



THE FORGOTTEN WAR

BY SOMEONE WHO WAS THERE

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*THIS IS A TRUE STORY
DEDICATED TO THE BRAVE MEN
WHO LOST THEIR LIVES IN KOREA
AND WERE FORGOTTEN BY EVERYONE
EXCEPT THE LOVED ONES
THEY LEFT BEHIND.
I KNOW, BECAUSE I WAS THERE.*

PROLOGUE

THE EVENTS IN THIS BOOK ARE NOT IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER. THEY ARE JUST SOME OF THE EVENTS THAT STAND OUT IN MY MIND THAT I CAN STILL REMEMBER.

I WAS UP AND DOWN FROM THE SOUTH TO THE NORTH THREE TIMES, SO I DON'T REMEMBER WHICH TIME SOME OF THESE INCIDENTS TOOK PLACE.

I WAS ALSO YOUNG AND REALLY DIDN'T CARE WHERE WE WERE. I JUST FOLLOWED ALONG.

MOST OF THE TIME WE WALKED THROUGH THE HILLS, OR IF WE DID RIDE IT WAS ON TANKS. WE RODE ON TRUCKS A VERY FEW TIMES. I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START, SO I WILL START AT THE BEGINNING.

I WAS WORKING AND A FRIEND OF MINE KEPT ASKING ME TO JOIN THE ARMY WITH HIM BUT I KEPT REFUSING. THEN HE SHOWED UP WITH THE RECRUITING SERGEANT ONE SATURDAY AND SAID HE WAS SHIPPING OUT TO BASIC TRAINING ON MONDAY AND WANTED ME TO GO WITH HIM. THE SERGEANT SAID HE WOULD HURRY ME THROUGH INDOCTRINATION SO I COULD LEAVE WITH HIM ON MONDAY. THE DATE WAS NOVEMBER 28, 1949. I WAS 17 YEARS OLD.

I WAS DISSATISFIED AT WORK SO I DECIDED TO GO. I WAS HURRIED THROUGH AS HE SAID AND I TOLD HIM I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WAS DOING IN THE ARMY; I WANTED TO BE A FIGHTER PILOT. HE SAID THAT I HAD QUALIFIED FOR THE AIR FORCE AND AFTER BASIC I COULD TRANSFER OVER. WHEN WE GOT SWORN IN I FOUND OUT THAT MY BROTHER AND THREE OTHERS HAD ALSO JOINED.

I LEFT FOR BASIC TRAINING WITH MY FRIEND AND MY BROTHER. THE OTHERS CAME THE NEXT WEEK. AFTER BASIC THEY ALL SIGNED UP FOR THE FAR EAST. I DID TOO. WE TOOK A TROOP TRAIN TO SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, WHERE WE RECEIVED OUR SHOTS AND LOADED ON SHIPS TO GO TO JAPAN. WE GOT OFF THE SHIP IN TOKYO, AND WENT TO A REPLACEMENT DEPOT. THAT'S THE LAST TIME I SAW ANY OF THEM UNTIL WE GOT HOME AGAIN.

I WAS SENT TO THE FIRST PLATOON OF COMPANY B. OF THE FIFTH CAVALRY REGIMENT, FIRST CAVALRY DIVISION. I WAS IN JAPAN FOR THREE MONTHS WHEN KOREA BROKE OUT IN WAR. THE NORTH HAD INVADED THE SOUTH.

I WAS WITH SOME MEN WHO HAD JUST RETURNED FROM KOREA THAT WERE THERE WHEN THE OCCUPATION HAD ENDED. WE WERE SENT BACK. WE LANDED AT A SEAPORT TOWN CALLED POHANG IN JULY OF 1950. THEN WE MOVED NORTH FROM THERE WHERE WE SET UP ON SOME HILL ABOVE A CREEK. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE I GOT SUNBURNED. I NEVER BURNED. BUT I DID THAT DAY. WE WENT DOWN TO THE WATER WHICH WAS ANKLE DEEP AND PLAYED. I HAD A RATION CAN IN MY PACK THAT HAD TURNED SIDEWAYS AND RUBBED MY BACKBONE RAW WHEN WE MARCHED FROM THE TOWN. WHEN THAT SUN BEAT DOWN ON ME I GOT BURNED AGAIN. WE MOVED FARTHER NORTH. THERE WERE NO FRONT LINES. NO ENEMY TO FACE.

WE SET UP ON A HILL THE SHAPE OF A HORSESHOE WITH CO. B. ON THE FRONT OF IT AND A. AND C. COMPANY ON THE BACK SIDE. WE GOT NO MORE THAN SET UP WHEN SOME ONE GOT TRIGGER HAPPY AND A. AND C. COMPANY STARTED

SHOOTING AT US. NEEDLESS TO SAY THE ENEMY DID NOT SHOW UP SO WE MOVED ON TO ANOTHER HILL.

WE DUG OUR FOXHOLES. THE ENEMY WAS DOWN BELOW US ON THE ROAD WITH A TANK AND WOULD FIRE A ROUND NOW AND THEN AT US. THE RED CROSS WAS DOWN THE HILL ON THE OTHER SIDE WITH COFFEE AND JUICE. I DON'T REMEMBER THE NAME OF THE MAN I WAS IN A FOXHOLE WITH. HE WENT DOWN FOR COFFEE AND WHEN HE CAME BACK I WENT DOWN. I WENT THROUGH THE LINE AND WHEN I GOT TO THE END THEY WERE CHARGING FOR THE DRINKS. I FELT LIKE POURING IT OUT. I WENT BACK UP THE HILL AND LOOKED FOR MY FOXHOLE. I COULDN'T FIND IT OR MY FRIEND. A TANK ROUND HAD HIT IN THE HOLE AND IT WAS GONE ALONG WITH MY FRIEND.

GOD WATCHED OVER AND PROTECTED ME.

THE COMPANY COMMANDER WAS CAPTAIN PICKERING, A MAN FROM THE SECOND WAR WHO REALLY KNEW HIS STUFF. HE KNEW HOW TO LEAD MEN. AS I SAID THERE WERE NO FRONT LINES AND WE WERE SOON SENT BACK TO GET PART OF THE TWENTY FOURTH DIVISION OUT OF WHAT WAS CALLED A DONUT. THEY WERE SURROUNDED AND THEY HAD THE ENEMY SURROUNDED AND THAT GROUP WAS ALSO SURROUNDED. WE WERE TOLD THEY WERE FIRING THE ARTILLERY AT POINT BLANK RANGE. BUT BY THE TIME WE GOT BACK TO WHERE THEY WERE THERE WAS NO ONE LEFT. THEY WERE WIPED OUT.

WE WENT BACK NORTH AGAIN AND SET UP ON A HILL. WE DUG IN. I WAS AN ASSISTANT B.A.R. (BROWNING AUTOMATIC RIFLE) MAN, AND WE WERE IN A HOLE TOGETHER. HE WENT DOWN THE HILL FOR COFFEE AND WHEN HE CAME BACK I WENT DOWN. WHILE I WAS GONE WE WERE ATTACKED BY OUR OWN BLACK WIDOW FIGHTER PLANES AND WE DIDN'T HAVE A PANEL TO PUT OUT ON THE HILL TO LET THEM KNOW WE WERE FRIENDLY TROOPS. WHEN I GOT BACK MY B.A.R. MAN SHOWED ME A FIFTY CALIBER SLUG HE DUG OUT OF THE FOXHOLE WALL RIGHT BESIDE WHERE HE WAS SITTING. IT HAD JUST MISSED HIM

ONCE AGAIN WE WERE CALLED TO GET THE SIXTY FIRST RECON OUT OF A JAM. BUT THE SAME THING HAPPENED. WHEN WE GOT THERE WE FOUND NO ONE. A. AND C. COMPANY SET UP ON THE ROAD SIDE AT THE EDGE OF A HILL WITH D. COMPANY'S HEAVY WEAPONS FOR SUPPORT. THERE WAS A FIELD OF SOME KIND BETWEEN THE ROAD AND THE RIVER AND B. COMPANY WAS SENT ACROSS

THE RIVER AND UP ON A HILL OVER THERE. WE WERE SUPPOSED TO BREAK RADIO SILENCE AT NOON THE NEXT DAY. DURING THE NIGHT WE HEARD GUNFIRE OVER BY THE ROAD AND WE THOUGHT BOY, A. AND C. COMPANY ARE SURE GIVING THE NORTH KOREANS HELL. THE NEXT MORNING WE COULD SEE ENEMY TROOPS COMING AROUND THE HILLS IN FRONT OF US. THEY LOOKED LIKE ANTS ON AN ANT HILL; THOUSANDS OF THEM. THE CAPTAIN DECIDED TO BREAK RADIO SILENCE AND WARN A. AND C. ABOUT THEM. WE GOT NO RESPONSE ON THE RADIO, SO THE COMMANDER DECIDED TO GET BACK ACROSS THE RIVER AND JOIN A. AND C. COMPANY. WE CAME DOWN OFF THE HILL AND STARTED TO CROSS THE RIVER AND WE THOUGHT A. AND C. WERE FIRING AT US. IT WAS THE SOUND OF OUR OWN FIFTY CALIBER MACHINE GUNS WE HEARD. MEN IN THE RIVER STARTED WAVING THEIR ARMS AND HOLLERING, "WE'RE GI'S", THEY WERE GETTING CUT DOWN. THE NORTH KOREANS HAD RUN A. AND C. COMPANY OFF THE HILL DURING THE NIGHT AND THEY LEFT ALL THEIR WEAPONS INCLUDING D. COMPANY'S FIFTY CALIBER MACHINE GUNS. MY GUNNER AND I MADE IT ACROSS THE RIVER. BY THE BANK HE SPOTTED A MACHINE GUN UP ON THE HILL. HE STOOD UP TO FIRE ON IT, BUT THERE WAS A GUN IN THE FIELD IN FRONT OF US AND IT CUT HIM RIGHT IN HALF. AT THAT POINT A SOUTH KOREAN ROK FIGHTER CAME UP THE RIVER WOUNDED AND TOLD US TO GET OUT OF THERE AS WE WERE SURROUNDED ON THREE SIDES ALREADY. WE MANAGED TO GET DOWNSTREAM A WAYS AND CROSS THE RIVER AND UP TO THE ROAD. WE LOST HALF OF OUR COMPANY JUST TO GET ACROSS.

