taking a Break

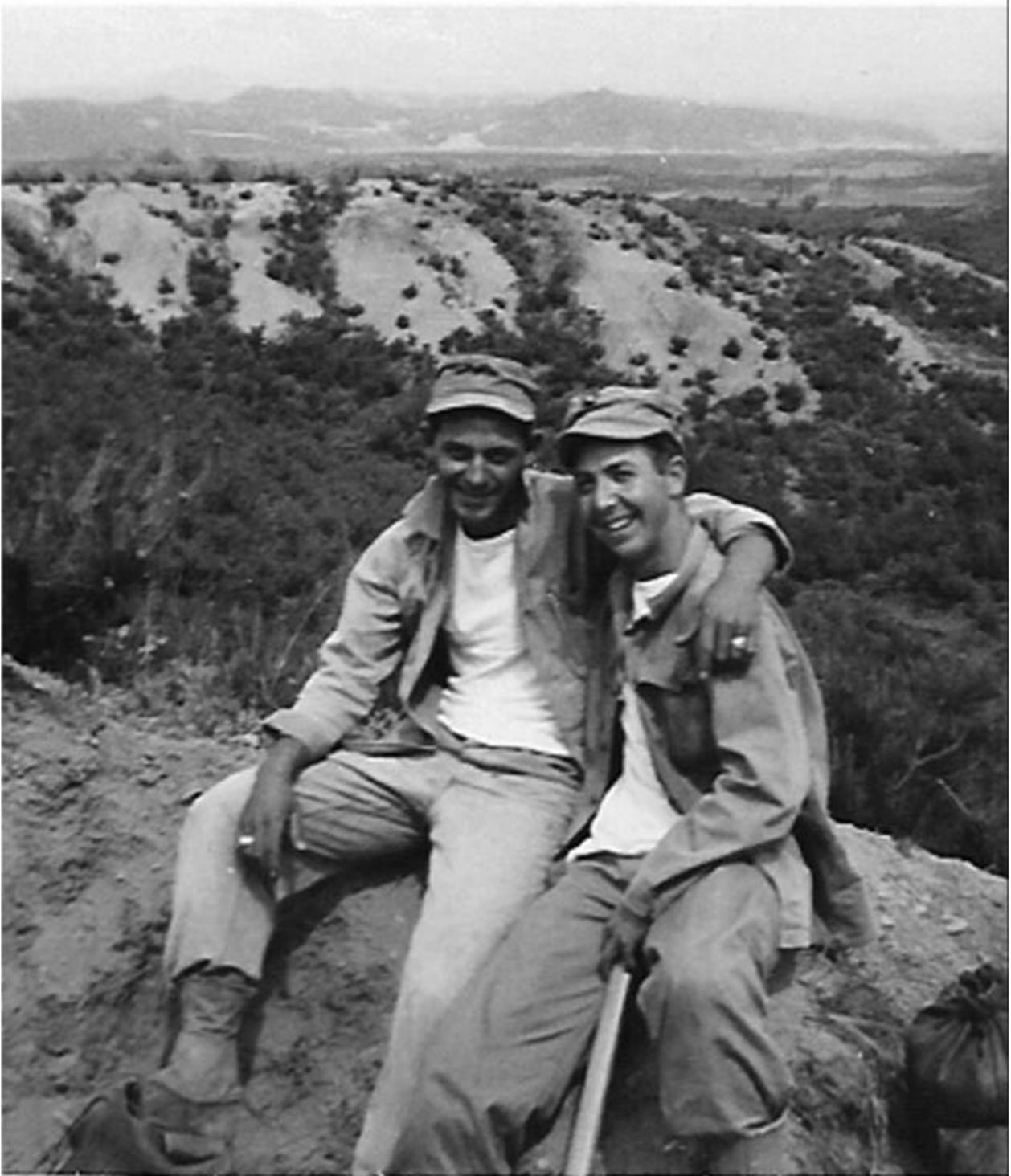


Ron with Pick Ax



Ron and Sgt. Shipley

## DIGGING FOX HOLES AND BUNKERS ON THE KANSAS LINE



TWO GOOD FREINDS FROM CLEVELAND  
(TOM LAURIA AND I)



Mike Schyberg

RELAXING IN OUR "SKIVVIES"



Imjin River

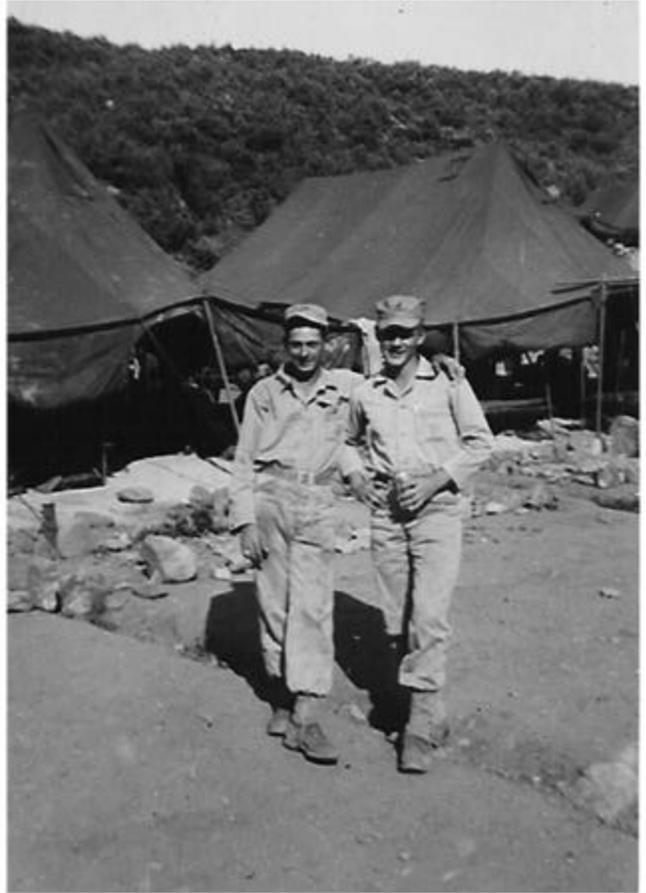


R & R at Imjin River





Ron Gaurding a Beer



Ron and Floyd (KIA)



