

Marines Land Under Fire But Had the Situation Well in Hand

(Editor's Note: Associated Press Correspondent Don Whitehead was in the first assault wave of U. S. marines to cross the Han river near Seoul at dawn Wednesday. His amphibious craft was hit by a shell, but he was unhurt. Here's his dispatch, sent back from the front by courier and telephoned to Tokyo.)

By DON WHITEHEAD

With the U. S. Marines Outside Seoul, Sept. 21 (AP)—A pale three-quarters moon was sliding below the horizon when the marines came out of their foxholes and started trudging toward the Han river Wednesday.

Ahead of them somewhere on the dusty road were the big amphibious tractors the assault waves would ride into the battle for the Han river bridgehead on the Seoul side.

The men came out of their holes unwrapping themselves from blankets and shelter halves and cursing softly. The night was cold and damp.

But Mike Ehrlich checked back with his battalion commander, Lt. Col. Robert D. Taplett of San Francisco. The H-hour for attack had been delayed because of the failure of the reconnaissance mission.

Finally, the third battalion sorted itself out and the confusion resolved. The men climbed into the big amtracks with their weapons and ammunition, (packed closely together.) "They should pack us in these things with oil and then we would really be sardines," someone said.

Then I noticed the sergeant carrying the cardboard box—M/Sgt. Anthony Kent of 115 South Third St., Salina, Kas. He noticed my curiosity and opened the top. Inside were three fluffy white rabbits sleeping soundly on a bed of straw.

"Bought them with a package of cigarettes," Kent grinned. "Now they're our mascots."

Rabbits going into battle with the big tough marine! Suddenly I realized how young these warriors were.

There were 35 men in our amtrack. They groaned when Mike told them the assault had been delayed another hour.

"That's all right," the major said. "That will give us more artillery preparation and a chance for the air to hit them before we land."

Dawn had broken when the amtrack column lurched forward and roared down the road toward the river. And in the bowels of each were sealed a unit of marines ready to begin fighting when the amtrack doors opened on the Seoul side.

The artillery thundered. We could hear the rush of shells and feel the shudder of explosions as our artillery pounded the enemy shore of the Han. The amtracks bounded and jerked down the road and then we were in the river.

Bullets began to slam against the side of our amtrack. Through a slit in the rear door I could see little spouts of water jumping up as bullets hit the water. But the steel sides protected us and the amtracks plowed ahead.

Then we were ashore and climbing a steep sandy bank. The machineguns were rattling. Our amtrack pulled away from the river about 1,000 yards and swerved through a rice paddy to an embankment. The men were tense. They tripped their weapons, ready for the dash through the door.



Forging Ahead—Troops of the U. S. 24th division cross the Nakdong river below Waegwan in assault boats in the latest United Nations offensive against the North Korean communist invaders. The GIs established the first allied bridgehead west of the Nakdong since the "no retreat" Nakdong defense line was established in early August. Exclusive NEA-Acme Radio-Telephoto by Staff Correspondent Ed Hoffman. (Acme Telephoto)

Slowly the door opened. Sergeant Kent was first out, carrying the box with the rabbits. As he hugged the shelter of a bank he put them down carefully beside him.

I dashed after the sergeant and then the man behind me screamed and pitched forward. At the same time we heard the crack of the rifle.

Then another marine screamed and fell from the amtrack. The enemy on the hill above us was shooting straight down into our men as they came out the door.

The marines hugged the embankment as the bullets cracked into the vehicle. The driver fell wounded.

Mike Ehrlich thundered at his men to get out of the vehicle.

Then he coolly sent a rifle squad around the ridge and ordered an amtrack machine gunner to swing his gun around and open fire.

An empty amtrack came by and Mike stopped it. He ordered the door opened and we carried our wounded inside to be ferried back across the Han.

Above us cracked rifles and machine guns as the fighting moved up the ridge. Our amtrack had gotten ahead of the infantry and for a brief time there was no infantry between us and the enemy.

In a short time our mortars were thumping shells into the enemy lines.

This time the marines had landed and the situation was well in hand.



Captured North Koreans in Incheon—North Korea soldiers captured in fighting in Incheon huddle along a curbstone under guard of U. S. marines. (AP Wirephoto)

Moon-Faced Chinese Is the Man to Keep Your Eye On

Stalin has been getting most of the publicity, but the communist big shot to keep your eye on today is a moon-faced Chinese named Mao Tze-Tung.

He has planted three powder kegs around the Far East and any one of them could explode into World War III.

Mao is a disappointed man today, and most of the bitterness growing out of that disappointment is directed at the United States. The Chinese communists made their bid yesterday to win their way into the United Nations. They wanted the Chinese nationalists to be evicted so they could sit down in the empty seat.

A bloc of nations, led by the United States, defeated the attempt by a vote of 33 to 16. And now, like any disappointed man, Mao is tempted by the thought that there are plenty of ways in which he can get his revenge.

As leader of the Chinese communist party, Mao has good-sized armies on the northern border of Korea, on the Chinese coast that looks across to Formosa and in the Chinese territory adjacent to Indo-China.

Gen. Douglas MacArthur's chief concern is what Mao is going to do with the 200,000 well-trained troops who are

massed just north of Korea. If the Chinese communist leader should decide to throw them into the scales of the Korean war, all our calculations would be upset. The war then, instead of ending in a quick United Nations victory, probably would bog down into a winter stalemate. So far there has been no indication that Mao wants to tackle the sizeable, seasoned U. N. forces under MacArthur; rather, he seems to be keeping his troops there to be certain that nobody attempts to cross the North Korean border and invade China.

Anyway, he has other fish to fry at the moment. He has trained a communist Indo-Chinese army and sent it south to make some probing attacks against the French troops in Indo-China. So far the fighting has been little more than skirmish action with no more than 5,000 men engaged on each side. But if the French defense line develops weaknesses, Mao probably will

give the signal for an all-out offensive.

That would be where we come in. President Truman has pledged assistance to the French in resisting communist aggression in Indo-China. An American military advisory commission already is on the scene and we are sending supplies and munitions to the French. A full-scale Red offensive would raise the question of whether we had another Korea on our hands.

Mao's third powder keg is Formosa. There the United States is directly involved, for Mr. Truman has ordered the U. S. Seventh fleet to protect the island where Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek and his Nationalist army is making its last stand. A communist attack on Formosa almost certainly would explode into a world war.

Mao is an ally of Stalin and received considerable assistance from Russia in the campaign that drove the Nationalists off the Chinese mainland. But he is just as tough as the man in the Kremlin and he has his own ideas about how to expand communist influence in Asia. There is always a danger that even if Stalin should decide to postpone World War III, Mao might toss a veto toward Moscow and go ahead with his own plans.

Patient Released

Salt Creek — Mrs. Lydia Brown was released from the Community hospital in Medford on Tuesday morning after being confined there for several weeks following an automobile accident in which a lung was punctured and several ribs broken. Mrs. Lloyd Beerman went to Medford to stay with her mother at the home of relatives until she can be moved to the Beerman home here.

In Good Hands—U. S. marine infantry and tanks take over Kimpo airfield on the outskirts of Seoul, Korea. The landing strip is in good shape. Demolished plane at left is Russian-built Yak. Exclusive NEA-Acme photo by Staff Correspondent Stanley Tretick. (Acme Telephoto)



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