THE COMPANY COMMANDER AND ANOTHER SOLDIER TOOK B.A.R.S AND SET UP A BLOCK AT THE ROAD. HE SENT ME AND A MAN NAMED MURRAY TO SET UP ON THE HILL TO KEEP THEM FROM GETTING BEHIND US. WE TOOK OUR WOUNDED AND ALL THE WEAPONS WE COULD CARRY AND STARTED UP THE ROAD. THE COMPANY COMMANDER WAS CARRYING A SIXTY MILLIMETER MORTAR WITH THE BASE PLATE ATTACHED. AS WE STARTED UP THE ROAD WE SAW A PLANE ABOVE US. IT WAS A SPOTTER FOR OUR ARTILLERY. AS I SAID WE HAD NO PANEL TO PUT OUT TO SHOW WE WERE FRIENDLY TROOPS. THE CAPTAIN SENT THREE OF US RUNNING UP THE ROAD. HE SAID FIND SOMEONE AND TELL THEM WE ARE COMING. HE DIDN'T WANT OUR OWN ARTILLERY FIRING ON US.

THE FIRST PERSON WE FOUND WAS A BIRD COLONEL. INSTEAD OF ASKING US WHAT WAS GOING ON HE STARTED YELLING AND GAVE US HELL. HE ASKED WHY WE WERE RUNNING AND WHY DIDN'T WE STAY AND FIGHT. HE SAID HE DROVE DOWN THROUGH THERE THE DAY BEFORE AND DIDN'T SEE A THING. BEING YOUNG AND HAVING A TEMPER I GOT IN TROUBLE RIGHT THERE. I ASKED

HIM WHY HE DIDN'T TELL THAT TO A. C. AND D. COMPANY THE NIGHT BEFORE WHEN THEY RAN AND LEFT ALL THEIR WEAPONS BEHIND. I ALSO SAID TO HIM, "DRIVE DOWN THERE TODAY YOU SON OF A BITCH AND YOU'LL FIND SOMETHING". THAT'S THE WRONG THING TO SAY TO A COLONEL WHEN YOU ARE A PRIVATE. BESIDES, I FORGOT TO SAY, "SIR". SO DOING THE ARMY THING, THEY RELIEVED THE CAPTAIN OF HIS COMMAND FOR BREAKING RADIO SILENCE BEFORE HE WAS SUPPOSED TO. HE WENT TO INTELLIGENCE I HEARD. I ALSO HEARD THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE THAT HE AND I WERE GOING TO GET A COURT MARSHAL. THEN I NEVER HEARD ANYTHING MORE ABOUT IT. ALL I KNOW IS IF IT HADN'T HAVE BEEN FOR THE DECISIONS CAPTAIN PICKERING HAD MADE WE WOULD HAVE BEEN WIPED OUT RIGHT THERE. AFTER CAPT. PICKERING WAS RELIEVED AS COMPANY COMMANDER THEY GAVE US A FIRST LIEUTENANT TO REPLACE HIM. THAT WAS A BAD MISTAKE. HE DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO LEAD MEN AND HE WAS AFRAID OF COMBAT AND JUST DESTROYED OUR MORAL. NO ONE LIKED HIM. THE COMPANY GOT USED TO RETREATING BY HIS LEADERSHIP

THEY GAVE ME THE JOB OF PLATOON RUNNER. I HAD TO GO WITH THE COMPANY COMMAND POST (C.P.) AND THEN GO TO MY PLATOON SO WE KNEW WHERE THE COMMAND POST WAS. SO I MOSTLY TRAVELED ALONE. I ALSO GOT THE DUTY OF RADIO GUARD AT THE C.P. ON SOME NIGHTS. A FEW OF THE GUYS WANTED ME TO SHOOT THE LT. ONE NIGHT WHILE I WAS ON DUTY HE HAD TO GO TO A MEETING. WHEN HE CAME BACK I CHALLENGED HIM AS IT WAS DARK. WHEN I ASKED FOR THE PASSWORD HE JUST ANSWERED, "IT'S ME". I TOLD HIM I DIDN'T KNOW ANY "ME". I COULD HAVE SHOT HIM THEN BUT I DIDN'T. HE GAVE ME THE PASSWORD RIGHT AWAY.

CO. B. WAS CAMPED IN A DRY RIVER BED SURROUNDED BY HILLS, AND EVERY NIGHT THE ENEMY WOULD INFILTRATE IN THE HILLS AROUND US. WE WERE SUPPOSED TO BE IN RESERVE BUT EVERYDAY WE HAD TO GO TAKE BACK A HILL SOMEONE LOST DURING THE NIGHT. ONE MORNING WHEN WE STARTED TO GO WE TOOK FIRE FROM A HILL ABOVE US AND THE COMMANDER ORDERED US BACK TO CAMP. THAT WAS THE END OF HIS COMMAND. THEN THEY SENT US A SECOND LT. THAT TURNED OUT REAL GOOD. HIS NAME WAS HANEY. HE CHANGED THE COMPANY BACK TO A FIGHTING UNIT AGAIN. WE DIDN'T HAVE A PLATOON LEADER AT THE TIME.

THEN ONE DAY A SECOND LT. SHOWED UP BY THE NAME OF BRIAN, I THINK THAT WAS HIS NAME; OR MAYBE BRYANT. I JUST CALLED HIM LT. BRIAN. HE

DECLARED TO US THAT HE WAS A 90 DAY WONDER FRESH OUT OF OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL AND WAS ASSIGNED AS OUR PLATOON LEADER. WE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO THINK. HE SAID, "I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING THAT'S GOING ON OVER HERE BUT I'M GOING TO FIND OUT." HE LOOKED AT ME AND SAID, "AND YOU'RE GOING TO HELP ME". FROM THEN ON HE AND I WENT ON EVERY PATROL THAT WENT OUT EVEN IF IT WASN'T OUR UNIT. HE LEARNED AND SO DID I. HE WAS OUR LEADER AND HE FOUND OUT HOW TO LEAD. HE WAS WITH US FOR A WHILE TILL THEY NEEDED A COMPANY COMMANDER IN A DIFFERENT BATTALION. I WOULD SEE HIM NOW AND THEN AS WE BECAME FRIENDS. THE NEXT TIME I SAW HIM HE WAS PROMOTED TO BATTALION COMMANDER. THE LAST TIME I HEARD ABOUT HIM HE WAS TRANSFERRED TO INTELLIGENCE. HE WAS A GOOD MAN.

AS I SAID, WE WERE IN A DRY RIVER BED JUST OFF THE NAKDONG RIVER BEHIND THE HILLS. FOUR OR FIVE OF US WERE SENT TO GUARD THE FORWARD OBSERVER (F.O.) FOR THE ARTILLERY. WE WERE ON A BALD PEAK ABOVE A PATH THROUGH THE HILLS OVERLOOKING THE NAKDONG. WE COULD SEE ACROSS THE RIVER. AT NIGHT WITH THE F.O.'S BINOCULARS WE COULD SEE THE CRATERS ON THE MOON. WE WERE SURPRISED BY PEOPLE COMING UP THE PATH. THEY DIDN'T KNOW WE WERE THERE. WE WERE SO CLOSE WE COULD REACH OUT AND SLAP THEM ON THE HEAD. THE THIRD NIGHT THEY CAME ACROSS WE WERE WAITING FOR THEM. WHEN THEY CAME BACK WE TOOK THREE PRISONERS. THE REST DIDN'T MAKE IT. I TOOK A TWENTY FIVE AUTOMATIC PISTOL FROM THE OFFICER WITH THEM AND WE GOT MAPS FROM HIM TO SEND BACK. WHEN WE FOUND OUT WHAT WAS ON THOSE MAPS WE WERE GLAD THEY DIDN'T GET BACK ACROSS THE RIVER AS THEY HAD EVERY POSITION WE HAD ALONG THE RIVER MARKED; EVEN WHERE OUR ARTILLERY WAS. THEN A COUPLE DAY'S LATER WE WATCHED AS ONE HUNDRED AND ONE BOMBERS UNLOADED ON THE MOUNTAINS ACROSS THE RIVER. WHAT A SIGHT. WE COULD SEE THE BOMB BAYS OPEN AND THE BOMBS FALL. I THINK THAT'S WHAT KEPT US FROM BEING PUSHED BACK TO PUSON.