Ron and Frank Lipp (WIA)



Frank and Johnny Lawrence (KIA)

## MY BUDDIES AND I IN THE RESERVE AREA

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### Outpost Yoke

The first day or two were very quiet on OP Yoke. We were on a hill that had a trench around the circumference with another trench cutting through to join the main trench. About the third day the Chinese started firing a few mortar rounds each day. It wasn't long before we could not use the head on the reverse slope. As soon as someone sat on the head, almost immediately we would get incoming shells, totally zeroing in to the head. That was a mess; not to mention you had to run for your life. After a while they would send in 10 to 20 rounds every afternoon. We were sure that it was just to make us uneasy, jumpy, and to agitate us. It worked. Again we were told to lie down; it is almost impossible to be hit if you're on your stomach lying down. In addition we had bunkers, flak jackets on and the front of the jackets were CLOSED.

It was not unusual that when mortar rounds hit the ground, they would actually lift us off the ground. However, a haunting eerie whistle always preceded them, which was a warning to hit the deck. When the Chinese stopped firing the mortars, the South Koreans would try to run supplies up the hill. More often than not they would get them partway up the hill and dump them, and shag ass back to the rear. We would have to go down the rest of the way and bring back what they left behind.

In spite of this we had to shave every day, they said the Captain would be here for inspection. That got old after a while. We knew he would never come up that hill. I am not saying that he was afraid but there was no need to come up to that outpost. It did keep us squared away, we did look like Marines and we still had the pride that separated us from any other branch of the service . . . .and the Captain just might come to visit us.

It was late afternoon when we were ordered to come off the hill. Marines do not leave anyone behind, wounded, dead or missing. We were ready to leave that outpost. That was the good news. The bad news was we could not find two men. They just happened to be guys that had just joined us in the reserve area. Since we could not find them we had to stay on the outpost.



Photograph of Outpost Yoke circa 1990



Photograph of Outpost Yoke taken by me in 1951

The Chinese continued sending mortars throughout the night. The next thing we knew and we could hardly believe it, the two that we were searching for took off through the escape route. While we stayed all night suffering through mortar attacks all night long. Needless to say leaders kept them away as far as possible from the rest of squad. We never saw them again.

We had a couple of days break in the rear and because the mortars were so intense they had to switch us with another squad. It was great. We were able to take a few days off. Open some mail and packages from home plus I would always get a slew of mail from Ruth. This time she sent me a few pictures of her and every time I showed those pictures of her she was the best looking one, hands down!

While we had that short break one of the things that really amazed me was to watch a marine lying down with a 50 cal. machine gun, sniper scope, just waiting looking for the enemy to cross through his scope. He would fire just one round; he did not miss very often and usually it was a head shot.



**Browning M2 .50 caliber MG**

Before we knew it we were back on OP Yoke. The mortar fire got more intense. They must have known we were back on the hill; it seemed like we had never left. The Chinese started to come part way up the hill, cutting the wire to disarm the mines. Many times they were chanting "Marines tonight you die, Marines tonight you die."

We were very proud of the fact that we were not trigger happy. We did not fire unless we saw or heard someone. That night I heard someone about 30 yards down the hill, I pulled the pin on my hand grenade was ready to throw it, but after that we didn't hear a sound. We were on full alert that night, I decided to hold on to it until the noise was heard again. As the evening passed we were all getting drowsy. All of a sudden I was startled. About 40 yards off to my left the enemy tripped a mine; then another Chinese went to help the first. He tripped another mine. They were all screaming and groaning. The marines were clapping and cheering, and I was so excited I almost dropped the grenade. The grenade!!! I heard it "POP", I could not get rid of it soon enough -- I tossed it down the hill.

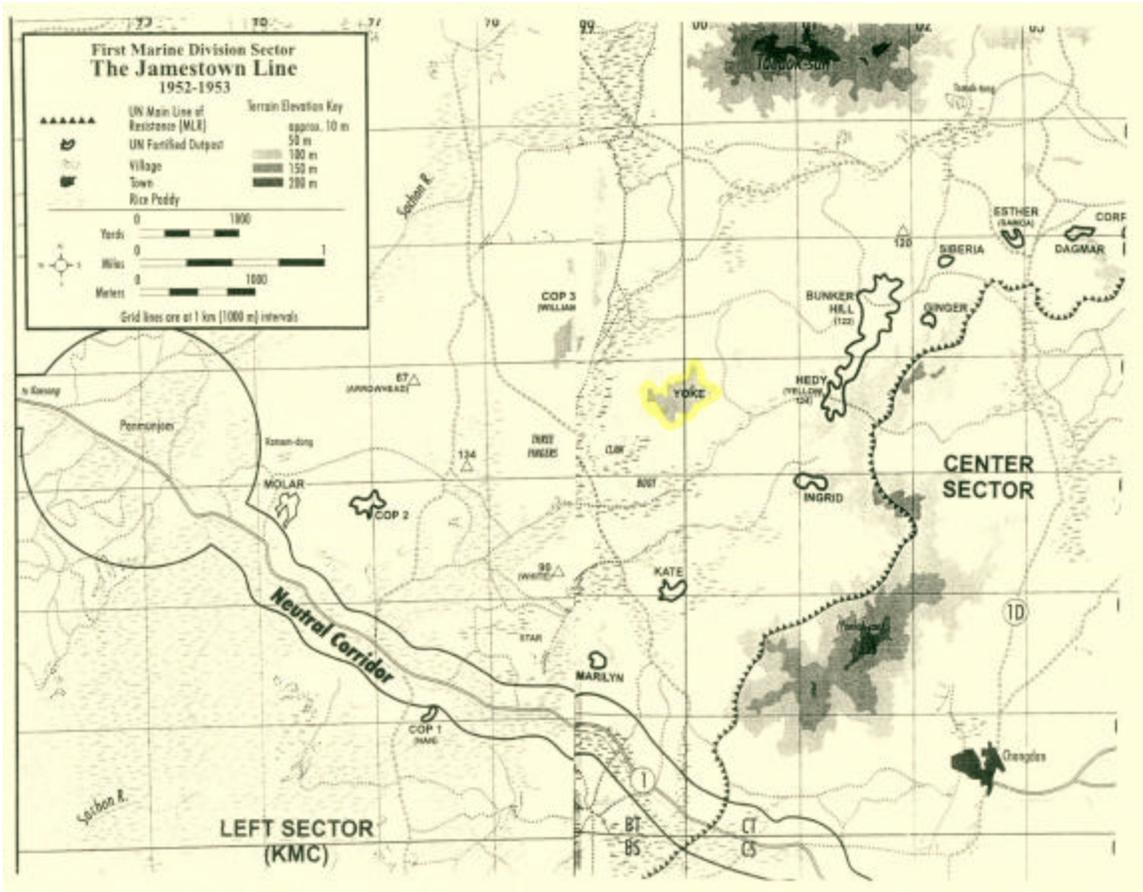
The next several days it was back to normal, the enemy kept harassing us and dropping mortars on our positions. What happened later that

day still makes me sick every time I think of it. While we were taking incoming, Sgt. Shipley got hit with a mortar round. He took a lot of shrapnel and we took him back to the lines. I was one of the four stretcher bearers. I can't begin to tell you how heavy that stretcher was and Shipley was not that big of a guy. Halfway down the hill the South Koreans took over and carried Shipley the rest of the way down the hill. About an hour or so later we heard that Shipley would be OK. I was thrilled, I got his address and wrote his mother about what a great guy he is and how he would be in great shape soon. The following day we found out he was KIA, killed in action. The mail unfortunately had already been picked up. That was the last letter I have ever written to someone's mother. It was a real tough one.

One of the great morale boosters was when we had an air strike with three marine Corsairs attacking a hill right in front of OP Yoke. The Corsairs were shooting up that hill pretty good and they were dropping 500 pound bombs, spraying them with 50 caliber machine gun fire. They made several passes. They were a terrific morale booster. As we looked back the Corsairs knew what was about to happen!) They were starting to soften the enemy. As the Corsairs were about to leave there was one machine gun that continued firing at the aircraft, it appeared they were ready to leave. We were cheering them on. We started pointing at the Chinese when one Corsair broke formation and circled back. He almost hit the treetops he was so close to the ground. He came in firing those 50 calibers right at the machine gunners' emplacement, plus he dropped two 500 lb. bombs right on the enemy. We started cheering and laughing, it was an awesome sight to see. That meant that there would be few less enemies that would come and visit us.



We continued to take round after round of mortar fire. We were on our bellies most of the time, rarely did we sit in the bunkers, and they continued to keep us pinned down. We thought for sure they would try to charge and overrun our position. They never came. It was getting so hairy up there that they sent us back to Reserve again. We were sent back to the rear because it was so rough on Yoke. We came off the outpost late that evening so the enemy would not know we had been relieved. We went back to the front lines, which were a lot safer than the outposts and had to stand on alert watch when we got back. I was so tired I could hardly keep my eyes open.



That afternoon my mail caught up with me with some great letters from Ruth, and a package from my grandmother and my aunt. What a great surprise! It was loaded with goodies and I shared some with my friends. Just about that time the Sergeant ordered me to take a fire team and two communications people up to Yoke. I couldn't believe it. I had just started to open my package and back to the outpost. The sergeant said "You'll only be there a couple of hours." I told my friends to hang on to my package, I will see you later.....I did not know realize how much later it would be.



View From an Outpost



South Koreans Passing Through The Outpost

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### Chinese Rotation, OUTPOST YOKE

*Chinese Rotation. If you are wounded by the enemy bad enough to be sent home. Otherwise you would have to wait a year for your draft to go home. Thus the word Chinese Rotation.*

By now I was considered an old timer so the sergeant put me in charge of the fire team and I was told to keep an eye on the communication people; take them up and bring them back once they had fixed the communications systems. I had been up and down that hill many times, I knew every path, almost every tree, from the main route to the escape route. We started with six marines, four from our fire team, two rifle men, one assistant BAR man and I were still lugging the BAR, and happy to carry it, in addition to the communication people. As we were going up the hill I said, "How long do you think it will take?" They answered that it would take about half an hour to an hour, and that it shouldn't be a big deal. When we got them to the top of the hill they started doing their job. The Lt. said, "100% watch tonight. We think the Chinese may come up tonight." Shit, shit, I mumbled to myself, we have heard that they were coming every night since we have been on OP Yoke, the last thing we wanted was another 100% watch!

My assistant BAR man and I went to the bunker we had had the previous night. It was pretty much in the center of the trench on the forward slope, I couldn't believe we would be here again so soon. There were two other marines that shared the bunker with us that we had never met before, they had arrived the previous night. This was this unit's second night on OP Yoke. They didn't have a clue as to what was going on up here. They were nice enough guys but they were scared as hell. I tried to tell them that the enemy would not come up. They did this every night just to rattle us. It seemed they relied on me not to show any weakness. It was getting very dark, you couldn't see your hand in front of you. We could barely hear the people who were creeping and crawling down the hill from our position; however that was something that happened almost every night.

The marines were dug in with 35 to 40 men (I am not sure of the exact number). We had two machine guns dug in, one on each end of the trench on top of the hill. Most of us were in separate bunkers, generally about two men to a bunker, except the ones that came up with my group, we doubled up in the bunkers.