WHILE WE WERE SUPPOSEDLY IN RESERVE, WE WERE CAMPED BEHIND THE HILLS FROM WAEGWAN AND EVERY DAY WE HAD TO TAKE HILL 303 BACK FROM THE ENEMY. THE HILLS WERE NAMED FOR HOW HIGH THEY WERE. WE WOULD TAKE IT DURING THE DAY AND TURN IT OVER TO THE 7TH CAVALRY AND THEY WOULD GET RUN OFF EVERY NIGHT. THIS HAPPENED THREE DAYS AT LEAST.

I ALSO REMEMBER AN APPLE ORCHARD SOMEWHERE CLOSE THAT WE WENT TO NOW AND THEN. THE APPLES WERE GOOD. THEN ONE DAY I HEARD THAT THREE MEN WENT THERE AND FOUND A WOUNDED ENEMY FIGHTER THERE. HE WAS HALF DEAD. THEY TOOK HIM TO HEADQUARTERS AND THEN I HEARD THEY PUT EACH OTHER IN FOR A SILVER STAR FOR BRAVERY IN CAPTURING HIM. THAT WAS NOT THE ONLY CONFLICT WHERE PEOPLE GOT MEDALS FOR NOTHING. THAT WAS JUST THE FIRST I HEARD OF.

WE WERE THEN PULLED BACK A LITTLE FARTHER SOUTH TO TAKE UP POSITIONS ON A HILL. WE LOST THE OUTFIT THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE FOLLOWING US. WHEN WE GOT TO WHERE WE WERE GOING THEY WEREN'T THERE. THREE OF US WAITED FOR THEM DOWN ON THE ROAD. IT WAS RAINING HARD SO I SAT DOWN ON MY STEEL HELMET. I PULLED MY PONCHO OVER ME AND PUT MY TOWEL OVER MY HEAD WHERE THE OPENING IN MY PONCHO WAS. NEEDLESS TO SAY I FELL ASLEEP. I WOKE UP IN THE MORNING WITH A START AND SCARED BECAUSE I WAS STILL UNDER MY PONCHO AND COULDN'T SEE A THING. I JUMPED UP AND FELL BECAUSE MY LEGS HAD FALLEN ASLEEP. THANK GOD THE RAIN HAD STOPPED. THE ONES WE WERE WAITING FOR HAD GONE UP THE HILL THE BACK WAY. WE WAITED FOR NOTHING.

COMPANY B. WAS ON A FINGER JUTTING OUT FROM THE HILL ON THE FAR SIDE. THERE WERE THREE MORE FINGERS COMING OFF THE TOP OF THE RIDGE. THEN THE RIDGE WENT UP TO THE TOP OF THE TALL HILL. THERE WAS A VALLEY ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RIDGE. MY SQUAD LEADER WAS A MAN NAMED RICHARDSON. HE WAS LIKED. WHEN WE FINALLY GOT RATIONS HE WAS AT THE VALLEY WAITING AND BROUGHT UP A CASE OF C-RATIONS FOR US. WE ALSO HAD A NEW PLATOON LEADER WHOSE NAME WAS LT. RAGSDALE. HE WAS A WHINER. HE TOLD RICHARDSON TO LEAVE THE RATIONS FOR HIM AND THE FIRST SGT. AND GO BACK DOWN AND GET SOME MORE. RICHARDSON TOLD HIM THESE RATIONS WERE FOR HIS MEN AND IF THEY WANTED SOME TO GO GET THEM. I BELIEVE THE SECOND OR THIRD NIGHT WE WERE UP THERE THE NORTH KOREANS PULLED A BANZAI ATTACK UP THE MIDDLE OF THE RIDGE AND RAN THE TROOPS OFF THE FINGERS OF THE RIDGE. THE NEXT DAY WE STARTED TO TAKE IT BACK. RICHARDSON WAS ON MY RIGHT AND ANOTHER SOLDIER WAS ON MY LEFT. WE WERE ON THE SIDE OF THE FIRST FINGER OF THE RIDGE LOOKING TOWARD THE TOP OF THE BIG HILL WHEN HAND GRENADES STARTED TO FLY AROUND US. THEY LOOKED LIKE RATION CANS WITH A SPOUT AND THEY WERE FILLED WITH BLACK POWDER, NAILS, GLASS, AND ANYTHING ELSE THEY COULD FILL THEM WITH. AS I SAID I WAS THE PLATOON RUNNER AND I

HAD PICKED UP AN M-2 CARBINE BECAUSE IT WAS LIGHTER TO CARRY. I WAS KNOCKING THE GRENADES BEHIND ME AS FAST AS I COULD WITH THE BUTT OF MY WEAPON. THE MAN ON MY LEFT GOT SHOT AND WENT ROLLING DOWN THE HILL. I LOOKED OVER AT RICHARDSON. WE WERE LYING FLAT ON OUR STOMACHS. THERE WAS NOT A SPOT WHERE YOU COULD PUT YOUR FINGER ON HIS BACK WITHOUT TOUCHING BLOOD. THE GRENADES STOPPED AND WHOEVER WAS THROWING THEM TOOK OFF. RICHARDSON WENT DOWN TO GET THE MAN THAT WAS SHOT AND TOOK HIM TO A MEDIC. I BEGAN FIRING AT THE ENEMY UP ON THE BIG HILL BUT TO MY AMAZEMENT I COULD SEE MY BULLETS LAND AND THEY WEREN'T EVEN REACHING THE TOP. THE CARBINE WAS GOOD FOR CLOSE IN-FIGHTING, BUT IT WASN'T GOOD TO REACH OUT AND TOUCH SOMEBODY. I TRADED THAT CARBINE FOR AN M-1 RIFLE RIGHT THEN. WE TOOK THE BIG HILL BACK.

THE **LORD** HAD WATCHED OVER ME THERE AGAIN. I NEVER GOT A SCRATCH.

I ONLY KNOW THE NAMES OF A FEW TOWNS. I DIDN'T REALLY KNOW WHERE WE WERE MOST OF THE TIME AND DIDN'T REALLY CARE FOR WE WALKED THROUGH THE HILLS MOST OF THE TIME. I JUST FOLLOWED ALONG WHERE WE WERE TOLD TO GO. WE MADE IT THROUGH JULY AND AUGUST AND THEN IN SEPTEMBER. WE WERE TOLD ABOUT THE MARINES MAKING A LANDING AT SEOUL. WE STARTED THE PUSH NORTH

WE WENT UP A DRY RIVER BED AND TOOK POSITIONS ON A RIDGE AT THE END OF IT. THE ENEMY WAS ON THE NEXT RIDGE AHEAD OF US AND WE WERE GIVEN THE ORDER TO ATTACK. WE STOOD UP AND SO DID THEY. WE JUST STOOD THERE SHOOTING AT EACH OTHER UNTIL SOMEONE HOLLERED TO GET DOWN. I WAS LYING ON MY LEFT SIDE LEANING ON MY LEFT ARM LOOKING OVER THE TOP OF THE RIDGE AT THE NEXT HILL WHEN I WAS HIT IN THE BACK LIKE SOMEONE HAD HIT ME WITH THE FLAT SIDE OF A PLANK WITH ALL THEIR MIGHT. THE THOUGHT CAME IN MY MIND IF I MOVED MY BONES WERE GOING TO FALL APART. I LOOKED TO MY RIGHT AND THE MAN NEXT TO ME WAS DEAD AND THE ONE PAST HIM WAS DEAD. WE WERE ALL HIT BY THE SAME ROUND. WE WERE BEING HIT WITH ARTILLERY. EVERYONE STARTED DOWN THE HILL. THERE WAS A CUT IN THE HILL AND SOMEONE PULLED ME IN FRONT OF HIM. HE PULLED A PIECE OF METAL FROM MY BACK AND ASKED ME IF I WANTED TO SAVE IT. IT WAS A PIECE OF SHRAPNEL ABOUT THE SIZE OF MY THUMB AND TWICE AS LONG. I DON'T KNOW WHY IT DIDN'T GO THROUGH ME. IT HIT ME ENDWISE. I STARTED BACK DOWN THE HILL. SOMEONE CALLED MY NAME AND

ASKED ME TO HELP HIM. IT WAS ONE OF THE SOUTH KOREANS THAT WAS ASSIGNED TO US. I HELPED HIM DOWN TO THE ROAD WHERE A LITTER JEEP WAS WAITING. I TURNED AROUND TO GO BACK UP BUT HE TOLD THE LT. IN CHARGE THAT I WAS HIT, TOO. THE LT. ASKED WHERE I WAS GOING AND WHEN I TOLD HIM HE TOLD ME TO GET MY ASS IN THE JEEP, SO I DID.

I WAS BACK AT THE AID STATION ONLY THREE DAYS THEN TAKEN BACK TO MY UNIT. WHEN I WALKED INTO THE AREA, A COUPLE OF GUYS TURNED WHITE. THEY THOUGHT I WAS A GHOST AS THEY WERE TOLD I WAS KILLED. WE LOST MY SQUAD LEADER THERE. HIS NAME WAS CORPORAL HAROLD VAN DENBURG. HE WAS FROM OSWEGO, NEW YORK. HE WAS MY SQUAD LEADER SINCE JAPAN. THE DATE WAS SEPTEMBER 16, 1950.

WHEN I THINK BACK ON IT THE ENEMY NEVER HAD ARTILLERY; NOTHING THAT BIG, ONLY SOME KNEE MORTARS AND T34 RUSSIAN TANKS. THAT'S ALL THEY COULD HAVE GOTTEN ACROSS THE RIVER ON THE UNDERWATER BRIDGE THEY MADE. THEY COULDN'T HAVE HIT THAT SIDE OF THE HILL. IT HAD TO BE OUR OWN ARTILLERY. THE ROUNDS FOLLOWED US RIGHT DOWN THE HILL.