As we stood in the trenches we still could hear some movement. Two of the marines were sharing their bunker with my assistant BAR man and I. He

said, "I hear something out there." "Don't worry, they try to shake us up every night but the Chinese never come up." About 30 seconds later a Thompson starts shooting (I later found out the guy in the next bunker to my right got it from a tanker). I shouted "Stop firing." They are looking for your position and they probably won't come up anyway." The Thompson was shooting like crazy, wasting ammunition. We knew he could not see anybody, it was too dark. I told the rifleman with me, "I will throw a white phosphorus grenade and you will see there is nothing there." I threw the grenade and it lit up the sky and what I SAW was unbelievable. It looked like the end of a ballgame letting out. I could hardly believe my eyes. Within a few minutes both machine guns were wiped out. The guy with the Thompson said "Give me your BAR, I am out of ammo." I countered "I will use it on you before I will give it to you. Get over here and start loading these magazines." He was already out of ammunition and we had only been in battle for several minutes. I always carried as much ammo and hand grenades as my back and legs could carry, but it was always used wisely. I only shot three or four rounds at a time; sometimes I would squeeze just once. I didn't want to sound like a machine gun. We knew their average time in combat was less than 10 minutes. I wanted to be ready, and not out of ammo when it was really needed. There were no bayonets on a BAR, or his Thompson, I wasn't too happy using the K Bar knife if we didn't have to. It started to get really hairy. Our artillery started dropping white phosphorous, it really brightened up the hill. I don't know if that was good or bad but the good news was you could see what you were shooting at for a short period of time. The bad news was you could see how many Communist Chinese were coming up that hill. It was scary to say the least. I broke my rule of shooting three or four rounds at a time. My Asst. BAR man, the rifleman was loading the magazines as fast as humanly possible. While the phosphorus lit the hill up we were spraying them with the BAR and rifle fire. It made me think of the movies where you see a soldier in combat and he can't pull the trigger. {Excuse me, I never had that problem.} As we were shooting down the hill we started to get visitors in our trenches. To my right I heard someone coming through the trench, "Are You A Marine?" No answer. I asked again, no answer. I fired several rounds down through the trench. It was real quiet. All of a sudden I heard a sound, like someone was crawling on top of the trench again to my right. I took the BAR put it on top of the trench and fired several rounds. We heard the body drop. I love that BAR.

The Chinese looked like they would be taking the forward slope. At that time, both right and left forward slopes were in enemy hands and the machine guns were knocked out in less than 10 minutes. The rifleman was so nervous he kept saying "You'll get a medal for this." I replied "Just keep filling the magazines.

About 30 minutes into the battle they were ordering everyone to the rear trenches. When I got there a sergeant said to me, "Do you know your way off this hill?" (this was their first night on OP Yoke). We found out we were totally surrounded. The figures vary as to how many Chinese were out

there. One figure I heard was close to 700 CCF (Chinese Communist Forces) with 350 on the forward slope and 350 on the reverse slope. Now I know what all that softening up was for with the Corsairs and the artillery.

The sergeant said the main passage was blocked with Chinese and asked if I knew the escape route. I said "Yes. Is this a direct order? We don't want to leave anyone behind." He shouted "This is an order." I started down the escape route and was being followed by marines. I must have gone 15 yards down the path when I saw the enemy coming up the hill. It looked just like the forward slope. I called back to the sergeant and said "We're not going anywhere. There are massive amounts of Chinese on the escape route." As I went back to the top of the hill there was a humming noise. It sounded like wasps and it was a sound I had never heard before. It was very spooky. They were flying all around me.

When I got back to the trenches the Chinese were starting to overrun our positions. They were on top of the trenches shooting down on us with burp guns and throwing hand grenades down on us. I had three bounce off of me. Fortunately they were concussion grenades -- they were meant to disorientate, stun you, and make you lose your hearing. Then another one was thrown. This was a fragmentation grenade and it landed between a marine and me. As it landed I pushed him out of the way, threw myself to the ground and tried to push it away with my arm. As I tried to push it with my arm it went off! I immediately felt a burning sensation in my left elbow.

About this time the sergeant and the Lt. ordered everyone into the bunkers. All the marines and army artillery were firing on our hill to keep the enemy off OP Yoke. In addition to shelling the hill they were firing VT, Varied Time. The object was to have the bombs explode just before they hit the ground so that they caused more damage to the enemy. I now found out what that humming noise was; I could not believe how close they came to me with out being wounded. Straightaway we went to the bunker (there were four or five marines with me). I asked if anyone had a battle dressing and a marine helped me put it on. My first thought was that I would lose my arm or be captured.

At this time we could hear the Chinese running around the trenches. Some people were moaning from pain, others were just talking. I said "If you want to get out of here alive, shut up." This didn't do much good -- they still kept talking. In the meantime at least two hand grenades were thrown in. I said, "I will shoot the next guy who says anything, anything at all." You could hear a pin drop.

The Chinese don't leave their wounded or dead either. At about 0500 hrs. the Lt. said everybody out." As we came out -- what a sight! There were enemy bodies all through the trenches. They spent most of the night taking their wounded and dead back off the hill. The first thing I saw in the morning was a dead Chinese boy, he couldn't have been more than 12 years old. It was sickening. I could hardly fathom the dead people lying through-

out the outpost, not to mention the marines; the first figure I heard was 100% casualties.

The Lt. said, "All the walking wounded go back to the front lines." That was music to my ears, I was ready. When I got back to the front lines the last person I wanted to see was the corpsman I had the fight with. He said "Let me look at your arm." I told him I would rather let it fall off before I would let him touch it. It was still fresh in my mind what had happened to Shipley.

The Captain was there to greet us and gave the corpsman a strange look. They then got us in a truck and immediately delivered us to an Aid Station. (I never got my package from home).