WE WERE IN THE DRY RIVER BED BEFORE LT. BRYAN CAME. WE WENT ON PATROL UP THE HILL BEHIND US. I WAS THE RADIO MAN. I HAD A 300 RADIO ON MY BACK WHICH WASN'T MUCH GOOD. AFTER WE GOT TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HILL THERE WAS TOO MUCH LAND MASS BETWEEN US TO REACH ANYONE. WE CAPTURED A NORTH KOREAN SOLDIER. HE LOOKED TO BE ELEVEN OR TWELVE YEARS OLD. WE ASKED HIM IF THERE WERE MORE AROUND AND HE WOULDN'T TELL US AT FIRST, BUT ONE OF THE SECOND WAR SOLDIERS PUT HIS BAYONET TO HIS THROAT AND HE STARTED TALKING. WE WENT AFTER THE OFFICER THAT HE WAS WITH WHO WAS HIDING IN A HOLE. HE STARTED RUNNING AND SOMEONE SHOT HIM. WE NEVER FOUND ANYONE ELSE THERE. EVERY DAY WE HAD TO SEND A PATROL UP THAT HILL. THE KOREANS WOULD INFILTRATE EVERY NIGHT. WHEN LT. BRYAN CAME, HE AND I WENT UP THERE EVERY DAY.

AS I SAID, WE WALKED THROUGH THE HILLS DURING THE DAY CLEARING THEM OF THE ENEMY. WE PUT OUR SLEEPING BAGS ON A TRUCK AND WE WOULD GET THEM BACK AT NIGHT. I NEVER GOT THE SAME BAG. SOMETIMES I WOULD GET ONE AND SLIP MYSELF IN IT ONLY TO FIND THE NIGHT BEFORE SOMEONE HAD SLEPT IN IT WITH HIS MUDDY BOOTS ON AND THE BAG WOULD BE FULL OF MUD. SOMETIMES I WOULD GET A BAG WHERE THE GUY BEFORE HAD LICE AND

JUST LIVED WITH THEM INSTEAD OF GETTING RID OF THEM. YOU NEVER KNEW. MOST OF THE TIME THE MEDIC WOULD HAVE LOUSE POWDER WITH HIM. ONE NIGHT I WAS STATIONED ALONG A ROAD IN A SHED ON THE END OF A HOUSE. IT WAS FULL OF HAY. THE NEXT MORNING A FEW OF US IN THERE WOUND UP WITH LICE. THE MEDIC DIDN'T HAVE ANY LOUSE POWDER SO THE CRITTERS STAYED WITH US UNTIL WE GOT TO CAMP. LICE WOULD GATHER AROUND OUR WAIST WHERE IT WAS THE WARMEST. WE WOULD STOP ALONG THE ROAD AND SOMEONE WOULD BUILD A FIRE. WHEN THE MEN STOOD CLOSE TO THE FIRE I COULD SEE WHO HAD LICE. IT SEEMED THEY WOULD POP RIGHT OUT OF THEIR JACKETS TOWARD THE HEAT. I REMEMBERED WHAT MY PLATOON SERGEANT IN BASIC SAID ONCE. HE WAS TALKING ABOUT ALASKA AND HE SAID THAT WHEN THEY GOT LICE THEY WOULD TAKE OFF ALL THEIR CLOTHES AND HANG THEM OUTSIDE AND FREEZE THE LICE OUT OF THEM. AT THE TIME WE THOUGHT HE WAS MAKING A JOKE. WHEN I GOT THE CHANCE I TRIED IT AND IT WORKS. I GOT OUT OF MY CLOTHES AND HUNG THEM OUTSIDE OF THE TENT AND THE NEXT MORNING THE LICE WERE GONE.

ONE NIGHT WE WERE ON A HILL. THE NEXT MORNING WE WERE ATTACKED BY OUR OWN BLACK WIDOW FIGHTER PLANES AGAIN. I DON'T REMEMBER WHETHER IT WAS A P38 OR P39 BUT IT WAS A TWIN FUSELAGE PLANE. IT MOVED SLOW SO IT WAS GOOD FOR AIR SUPPORT. ONCE IT STARTED TO MAKE ITS RUN AND THOSE MACHINE GUNS STARTED TO CHATTER YOU WONDERED IF IT WAS EVER GOING TO GET PAST YOU. IT PROBABLY WASN'T LONG BUT IT SEEMED AS IF IT TOOK FOREVER TO GET BY. WE WERE ATTACKED THREE TIMES BY THEM WHILE I WAS IN KOREA. FOR A LOT OF THE TIME WE DIDN'T HAVE A PANEL TO LAY OUT ON THE HILL TO SHOW FRIENDLY FORCE.

WHEN WE WERE ON THE MOVE ON A SPEARHEAD WE RODE ON TANKS. THE TANK I RODE ON WAS CALLED OUR "MOM". WHEN THE TANKS PARK FOR THE NIGHT THEY STAY TOGETHER IN A GROUP AND WE WOULD TAKE UP POSITIONS ON THE HILLS AROUND THEM. ONE NIGHT ONE OF THE TANKS HAD AN ORPHAN KID WITH THEM. HE WAS ABOUT FIVE YEARS OLD. AT NIGHT THEY SENT HIM UP ON THE HILLS WITH US. IT WAS A GOOD THING THEY DID. OUR TANKS WERE PARKED ONE NIGHT. THE NORTH KOREAN TANKS DIDN'T KNOW THEY WERE THERE AND THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE A GOOD PLACE FOR THEM TO PARK. IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE ALL HELL BROKE LOOSE DOWN THERE. OUR TANKS MADE SHORT WORK OF THEM.

IN THE SUMMER WE BATHED IN THE RIVER. ONE DAY WE WERE CAMPED BY A RIVER AND BATHED IN IT. THE NEXT DAY IT WAS RUNNING RED WITH BLOOD FROM SOMEWHERE UPSTREAM FROM US. WE WERE ISSUED NEW UNIFORMS AND FIVE OF US WERE SENT TO PUT UP A ROAD BLOCK. WE WERE ON THE TOP OF A RIDGE ABOVE THE ROAD AT A CURVE. THEY GAVE US OUR RATIONS WHICH AMOUNTED TO A NUMBER 10 CAN OF PEACHES AND A BOX OF CRACKERS FOR THE FIVE OF US. WE WERE THERE A COUPLE DAYS. THEN THEY PULLED US OFF AND WE WENT BACK TO WHERE WE WERE CAMPED. WE FOUND THAT THE NORTH KOREANS HAD BEEN THERE WHILE WE WERE GONE. THEY TOOK EVERYTHING INCLUDING OUR NEW UNIFORMS. I DON'T KNOW WHERE THEY SENT THE REST OF THE OUTFIT BUT THEY LEFT NO GUARD AT THE CAMP.

WE WERE ON A HILL AND A. AND C. COMPANY WERE ON THE TOP. COMPANY B. WAS SPREAD OUT ON A RIDGE COMING DOWN FROM THE TOP. WE HAD OUR FOXHOLES DUG IN ON THE SIDE OF THE RIDGE. WE WERE PULLING GUARD DUTY ONE HOUR ON AND ONE HOUR OFF. I HAD MY SLEEPING BAG ON TOP OF THE RIDGE ABOVE OUR FOXHOLE. I HAD PULLED MY HOUR ON GUARD AND CRAWLED INTO MY SLEEPING BAG. IT DIDN'T SEEM LONG WHEN THE OTHER GUY WAS PULLING AT MY BAG TO WAKE ME UP. I SAT UP AND TOLD HIM I HAD JUST GOT OFF GUARD DUTY. I LAID BACK DOWN JUST IN TIME TO SEE TRACER BULLETS PASS ABOUT SIX INCHES ABOVE MY FACE. IT DIDN'T TAKE ME LONG TO GET INTO THE FOXHOLE. I MUST HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP AS SOON AS I GOT IN MY SLEEPING BAG. BEING A SOUND SLEEPER I DIDN'T HEAR A THING THAT WENT ON. THE NORTH KOREANS HAD RUN COMPANY A. OFF THE TOP OF THE HILL AND WERE LOOKING DOWN OUR THROATS. THE NEXT MORNING WE TOOK CARE OF THEM.

GOD HAD PROTECTED THIS DUMB KID AGAIN.

WE FOLLOWED THE GENEVA CONVENTION WHEN WE FIRST GOT THERE BUT THE NORTH KOREANS DIDN'T. ONE OF OUR COMPANIES RAN ACROSS SIX AMERICAN SOLDIERS WITH THEIR HANDS TIED BEHIND THEIR BACKS AND SHOT IN THE BACK OF THE HEAD. THE WORD CAME DOWN TO TAKE NO MORE PRISONERS. I DON'T THINK IT CAME FROM HEADQUARTERS BUT FROM SOMEWHERE ALONG THE LINE. WE GOT A NEW PLATOON LEADER. I DON'T REMEMBER HIS NAME. HE CAME OVER FROM JAPAN WHERE HE WAS A MASTER SERGEANT IN CHARGE OF LOADING AIRPLANES FOR KOREA. HE VOLUNTEERED TO COME TO KOREA FOR A PROMOTION TO SECOND LT. WE WERE KIND OF MAD AT FIRST BECAUSE HE WAS LOADING PLANES WITH PLUMBING SUPPLIES FOR PUSON AND WE WERE SHORT

OF FOOD AND AMMUNITION. HE TOLD US WHEN HE FIRST GOT THERE THAT HE WANTED US TOUGH. HE SAID IF YOU GET UP IN THE MORNING AND SHIT AND IT DON'T STACK UP RIGHT, KICK IT ASIDE AND SHIT AGAIN. WE SHAVED EVERY MORNING NO MATTER HOW COLD IT WAS. HE VOLUNTEERED US FOR EVERY PATROL THAT WENT OUT. HE WANTED TO GET SOME MEDALS. WE WENT ON TANKS ON COMBAT PATROLS. WE WENT ON RECON PATROLS. I FORGET HOW LONG HE WAS WITH US BUT IT WAS QUITE A WHILE.

ONE DAY WE WERE SUPPOSED TO HELP A. AND C. COMPANY TAKE A HILL. . WE WERE TO WAIT FOR THE AIRSTRIKE TO GET OVER AND A. AND C. WERE GOING TO TAKE THE NEXT HILL. WE WERE TO TAKE UP THE POSITIONS THEY HAD AND GIVE THEM COVER FIRE. ONE OF THE JEEP DRIVERS CAME ALONG TO GET IN THE ACTION. THE NEXT THING WE KNOW AFTER THE AIRSTRIKE WE GOT THE WORD, ATTACK. HE VOLUNTEERED US TO LEAD THE ATTACK AS WE MOVED OUT A LIEUTENANT IN ONE OF THE OTHER COMPANIES GOT SHOT THROUGH THE CHEEKS. HE MUST HAVE TURNED HIS HEAD TO GIVE ORDERS. WE WERE GOING TO THE LEFT SIDE OF THE HILL. THERE WAS A LITTLE BANK WE CAME TO AND THERE WAS NOTHING BUT DIRT BETWEEN US AND THE TOP OF THE HILL. NO COVER AT ALL. WE CALLED IN ANOTHER AIRSTRIKE BUT THE NORTH KOREANS WERE DUG IN AND HAD TREES OVER THEIR TRENCHES. I SAW A FIVE HUNDRED POUND BOMB HIT THE TOP AND AS SOON AS THE DUST CLEARED THEY WERE SHOOTING AT US AGAIN. WE WERE STANDING UP AT THE LITTLE BANK WAITING TO ATTACK WHEN ONE SHOT RANG OUT. THE JEEP DRIVER WHO WAS STANDING NEXT TO ME GOT HIT RIGHT BETWEEN THE EYES AND KILLED. HE SHOULD NOT EVEN HAVE BEEN THERE. HIS NAME WAS ELWOOD C. PUTT, FROM LEBANON, PA. THE DATE WAS JANUARY 30, 1951. ABOUT THAT TIME A SOLDIER I DIDN'T KNOW CAME AROUND TO MY LEFT HUNTING FOR COMPANY C. HE COULDN'T FIND THEM. HE SAID HE FOUND A WAY TO GET TO THE TOP. WE TOOK THE HILL. THAT WAS THE LAST TIME THE LT. VOLUNTEERED US FOR ANYTHING. HE GOT HIS MEDAL; IT WAS A HAND GRENADE RIGHT BETWEEN THE LEGS. A FEW DAYS LATER WE TOOK A HILL AND GOT BACK HIS WEDDING RING OFF ONE OF THE DEAD NORTH KOREANS.

GOD HAD WATCHED OVER ME AGAIN.

WE WERE GOING THROUGH THE HILLS WITH A. AND C. COMPANY IN THE LEAD. AS SOON AS THEY GOT FIRED ON IT WAS B. COMPANY'S TURN TO TAKE THE LEAD. WE MOVED UP FRONT. THERE WAS A LITTLE PATH; KIND OF LIKE A LOGGING ROAD THROUGH THE TREES TO THE LEFT WHERE THE SHOTS WERE COMING FROM. WE GOT DOWN BEHIND SOME FALLEN TREES FOR COVER. I THOUGHT ABOUT RUNNING OVER AND GETTING THE SHOOTER. WHEN I STOOD UP A LITTLE VOICE SAID TO ME, "WHAT WOULD YOUR MOTHER SAY?" I HESITATED FOR A SPLIT SECOND AND THE SHOOTING STARTED. IF I HAD GONE I WOULD HAVE BEEN CUT IN HALF WITH THE CROSS FIRE. THAT SECOND WAS ALL IT TOOK. THAT LITTLE VOICE SAVED MY LIFE.

GOD HAD PROTECTED ME AGAIN.

WHEN WE STARTED TO GO ON SPEARHEAD AGAIN WE WERE RIDING IN TRUCKS. WE WERE GOING THROUGH THE TWENTY FIFTH DIVISION WHICH WAS THE UNIT MY BROTHER WAS IN. MY BROTHER STARTED TO LOOK FOR ME BUT NEVER FOUND ME. I DIDN'T KNOW AT THE TIME HE WAS LOOKING FOR ME AS WE WERE GOING THROUGH THAT DIVISION. I LEARNED LATER WHEN WE GOT HOME THAT HE HAD ASKED ABOUT ME IN THE TRUCK AHEAD OF AND BEHIND THE ONE I WAS ON, SO WE NEVER MET OVER THERE.

AS I SAID I WAS PLATOON RUNNER FOR A LOT OF THE TIME SO I DIDN'T GET TO KNOW TOO MANY GUYS SINCE I WAS ALONE MOST OF THE TIME. THEN THEY PUT ME IN THE FOURTH SQUAD AS AN AMMO BEARER FOR THE MACHINE GUNNER. SO I WAS IN A SQUAD AGAIN. WE DID A LOT OF CUSSING. OUR SQUAD LEADER WAS A MAN NAMED SGT. PHILIPI AND HE CHANGED ALL THAT. HE CALLED US ON OUR CUSSING AND BEING WHO WE WERE, WE STARTED TO MAKE FUN OF HIM BY USING PHRASES SUCH AS "GOLLY DARN" AND "DAD GUM IT" AND THE LIKE. PRETTY SOON THAT'S THE WAY IT WENT. NO MORE CUSSING. SGT. PHILIPI WAS A GOOD LEADER. HE WAS A VETERAN FROM THE SECOND WAR. HE WAS STRICT BUT KNEW HIS STUFF.

WE THEN GOT A NEW ROCKET LAUNCHER. A 3.5 AND THREE OF US TRIED OUT FOR BEING GUNNER ON IT. WE WERE ON A HILL OVERLOOKING A RIVER. WE WERE SUPPOSED TO JUDGE THE DISTANCE TO A PILE OF ROCKS ON THE OTHER SIDE. I WAS THE CLOSEST TO HITTING IT BUT I DIDN'T GET THE JOB. THEY WOULD HAVE TO MAKE ME A CORPORAL TO GIVE IT TO ME.

SOMEWHERE TOWARDS THE BEGINNING WE HAD GAS MASKS AND PLENTY OF RATIONS. WE TOOK OUR PICK OF CIGARETTES AND LEFT THE REST. ONE DAY A VETERAN CAME TO ME AND SAID WE MIGHT BE SORRY SOMEDAY FOR THROWING THOSE RATIONS AND CANDY AWAY. HE SAID TO THROW AWAY THE GAS MASK AND KEEP THE BAG FOR STORAGE. THAT SOUNDED LIKE A GOOD IDEA TO ME, SO I DID. I KEPT CIGARETTES, CANDY, AND COCOA OUT OF THE RATIONS. PRETTY SOON I HAD THE BAG FULL OF GOODIES. THEY CAME IN HANDY LATER ON.

I GOT FRIENDLY WITH ONE OF THE TANKERS. HE WAS THE ASSISTANT DRIVER. WE GOT ALONG GOOD. WE RODE THAT TANK A LOT. I DON'T REMEMBER HIS NAME. JUST THE TANK; OUR "MOM". I WAS ALWAYS SINGING ESPECIALLY WHEN RIDING THE TANK. PRETTY SOON RICHARDSON STARTED CALLING ME MAW BECAUSE I GUESS IT TOOK THE FIGHTING OFF THE MINDS OF THE OTHERS. IF SOMEONE WOULD HAVE ASKED ME WHY I SANG I PROBABLY WOULD HAVE TOLD THEM THAT IT WAS BETTER THAN CRYING.

WE WERE SENT UP ONE HILL THAT WAS THE TALLEST I'D BEEN ON. WHEN WE GOT TO THE TOP WE COULD SEE A TOWN BELOW US. IT SWEEPED DOWN TO A ROCKY SHORE LINE TO A RIVER. ACROSS THE RIVER WERE MOUNTAINS WITH CAVES IN THE SIDE OF THEM. WE WERE ABOUT AS HIGH AS THE B.T. TWELVE TRAINER AIRPLANE THAT WAS IN FRONT OF US. THE PLANE WAS A SPOTTER FOR THE ARTILLERY. HE WOULD CALL IN FIRE ORDERS AND THEY WOULD SEND A BARRAGE ACROSS THE RIVER. THIS IS WHERE I SAW MY FIRST MIRACLE. AS WE WATCHED THE PILOT HE CALLED IN A FIRE ORDER THEN SOMEHOW DRIFTED IN FRONT OF THE ARTILLERY ROUNDS. ONE SHELL MUST HAVE HIT HIS WING AND CAUSED HIM TO SPIN AROUND. THEN HE WENT DOWN. HE DID NOT NOSE DIVE, BUT HE JUST SPUN AROUND FLAT WAYS. THE PLANE HIT THE GROUND FLAT ON ITS BELLY. WE THOUGHT THE PILOT WAS A GONER BUT AS WE WATCHED, THE PILOT GOT OUT AND WALKED AWAY.