When we arrived at the aid station they immediately prepared to operate on my arm. I do not know the anesthetic they were using, but it wasn't working. I was given medication three different times, but it wouldn't take. I started to worry. Then they gave me sodium pentathol, and said count backwards, 10, 9, 8, ..... I woke up 20 hours later.

I can still remember how hungry I was. The corpsman remembered me asking for food all through the night. I believe on the second day we were presented with our Purple Heart Medals in the aid station. Another good friend of mine was at the same aid station, Johnny Lawrence, from Cleveland; he also received a Purple Heart. He was sent back to duty after several days at the aid station. He was on the point and was KIA - killed in action. My father went to his funeral in Cleveland



Receiving The Purple Heart



Ron and Lt. Little (Platoon Leader of OP Yoke)

(The Army called it M.A.S.H, we called it an aid station)

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 NL=Night Letter  
 LT=Int'l Letter Telegram  
 VLT=Int'l Victory Ltr.

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CTB504

1952 JUN 30 PM 5 24

XVCT WA287 GOVT PD=FM WUX WASHINGTON DC 30 259P=

MRS HELEN GODZINSKI=

:4692 WEST 148TH ST CLEVE=

REGRET TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR SON PRIVATE FIRST CLASS MYRON JOHN KRIVO USMC HAS BEEN WOUNDED IN ACTION 24 JUNE 1952 IN THE KOREAN AREA IN THE PERFORMANCE OF HIS DUTY AND SERVICE OF HIS COUNTRY. I REALIZE YOUR GREAT ANXIETY BUT NATURE OF WOUNDS NOT REPORTED AND DELAY IN RECEIPT OF DETAILS MUST BE EXPECTED. YOU WILL BE PROMPTLY FURNISHED ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RECEIVED. HIS MAILING ADDRESS IS MARINE DIRECTORY

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ct. WA 287/2

1952 JUN 30 PM 3 24

SECTION NAVY 850 FLEET POST OFFICE SAN FRANCISCO CALIF  
 UNTIL HE FURNISHES YOU WITH HIS NEW ADDRESS=

G C THOMAS LIEUTENANT GENERAL USMC ACTING COMMANDANT  
 OF THE MARINE CORP.

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

## OUR TOWN'S KOREA WAR HONOR ROLL

A Navy medical corpsman and a veteran of Cleveland's own Seventh Battalion Marines were wounded in recent combat in Korea, their families here learned today. The casualties are:

### ANTHONY CARMEN DURANTE

Just one day before he was due to be evacuated for a rest from combat, Hospital Mate Anthony Durante was hit by enemy fire. Now hospitalized, the 26-year-old sailor was wounded June 13. His mother, Mrs. Marie Durante of 3639 E. 50th St., has received no details about the wounds.

In Korea with Marine Corps combat troops since the first of this year, Durante is a veteran of the Pacific campaigns in World War II. He enlisted in 1943 after attending Shaker Junior High School. A younger brother, Joseph, joined the Navy here this week.

### MYRON JOHN KRIVO

Hit by shrapnel in the left elbow June 24, Marine PFC Myron John Krivo has been on patrol with a First Marine Division unit as a fire team leader since Feb. 1. Krivo, 21, entered service with the Seventh Marine Infantry Battalion on Labor Day 1950.

PFC. Krivo is the son of Mrs. Helen Godzinski of 4692 W. 148th St. and Mirko Krivo of 4205 W.

208th St., Fairview Park. Before entering service he lived with his mother and worked as a sporting goods salesman in Sears, Roebuck and Co.'s west side store.

In a letter to his father dated June 26, the Marine said he was in the hospital, but expected to be released in about two weeks. The enemy came out second best in the encounter near Panmunjom when he was wounded, PFC. Krivo added.

## West Side Marine Korean Casualty East Sider Killed

Marine Pfc. Myron J. Krivo, 21, of 4692 W. 148th Street, was wounded in action near Panmunjon, Korea, June 24, it was learned last night.

He is the son of Mrs. Helen Godzinski of the W. 148th Street address and of Mirko Krivo, 4205 W. 208th Street, Fairview Park.

The marine, who went overseas in February, was wounded in the left elbow by shrapnel. He is recovering in a hospital in Korea.

Earlier, Army Pvt. Charles E. Koonce, 21, husband of Mrs. Leona Koonce,

PFC. MYRON J. KRIVO

2352 E. 90th Street, was reported killed in action June 22. However, his wife said she had received a letter from him dated June 23 and expressed doubt as to the accuracy of the official notification.

Also reported wounded earlier were:

CORP. JAMES E. BROOKS, 22, son of Mr. and Mrs. Elias E. Brooks, 2360 E. 89th Street, wounded June 23. He is a John Hay High School graduate.

MARINE PFC. THOMAS LAURIA, 21, son of Mr. and Mrs. Rosario Lauria, 11906 Detroit Avenue, Lakewood, wounded June 22. He is a Lakewood High School graduate.

PFC. EDGAR TOWNS, JR., 22, son of Mrs. Eva M. Howard, 3545 Woodland Avenue S. E., wounded June 20. He entered service in May, 1951.



## NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

## *New Leathernecks Shot-Proof Vest Hailed as Winner*

WITH THE MARINES SOMEWHERE IN KOREA, May 18—(INS)—The top medical officer with the marines in Korea said today that the new leatherneck bullet-proof vest had proved itself capable of reducing combat wounds by more than two thirds.

And the top marine general in Korea said that in one heavy action alone, the vest had cut down the number of deaths by at least 75%.

Navy Capt. Louis P. Kirkpatrick of Reagan, Tex., reported the vest "90 to 95%" successful in preventing wounds in the torso, and that in the past approximately 80% of all wounds were inflicted in areas protected by the vest.

The veteran combat physician also estimated that half of the marines wounded in action since the vest was brought into use would have been killed or permanently handicapped if they had not had the vest.

Every man going out on patrol or into attack is ordered to wear the vest.