THAT WAS THE FIRST MIRACLE I SAW.

THE SECOND ONE I SAW WAS SIMILAR. WE WERE ON A HIGH HILL. THERE WAS A DEEP VALLEY BETWEEN US. THE ENEMY WAS IN CAVES IN THE SIDE OF THE HILL. WE CALLED IN AN AIRSTRIKE AND F80 SHOOTING STAR JETS WERE QUICK TO ARRIVE. THEY CAME OVER THE HILL WE WERE ON. THEY HAD TO GO DOWN INTO THE VALLEY TO SHOOT THEIR ROCKETS INTO THE CAVES THEN CLIMB UP TO CLEAR THE HILL TOP. ONE OF THE PLANES WENT TOO DEEP INTO THE

VALLEY AND WHEN HE SHOT HIS ROCKETS THEY WENT OFF BEFORE HE GOT OUT OF THERE. THE EXPLOSION GOT HIS PLANE IN THE BELLY WHEN HE WAS CLIMBING OUT. HE HAD SHOT HIMSELF DOWN AND CRASHED INTO THE VALLEY. TO OUR SURPRISE HE CLIMBED OUT OF THE PLANE AND STARTED RUNNING UP THE HILL WE WERE ON WITH THE NORTH KOREANS RIGHT ON HIS TAIL. WE GAVE HIM COVER FIRE AND HE MADE IT UP TO US. WE COULDN'T LET THEM GET HIM. THEY HATED PILOTS AND WOULD HAVE TORTURED HIM BEFORE THEY KILLED HIM.

THAT WAS MIRACLE NUMBER TWO THAT I SAW.

DURING THE SUMMER WE WERE ON A HILL SOMEWHERE SOUTH OF TAGUE I THINK. I DON'T KNOW FOR SURE. DOWN THE HILL FROM US I THOUGHT WERE APPLE TREES. I FOUND OUT FROM ONE OF THE GUYS THAT THEY WERE PERSIMMON TREES AND THEY WERE RIPE. SOMEONE GAVE ME ONE. I HAD NEVER SEEN A PERSIMMON BEFORE, LET ALONE TASTED ONE. I COULDN'T BELIEVE HOW SWEET IT WAS. WE HAD A FEW. LATER ON IN THE FALL WE WERE GOING THROUGH THE COUNTRYSIDE AND WERE PASSING AN ENGINEERING OUTFIT. THERE WAS A KOREAN SITTING ON A TRAILER FULL OF TIMBERS EATING A GREEN PERSIMMON. I HAD EATEN A BUNCH OF GREEN APPLES WHEN I WAS GROWING UP SO I ASKED HIM FOR ONE. I TOOK A BITE AND I MIGHT AS WELL HAVE TAKEN A SPOONFUL OF ALUM. I COULDN'T BELIEVE HOW SOMETHING THAT WAS SO SWEET WHEN IT'S RIPE COULD BE SO SOUR WHEN IT WAS GREEN. I GAVE UP ON GREEN PERSIMMONS RIGHT THERE.

IN SEPTEMBER WHEN WE STARTED THE PUSH NORTH WE GOT BACK TO SEOUL. WE WERE ON A HILL ABOVE THE RIVER JUST BEFORE THE TOWN. WE HAD CAPTURED A CASE FULL OF NEW WEAPONS FROM THE NORTH KOREANS. I FOUND A 31 CALIBER CARBINE. IT WAS BEAUTIFUL AND STILL IN COSMOLINE. IT HAD A BEAUTIFUL STOCK AND I WAS GOING TO KEEP IT. WE PUSHED FARTHER NORTH AND I CARRIED THAT CARBINE WITH ME. ONE OF THE GUYS TOLD ME TO PUT IT IN THE COMPANY COMMANDER'S TRAILER BEHIND HIS JEEP. IT WOULD BE SAFER THERE, SO I DID.

WE WERE ON A SPEARHEAD AGAIN, RIDING ON TANKS AND GOING THROUGH THE HILLS. WE GOT WAY AHEAD OF OUR SUPPLIES. WE WERE SHORT OF AMMUNITION AND OUT OF FOOD. THAT'S WHERE MY GAS MASK BAG CAME IN HANDY. FOR THREE DAYS WE LIVED ON DRY COCOA AND C-RATION CHOCOLATE. ONE OF THE TANKS BROKE A BELT AND WE HAD TO WAIT UNTIL IT

WAS FIXED. THE TANKS WOULD NOT LEAVE ONE ALONE. IF ONE BROKE DOWN THE OTHERS WOULD STAY WITH IT UNTIL IT WAS FIXED. WHEN WE CAUGHT UP WITH THE CONVOY THEY WERE GOING AROUND A MOUNTAIN ON A NARROW ROAD. IT WENT UP ALONG THE EDGE OF A DEEP VALLEY ON THE LEFT AND THE MOUNTAIN ON THE RIGHT. THEY WERE GOING ALONG ONE VEHICLE AT A TIME. IT WAS BACKED UP. IT WENT UP FOR A WAYS TO A SHARP CURVE TO THE LEFT. THEN IT WENT STRAIGHT FOR A WAYS AND CURVED BACK TO THE RIGHT AND THROUGH A PASS IN THE MOUNTAIN. WE COULD SEE THE LEAD VEHICLES GOING THROUGH THE PASS. AS WE WATCHED THEM A TRUCK FULL OF C-RATIONS GOT TOO CLOSE TO THE EDGE AND WENT CRASHING DOWN INTO THE VALLEY. AS I SAID WE HADN'T EATEN IN THREE DAYS. I DON'T KNOW IF THE GUYS FELT MORE SORROW FOR THE RATIONS OR FOR THE TWO MEN THAT CRASHED WITH THEM.

AS WE WERE SITTING THERE WAITING OUR TURN TO GO, A JEEP WITH A TRAILER ON THE BACK STOPPED IN FRONT OF US. THERE WAS AN OFFICER IN IT. HE GOT OUT AND WALKED UP A WAYS TO SEE WHAT THE HOLDUP WAS. WHILE HE WAS GONE ONE OF THE GUYS STARTED TALKING TO THE JEEP DRIVER TO KEEP HIM BUSY WHILE THE OTHER ONE GOT A CASE OF C-RATIONS OUT FROM UNDER THE TARP COVERING THE TRAILER. SOME OF US ATE THAT DAY.

ONE DAY WE WERE CAMPED ON A HILL. THERE WAS A SCHOOL BELOW US. WE WENT DOWN TO INVESTIGATE. ON THE WALL WAS A BIG POSTER OF JOE STALIN. I HAD THE TWENTY FIVE AUTOMATIC THAT I GOT FROM THAT NORTH KOREAN AND I SHOT THAT POSTER TO BITS. I HAD PLENTY OF AMMO FOR THAT PISTOL AS IT USED THE SAME AS THEIR BURP GUNS. THEY WERE KIND OF LIKE OUR MACHINE GUNS WITH A CYLINDER OF AMMO THAT FIT IT. I GOT A CYLINDER AND TOOK THE BULLETS OUT OF IT. WE COULDN'T SHOOT "UNCLE JOE" AS WE CALLED HIM BUT WE SURE HAD FUN WITH HIS PICTURE.

WE CONTINUED OUR PUSH NORTH AND WOUND UP IN THE CAPITAL OF P'YONGAN PROVINCE. WE RODE THROUGH ON TANKS. SOME OTHER OUTFIT HAD TAKEN THE TOWN. SOME OF THE GUYS TRADED THEIR C-RATIONS FOR CANS OF TUNA FROM A WEAPONS CARRIER FULL OF THEM. I DIDN'T LIKE TUNA SO I DIDN'T. I WAS GLAD I DIDN'T. WHEN THEY OPENED THE CANS THE FOOD WAS SPOILED. WE WENT NORTH OF THE CAPITAL AND SET UP CAMP. WE SENT OUT PATROLS BUT WE COULDN'T FIND THE NORTH KOREAN ARMY ANYWHERE. THEY WERE DESTROYED. WE STAYED THERE AWHILE AND THEN GOT THE WORD

THAT WE WERE GOING TO PARADE IN TOKYO THE FOURTH OF NOVEMBER. THERE WERE THREE OF US IN THE OUTFIT THAT WERE ONLY 17 YEARS OLD AND TOO YOUNG TO BE IN A COMBAT ZONE. WE WERE ASKED TO FALL OUT SO THEY COULD SEND US HOME. NO ONE MOVED. I TOLD THEM I HAD COME OVER WITH THE OUTFIT AND I WAS GOING TO GO BACK WITH IT. MY 18TH BIRTHDAY WAS THE SEVENTH OF NOVEMBER ANYHOW. THAT TURNED OUT TO BE A MISTAKE. WE WERE TO CLEAR A SEAPORT TOWN OF SINUIJU, THE CAPITAL OF NORTH P'YONGAN AND LOAD ON BOATS FOR JAPAN.

THAT NIGHT A SMALL PLANE ABOUT THE SIZE OF A PIPER CUB CAME OVERHEAD AND DROPPED MORTAR ROUNDS ON US. THAT WAS THE EXTENT OF THE NORTH KOREAN AIR FORCE. WE GOT WITHIN SEVEN MILES OF THAT TOWN ON THE YALU RIVER. WE WERE TOLD THAT A. AND C. COMPANY HIT A ROAD BLOCK.. WE HAD BEEN ISSUED OUR FULL SET OF SEVEN UNIFORMS. WE HAD A DUFFEL BAG FULL AND A LAUNDRY BAG FULL. WE WERE TO TIE IN WITH A COMPANY WHO WAS ON A RIDGE THAT WAS LIKE A HORSESHOE AROUND A VALLEY. WE WENT UP THE HILL TO JOIN A. COMPANY, BUT THEY WERE ON THE OTHER END OF THE HILL. THE ENEMY WAS ON OUR END. WE PULLED BACK TO THE HILL BEFORE THAT ONE. AT THAT TIME SOME OF US HAD A SOUTH KOREAN IN THE FOXHOLE WITH US. I HAD ONE NAMED KON. WITH THE LITTLE ENGLISH THAT HE KNEW AND THE LITTLE JAPANESE AND KOREAN THAT I KNEW (WHICH WAS WHAT WE CALLED G.I. SLANG) WE COULD COMMUNICATE. WE WERE IN THE SECOND HOLE FROM THE END OF THE HILL AND HE COULD HEAR THE ENEMY TALKING. HE TOLD ME THAT THEY WEREN'T KOREANS, BUT CHINESE. THAT'S WHEN I REALIZED THE WAR WAS NOT OVER BUT HAD JUST BEGUN...THE POLITICAL WAR, THAT IS.

THE WAR SHOULD HAVE BEEN OVER THEN; NOVEMBER, 1950. THERE SHOULD HAVE BEEN ONLY ONE KOREA, NOT A NORTH AND SOUTH. THAT'S WHEN I REALIZED MY DAD WAS RIGHT. HE WAS AGAINST THE U.N. ALTHOUGH I THOUGHT IT WAS A GOOD THING AT THE TIME. MOST OF THE MEMBERS WERE OUR ENEMIES. HOW IN THE WORLD CAN WE BE UNITED WITH OUR ENEMIES AND WIN? THE FIGHT WAS ON BETWEEN COMMUNISM AND FREEDOM. THREE MORE YEARS OF MEN ON BOTH SIDES DYING FOR NOTHING... JUST POLITICS.

THAT NIGHT THE ENEMY HAD TRUMPETS AND THEY BLEW TAPS FOR US FROM ALL FOUR DIRECTIONS. THE NEXT THING WE KNEW MEN WERE RUNNING PAST OUR HOLE ON TOP OF THE HILL. ONE OF THEM TOLD US TO GET OUT OF THERE. THE CHINESE HAD OVERRUN THE COMPANY COMMAND POST AT THE BOTTOM

OF THE HILL. D. COMPANIES HEAVY WEAPONS WERE DOWN THERE AND THEY ABANDONED THEM. WE COULD HEAR THE CHINESE DROPPING MORTAR ROUNDS IN THE TUBES. YOU CAN'T HEAR A MORTAR ROUND COME DOWN BUT I FOUND OUT THAT THERE WAS A KIND OF PRESSURE IN THE AIR WHEN THEY DID. I TOLD KON TO RUN TO THE OTHER END OF THE HILL. I WAS GOING TO WAIT UNTIL I SAW THE TRACER BULLETS THAT WERE COMING UP THE HILL EVEN OUT. THEN I WOULD KNOW THAT THEY WERE ABOVE THE HILL AND WE COULD SHOOT THEM.

ABOUT THAT TIME A MORTAR ROUND HIT IN FRONT OF US. THAT CHANGED MY MIND SO WE RAN DOWN THE HILL WITH THE REST OF OUR GUYS. A LITTLE WAYS FROM THE HILL WAS A CLUMP OF TREES SO WE STOPPED THERE. IT WAS LIKE AN ISLAND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FIELD. THAT'S WHERE A LOT OF THE GUY'S STOPPED. THE CHINESE DIDN'T FOLLOW US. LATER THAT NIGHT WE PULLED BACK TO THE ROAD TO REGROUP. THE NEXT DAY WE TOOK THE HILL BACK. I LOOKED IN THE TRAILER FOR MY CARBINE. THE JEEP AND THE TRAILER AND MY CARBINE WAS ALL SHOT TO HELL.

WE WERE ON THE TOP OF THAT HILL AGAIN. THEN WE STARTED TO TAKE THE HILLS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE VALLEY THAT LED DOWN TO THE ROAD. WE WERE ABOUT HALF WAY ACROSS THE VALLEY AND GOT PINNED DOWN BY ENEMY FIRE. I WAS LYING ON MY BELLY IN A LITTLE DITCH THAT WASN'T DEEP ENOUGH TO LAY YOUR RIFLE IN BUT I THINK I MANAGED TO GET ALL THE WAY IN. AN AIRSTRIKE WAS CALLED IN TO COVER US. WHILE WE WERE WAITING FOR THE PLANES I WAS HALF DOZED OFF. I WAS TIRED. ABOUT THAT TIME I FELT SOMETHING HITTING MY BACK. I THOUGHT IT WAS MACHINE-GUN FIRE. I THOUGHT I WAS SHOT. INSTEAD IT WAS THE CLIPS FROM THE GUNS OF THE PLANES. THEY SENT JETS TO COVER US AND WHEN THEY CAME OVER THE HILLS THE GUNS WERE DONE FIRING BEFORE THE SOUND CAME OVER THE HILL. THE CLIPS FROM THE SHELLS WERE HITTING MY BACK. I GOT OVER TO WHERE THERE WAS A CULVERT UNDER THE ROAD. THERE WERE A COUPLE OF GUYS ALREADY IN THERE. I STARTED TO TALK TO ONE BUT HE WAS DEAD. HE WAS JUST SITTING THERE AGAINST THE WALL AND I DIDN'T SEE A SCRATCH ON HIM. BUT HE WAS DEAD.

WHEN WE GOT OUT OF THAT ONE I WENT TO FIND MY FRIEND IN THE TANKS. HE WAS AN ASSISTANT DRIVER BUT THE DRIVER HAD GOTTEN SICK AND HE FINALLY GOT A CHANCE TO DRIVE. THE ONLY TROUBLE WAS HE RAN OVER A LAND MINE. THE MINE BROKE INSIDE THE TRACK RIGHT UNDER THE DRIVER

SEAT. THE TANK WAS BUTTONED UP AND HE WAS KILLED. THEY TOLD ME HE WAS ONLY ABOUT FOUR FOOT TALL WHEN THEY GOT HIM OUT OF THE TANK.

THEY PULLED US BACK SOUTH WHICH WAS VERY HARD TO DO. WE RAN INTO THE CHINESE AT EVERY TURN. WE WERE FIGHTING BESIDE THE ENGLISH TROOPS AND WE TRADED C-RATIONS FOR ENGLISH MUFFINS. THEN NEXT WE WERE TIED IN WITH THE AUSTRALIANS. WE ALSO WERE WITH THE TURKS. THEY WERE A FIERCE BUNCH. WE WERE TOLD NOT TO GET CLOSE TO THEM AS THEY WOULD JUST AS SOON CUT OUR THROATS AS ANYONE ELSE'S.

WHEN WE WERE ON THE LINE WITH THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA ARMY, THEY WERE THE FIRST ONES TO RUN AND LEAVE A HOLE IN THE LINE. THEN THE ENEMY WOULD BE BEHIND US AGAIN. WE OFTEN RECEIVED BANZAI ATTACKS AT NIGHT. ONE NIGHT WE WERE ON A HILL, WITH NO FOOD AND ONE OF THE MEN HAD RUN ACROSS A HOG. WE BUTCHERED HIM FOR SUPPER. THEN WE GOT RUN OFF THAT HILL BY OUR OWN ARTILLERY. THE ENGLISH HAD CALLED IN A FIRE ORDER AND THEY GOT THE WRONG HILL. ONE ROUND LANDED IN THE ENGLISH COMMAND POST.

WE WERE SOMEWHERE IN THE BACK WHEN WE HEARD THAT BOB HOPE WAS COMING TO ENTERTAIN THE TROOPS. BEFORE HE GOT THERE THREE OF US WERE SENT TO A RAILHEAD TO GUARD A WAREHOUSE FULL OF GARLIC. IN MY OPINION THE NORTH COULD HAVE HAD THE GARLIC. WE COULD HAVE SMELLED THEM AND KNOWN WHERE THEY WERE AT. BUT ANYHOW WE DIDN'T GET TO SEE THE BOB HOPE SHOW.