"You don't have to tell them to wear them," said one hard-bitten officer, Maj. H. V. Joslin of Newport, R. I., "they don't even want to go out without them."

## **Pfc. John P. Lawrence**

Pfc. John P. Lawrence, 20, killed fighting in Korea with the First Marine Division on Aug. 22, will be buried tomorrow in Calvary Cemetery. Funeral services will be held in St. Philip Neri Church at 11:15 a. m.

Pfc. Lawrence attended Cathedral Latin and Collinwood High schools before enlisting in the Marine Corps in August, 1951.

He is survived by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. William O'Neill, 8825 Yale Ave., and a sister, Mary Kathleen.

Friends may call tonight at Flynn-Froelk Funeral Home, 13104 Euclid Ave., East Cleveland.

\* \* \*



Johnny Lawrence's Funeral in Cleveland Attended by My Dad

(See Chapter 10)

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### The Floating Hospital

After a few days the doctors told me I would go to the hospital ship. We went through Seoul and I believe, Inchon Harbor. From there I was put on the side of a helicopter and was flown to the ship. It looked just like a regular hospital. I could hardly believe what I saw -- and it could have been a stateside hospital. Everyone was terrific, the nurses, corpsmen and the doctors could not have been nicer. Because my wound was left open, the nurse said it will heal faster if it could be open for a few days and then sew it up. I could hardly look at it and when I did it really grossed me out. When they operated they had tried to get the shrapnel out through the entry; they did not succeed and had to remove it from under the opposite side of the arm. I didn't believe they would ever be able to close that wound up when the time came. It must have been three inches wide.

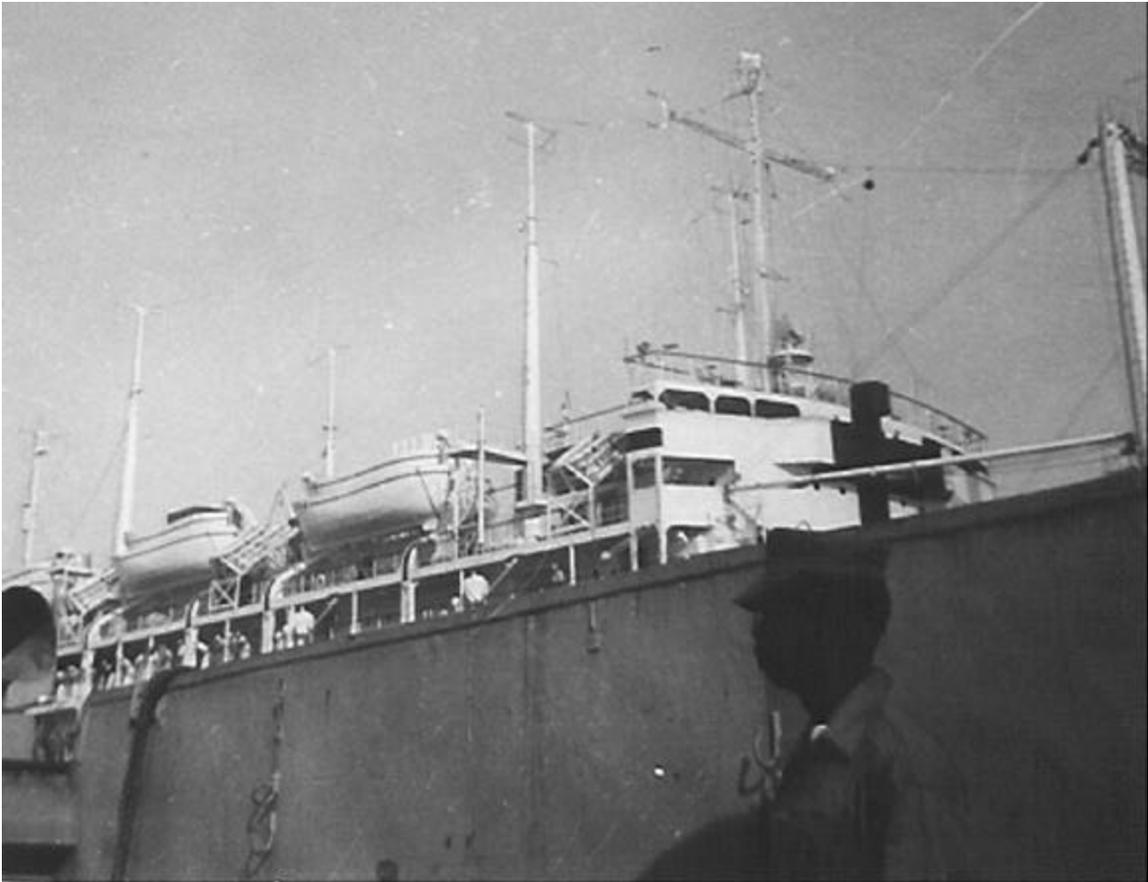
About the same time another good friend of mine who was also from Cleveland told me he was wounded too. I went to see Tom Lauria and when I saw him I almost cried. He was on OP Yoke the night after we were there, in the same bunker, on the forward slope I was in; the Chinese had it booby trapped. Tom had both arms filled with shrapnel, as were his stomach and legs. In addition, they had to amputate one of his legs. What a pathetic sight, and such a nice guy. Tom came from Italy when he was about 12 years old; he had no accent at all. He used to tell me when he got out of the marines he would be an American citizen and run his Dad's bar. A few days after his leg was amputated he received a Dear John letter from his girl friend. The timing could not have been worse, . . . I saw Tom after I got discharged; he was helping run his father's bar. I saw him again about 15 years later. He went to Italy and got married to a wonderful gal. He still lives in Cleveland. We had each other over to our houses. His wife was a wonderful hostess and cook; we finally drifted apart.

On a more humorous side, we had a guy on the ship with a cast from the top of his neck down. We had no idea what had happened to him. Shrapnel? Booby trap? We asked him what happened and he said he had dived into a very shallow lake and broke his neck. It is not supposed to hurt if you're not in combat. Everybody laughed at him. Poor guy.

It was time for me to get stitched up. I was called down to the doctor's office; they wheeled me down. I started thinking about how they would close that hole in my arm. Well, first of all, they started giving me morphine, then they gave me several shots to make sure I did not feel any pain. I was in "la la land" in about 15 minutes. I didn't feel any pain; I was just sailing. It took a while, but they did sew it up. I could not bear to look at the wound while they were sewing it up. There were over 80 stitches when they finished. I started to think about Tommy Lauria. What I had to go through didn't seem so bad.

We finally got off the hospital ship and they flew us to Tokyo, Japan. We were then picked up by an ambulance and taken to Yakuska, Japan.

Ruth's letters kept on coming and I wrote to her most every day.



The "Floating Hospital"



Tom Lauria Receives His Purple Heart



Johnny Lawrence and Ron



Johnny and Frank Lipp



Ron (Fresh Air Feels Great!)

## ON BOARD THE NAVAL HOSPITAL SHIP



Helicopter Taking Wounded Marines To Hospital Ship



Inchon River



Everyday Life in Yokosuka, Japan



Ambulance Taking Wounded Marines From Tokyo to Yokosuka Naval Hospital

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Korea, Japan, Wake Island, Hawaii and California

Heading Home



After arriving at Yakuska Naval Hospital I was given hydrotherapy to help get more movement in my arm. On the hospital ship they told me not to move it, now they wanted me to move it. The new doctor said he was surprised they had not amputated my arm. That's all I needed to hear.

You didn't have to tell me twice to exercise my arm. The thought of losing an arm gave me all the incentive I needed.

We just took it easy in the hospital. We had liberty in Yakuska and I totally relaxed. Life was good, very good. I bought some souvenirs for the family and Ruth; she never forgot to write, neither did I. The next time I saw the doctor he asked me how I would like to go stateside. YES, SIR. That also meant I was NOT going back to Korea.

Before I knew it we were on our way to Wake Island, Hawaii, and on to California. You have to remember 50 years ago we didn't have planes that could cross the Pacific non-stop. These transport planes had to land every 12 hours. However, to me, it was First Class all the way. Our first stop was Wake Island. I remembered that from World War II -- it was just a small island out in the Pacific. Our next stop was Hawaii; I could still remember Pearl Harbor. That's what started WW II, December 7<sup>th</sup>. 1941, with the

Japanese bombing the harbor. However, that was all in the past. What I saw now was an absolutely beautiful Hawaii. We were admitted to Tripler Army Hospital. The food kept getting better, it seemed the closer we got to the U.S. the better the food was. They also had a theatre, and the star of the show was Peggy Lee. If she was before your time, you don't know what you were missing. She was great and performed for the USO. What a thrill.

At that time when you listened to the radio they were talking about Hawaii becoming the 49th state. That was when we still had 48. Soon Hawaii and Alaska would make 50 states. I don't remember how long we stayed in Hawaii (it seemed like no time at all) and we were on the way back to the States. The only bad thing that happened to me, I learned later that the soldiers who unloaded the sea bags, souvenirs and luggage helped themselves to our souvenirs and other gear. I could not think of anything lower than stealing from wounded marines who did the fighting for them. They were pitiful.

Before I knew it we were landing in California, "Home Sweet Home". We landed at an air force base in California, I can't think of the name but the food was great. We were then transferred to a Naval Hospital outside of San Francisco.

We pulled a few liberties in San Francisco. One particular night a sergeant asked me to go on liberty with him. I had gone previously with him and a few other guys and it seemed like a good idea. Later that evening he was really throwing the drinks down and was getting very obnoxious. "Sergeant, I am going back to the hospital." He pleaded with me and said "Don't go. Let's get something to eat. I will be fine if I get something to eat." Well he talked me into it. He said, "Let's go to a Chinese restaurant." I was so dumb I went along with him. We ordered an assortment of dishes and while we were waiting he got up and put his back against the wall and shouted "I have been killing you bastards. How do I know you're not trying to poison me?" I could have died. "Sergeant, let's go." He said "I could kill you Chinese right now." I shouted, "I'm leaving now," and I walked out. A few minutes later he followed me out the door. That was the last liberty I spent with him.

A few weeks later the Dr. asked me how I would like to go to the Great Lakes Naval Hospital outside Milwaukee. I would love it. The great news was it was only 500 miles from Cleveland.

When I got to Great Lakes and walked in the hospital the first thing that happened was this guy comes running towards me and has his hand out. "Krivo, here's the ten dollars that I owe you." I could hardly believe it. The last time I had seen him they were taking him off the outpost on a stretcher and he looked real bad. I could hardly believe my eyes. He looked real good, and I could always use \$10.00. I had lent him the 10 spot during a card game. Once he was wounded I wrote the money off not thinking we would ever see each other again.



LOADING THE PLANE, FUELING UP,  
LEAVING JAPAN, AND HEADING HOME



Triplar Army Hospital - Hawaii



Great Lakes Training Station - Chicago



Naval Hospital in San Francisco

## STATESIDE

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### Almost Home

We were getting close to home and I was missing my family and Ruth. The Great Lakes Naval Hospital was right across the street from the Navy's boot camp. We were allowed to take liberty. Being new in the hospital I did not know anybody and went to the local town bar. You guessed it, they must have had over a 100 swabbies in that bar. I went in and tried not to be noticed (that's pretty hard to do with one marine and 100 sailors) so I went to the restroom. I don't why, it seemed like it would give me a break from having all those sailors staring at me. As soon as I came out I would walk to the closest door and get the hell out of there. I walked out and everyone was laughing at me. What did I get myself into? I stood with my back against the wall. One sailor came running over put his arm around me and said, "That happens all the time." The restrooms were marked MOM & POP. I saw MOM and walked right in, thinking it was MEN. The good news was I met some great sailors and had a few beers along with a great time.

Shortly after I arrived my Mom and Ruth came to Chicago to visit me. I had a cousin that was stationed in the Coast Guard and lived off base with his wife. My mom and Ruth were able to stay with them.

Thanks to the Marine Corps for a great start . . . my Dad who said "Would you do that if I were here?" Johnson Wax who gave me great sales training for almost ten years. Harold Sherfy and Robert "Professor" Taylor who taught me the meaning of what an entrepreneur really is. Both very successful business men, Mr. Sherfy is in real estate and Mr. Taylor who has one of the great names in personal care products.

By working with them as a sales manager I was able to discover some of their secrets. Hard work, always think positive, if they think it can be done, it will be done, and follow through on your ideas. I guess it is no secret but they actually do.

A REUNION IN CHICAGO WELL WORTH THE WAIT



My Mom and Ruth Klaehn (soon to be Ruth Krivo)



**My Dad**

## **Excerpts from The Outpost War**

**By Lee Balenger**

### **A DAY ON OUTPOST YOKE**

When the 5<sup>th</sup> Marines relieved the 1<sup>st</sup> Marines on line in mid-June, the units quite naturally assumed responsibility for the outposts, too. They included Outposts Royal, Nellie, Gertie, Digger, X Ray, and Yoke. Unfortunately for history, Outpost Yoke remains the only place name specifically identifiable by grid coordinates. The other outposts, although named in 5<sup>th</sup> Marine documents, had not been named by the 1<sup>st</sup> Marines, nor are the names located in any reports. Regrettably, this kind of omission is typical of battalion command diaries of the period. A reader must accept the errors and ambiguities of wartime reporting. This particular confusion is complicated by the fact that, months later, a strong Chinese position several miles west was also labeled "Yoke." The hill referred to in this section is the first Yoke, a position that later became Outpost Reno.

The names of the hills are not as important here as are the Marines' experiences on Outpost Yoke, which typify the slow process of the piecemeal war practiced during this period. With a change in outpost names, this process was repeated many times over during the outpost war.

When the OPLR was withdrawn and new outposts established closer to the line, Yoke was one of the hills selected. It was a medium-sized outpost 1,500 yards north of the MLR. Yoke held a garrison of thirty-four Marines.

Approximately 100 meters in elevation, Yoke overlooked the east side of a long north-south valley, a natural avenue of attack from the north. The terrain east of Yoke was dominated by a large hill, also an outpost that was half again taller, 157 meters on the map. Later, this large hill would be called Clarence and finally Vegas.

Southwest of Yoke was another hill of the same approximate size and held by forty Marines, but it was somewhat closer to the MLR. Later, it acquired the name Allen, which was changed to Carson in September. Farther southeast, beyond Carson, was the Chinese stronghold of Ungok, approximately 1,000 yards away.

On 16 June, 2d Battalion, 5<sup>th</sup> Marines, completed relief of the 2d Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Marines, on line. The sector assumed by 2/5 was the left side of the division's right sector. Fox Company, 2/5, assumed responsibility for Outpost Yoke and a portion of the MLR.

By reading excerpts from the terse and generally understated Command Diary of 2/5 and selecting only those passages relating to Fox Company and Outpost Yoke on a single day, one can clearly see that the fight to retain the outpost was incessant. It is necessary to bear in mind that Yoke was not

exceptional. In other sectors and on other outposts, the situation was all too similar. The following sample describes a typical day at Outpost Yoke:

24 Jun: . . . "F" Company reinforced squad set up a perimeter ambush. An estimated sixty enemy made contact and in the ensuing fight the enemy suffered two known KIA's, an estimated five KIA's and twenty estimated WIA's. Both sides withdrew at 2300. Fox Company suffered three WIA's two of which were evacuated by helicopter. . . . At 1520 "F" Company reported one WIA from hand grenade. . . . At 1530 "F" Company reported one WIA from fourteen rounds of 76mm artillery.

Entries in battalion command diaries are brief and often confusing. They frequently fail to present a full picture of a given situation. Such is the case with Outpost Yoke on 24 June, when the defenders, attacked by a superior force, came within a whisker of losing the hill. Taking information from other sources, Meid and Yingling present a clearer version than that reported above. Their account follows:

Late in the afternoon of 24 June, the enemy began registering his mortars and artillery on MLR company positions of 2/5 and a portion of the rear occupied by the battalion 81mm mortars. Chinese incoming, sometimes intense, sometimes sporadic, continued until shortly after 2130. By this time the CCF were moving down their trenches toward a key outpost, Yoke, . . . , which was still occupied on daytime basis by the Marines and lay north of the Company F sector (Captain Harold C. Fuson). Moments later, the 34 men temporarily outposting Yoke saw the Chinese and opened up with small arms fire, but the Marine positions were quickly enveloped by the Chinese. The Americans occupying the forward slopes of Yoke suffered many casualties from the intense fire supporting the enemy rush.

While the initial attack was in progress, the Chinese were able to position and fire machine guns from behind the outpost and in trenches on the forward slopes. Communist mortars interdicted the Marine supply routes to make normal withdrawal and reinforcement measures difficult. The Marines moved into bunkers, called down pre-planned fires, and continued the defense. Although the Chinese had overrun Yoke, they could not evict the Marines. At about 0300, the enemy withdrew. When the 2/5 troops followed to reoccupy the forward slopes of Yoke, the enemy renewed his attack and struck again. As before the Marines took to bunkers and called in defensive artillery fire. These boxing fires fell around the outpost perimeter until first light when the attacker withdrew for the second time.

. . . At Yoke alone, 9 were killed and 23 wounded (32 out of a force of 34 Marines). Enemy dead were 12 known and 50 estimated. Chinese wounded were estimated at 100. At one point during the attack on Yoke, the outpost commander reported that the enemy were wearing gas masks and using tear gas grenades.