WHILE WE WERE AT THE RAILHEAD, THE SO-CALLED SOUTH KOREAN POLICE WERE THERE. THEY INVITED US FOR SUPPER. COOKED FOOD SOUNDED GOOD. THE WOMEN WERE COOKING SOMETHING THAT LOOKED LIKE BEEF AND ALSO RICE, OF COURSE. IT SMELLED GOOD AT FIRST, BUT THE MORE IT COOKED THE MORE IT GOT A SWEET SICKENING SMELL TO IT. THAT'S WHEN I DECIDED IT WAS DOG MEAT. I ATE NOTHING BUT PLAIN RICE WHICH I DIDN'T CARE MUCH FOR. WE WERE TOLD THEY HAD A NORTH KOREAN SPY THEY CAPTURED. THEY ASKED IF WE WANTED TO TAKE A PUNCH AT HIM. I WENT IN WHERE THEY HAD HIM AND LOOKED HIM IN THE EYE. I DECLINED THE OFFER TO PUNCH HIM. THE GUY WITH ME DID THOUGH. WHEN WE GOT TO WHERE WE COULD TALK I TOLD MY BUDDY WHY I DIDN'T PUNCH HIM. I WAS ALWAYS SKEPTICAL OF THE SO-CALLED SOUTH KOREAN POLICE. THEY SHOWED UP EVERY TIME WE CAME TO A TOWN. I ALWAYS WONDERED HOW THEY GOT THERE SO FAST. THERE WAS

ALWAYS ONE THAT COULD SPEAK PRETTY GOOD ENGLISH, TOO. AND THERE ALWAYS WAS ONLY THREE OR FOUR OF THEM. I THOUGHT IF THEY ALREADY TOOK THE TOWN WHY DID THEY NEED US? I TOLD MY BUDDY THE GUY HE PUNCHED MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE ONLY FRIEND WE HAD. THERE WAS NO WAY TO BE SURE.

WE WERE PULLED BACK TO SEOUL AT ONE POINT TO GUARD CORPS HEADQUARTERS. THEY WERE GETTING A LOT OF INFILTRATORS. WE WERE IN A COLLEGE OF SOME KIND AT CHRISTMAS. THEY STARTED GIVING US BAYONET TRAINING. A LITTLE LATE I THOUGHT. IN BASIC TRAINING WE NEVER WENT THROUGH THAT. IT WAS TOO COLD OR TOO MUCH SNOW IN FT. RILEY, KANSAS, FOR MUCH OUTDOOR TRAINING. OUR MEDIC HAD SOME 190 PROOF ALCOHOL TO MAKE COUGH SYRUP WITH. HE COULDN'T FIND ONE INGREDIENT TO DO SO, EVEN AT CORPS. SO NEW YEARS EVE WE USED THAT ALCOHOL AND MIXED IT WITH THE CITRUS JUICE THAT THE WOMEN FROM TEXAS HAD SENT FOR US BOYS THAT WERE TOO YOUNG TO DRINK. WE THANKED THEM FOR IT. THAT NIGHT NOBODY CAUGHT COLD.

WE WERE MOVED TO A HILL WHERE WE SET UP CAMP. WE HAD THE COOK'S TENT WITH US SO WE GOT HOT CHOW. ONE DAY SOME OF THE MEN WERE OUT AND CAME ACROSS A STRAY COW BUT IT WAS TOO SCRAWNY TO EAT. THEY FINALLY CAME ACROSS A SOUTH KOREAN WITH A COW PULLING A WAGON. IT WAS HEALTHY SO THEY TRADED WITH HIM (AGAINST HIS WILL OF COURSE). THEY BROUGHT THE COW TO THE COOKS WHO BUTCHERED AND COOKED IT. WE HAD FRESH BEEF FOR A CHANGE. THE KOREAN WENT TO THE AUTHORITIES AND COMPLAINED BUT BY THE TIME THEY CAME TO OUR COMPANY TO ASK ABOUT IT THAT COW WAS CONSUMED. I SUPPOSE THE ARMY HAD TO BUY A NEW COW FOR THAT GUY. I DON'T KNOW. I DO KNOW THEY COULDN'T FIND HIS COW.

IT WAS AT THIS SAME PLACE THAT I WAS FRIENDS WITH THE MEDIC. HE WAS A NICE GUY AND WE GOT ALONG GOOD FOR QUITE A WHILE. I WOKE UP ONE MORNING WITH SOMEONE KISSING ME. IT WAS HE. I JUMPED UP AND HOLLERED AT HIM. HE SAID HE WAS SORRY. HE SAID I REMINDED HIM OF HIS GIRL FRIEND BACK HOME. THAT DIDN'T MATTER TO ME. THAT ENDED OUR FRIENDSHIP RIGHT THEN. A COUPLE OF THE GUYS TRIED TO SMOOTH IT OVER BY TELLING ME HE WAS SORRY. THAT DIDN'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE TO ME. MY DAD NEVER EVEN HUGGED ME WHEN I WAS LITTLE, LET ALONE KISS ME. I DON'T EVER REMEMBER SITTING ON HIS LAP. I DIDN'T LIKE IT A BIT. I GUESS THAT'S

WHY I HAD A HARD TIME HUGGING MY KIDS AFTER THEY GOT TO A CERTAIN AGE.

I HEARD ABOUT THE GUYS IN THE SECOND WAR THAT HAD LOST ARMS AND HAD TO HAVE SOMEBODY DO THEIR WRITING HOME FOR THEM. I FELT BAD ABOUT THAT SO I STARTED PRACTICING DOING EVERYTHING WITH MY LEFT HAND. IF IT EVER HAPPENED TO ME MY FOLKS WOULDN'T KNOW ABOUT IT TILL I GOT HOME. I GOT PRETTY GOOD AT IT. I KEPT IT UP ALL THE TIME I WAS IN THE ARMY.

WE WERE SHORT OF WATER A LOT OF THE TIME. SOME OF THE WELLS WE CAME ACROSS WERE POISONED. WE WERE GIVEN HALAZONE TABLETS TO PUT IN OUR CANTEENS TO PURIFY THE WATER. IT TASTED TERRIBLE. WE WOULD GET WATER FROM WHEREVER WE COULD. I HAD TO GET SOME OUT OF A RICE PADDY ONCE WHICH WAS NOT A GOOD IDEA. THE KOREANS USED HUMAN FECES TO FERTILIZE WITH. YOU DIDN'T KNOW HOW SAFE IT WAS OR WHAT YOU MIGHT CATCH. BUT IF YOU WERE THIRSTY ENOUGH IT DIDN'T MATTER. IN THE SUMMER TIME THEY GAVE US QUININE TABLETS TO WARD OFF MALARIA.

ONE TIME THE ARTILLERY WAS SET UP BETWEEN THE HILLS IN A FIELD AND THE INTELLIGENCE TOLD THEM THE ENEMY WAS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN RANGE IN FRONT OF THEM. FIVE OF US WERE SENT TO THE FRONT RIDGE TO KEEP AN EYE ON THEM SO THEY COULD MOVE THE ARTILLERY OUT OF THERE. WE WERE ON A HIGH PEAK AND BEHIND US WAS A BIG VALLEY. WE STARTED PLAYING WITH THE ENEMY. THEY HAD A TANK DUG IN THE RIVER BANK IN FRONT OF US. WE WOULD GO AROUND TO THE FRONT OF THE HILL AND SHOW OURSELVES. THEN RUN AROUND TO THE SIDE OF THE HILL. THEY WOULD SHOOT A ROUND AT US AND IT WOULD LAND BEHIND US WAY DOWN IN THE VALLEY. THAT NIGHT WE WERE SUPPOSED TO GO BACK TO WHERE THE ARTILLERY WAS SET UP AND MEET AN ENGINEER TO LEAD US THROUGH THE MINE FIELD THEY WERE GOING TO PUT THERE. WHEN WE ARRIVED THE ENGINEER WASN'T THERE AND NEVER DID SHOW UP. THE ENEMY WAS COMING THROUGH THE HILLS AFTER US AND WE HAD THE MINE FIELD BETWEEN US AND THE ROAD. IT STARTED TO GET DARK AND I HAD WAITED LONG ENOUGH. I HEADED TO THE RIGHT TO A HILL THAT LED TO THE ROAD. EVERYBODY FOLLOWED ME. WE GOT OUT OF THERE IN ONE PIECE.

WE FOUND FOOD WHERE WE COULD. ONE TIME WE HAD A HANDFUL OF RICE TO PUT IN A STEEL HELMET TO COOK. LET ME TELL YOU IT WASN'T UNCLE BENS. THE RICE THERE WAS SMALL. WE ALSO FOUND SOME KIND OF GRAIN THAT WHEN COOKED, IT WAS LIKE OLD MAIDS FROM POPCORN. BUT WE DID EAT IT. A COUPLE TIMES IN THE WINTER WHEN WE HAD HOT CHOW FROM THE COOK SHACK I WOULD TAKE THE EMPTY JELLY CAN FROM THE COOK, SCRAPE THE REMAINS OF THE JELLY AND MIX IT WITH SNOW SO I COULD HAVE A SUBSTITUTE MILK SHAKE. TWICE WHEN I WAS THERE WE DID GET A BEER RATION. SINCE I HATED BEER I TRADED MY BEER RATION TO SOMEONE FOR THEIR COCA-COLA RATION.

ONCE IN THE WINTER THE REGIMENTAL COMMANDER CAME TO B. COMPANY TO GIVE US A PEP TALK. HE TOLD US HE CONSIDERED B. COMPANY AS HIS EXTRA BATTALION. HE ALSO TOLD US THAT THEY WERE SENDING US 155 MM. HOWITZERS ON TRACKS FOR SUPPORT. THAT SOUNDED GOOD BUT IT NEVER HAPPENED WHILE I WAS THERE. FOR HALF OF THE WINTER I NEVER GOT SHOEPACS. THEY DIDN'T HAVE MY SIZE. I WORE COMBAT BOOTS. THEY WERE COLD. THEN I FINALLY GOT SHOEPACS. THEY WERE RUBBER ON THE BOTTOM PART SO THEY WERE WATER PROOF. THEY HAD TWO FELT INSOLES IN THEM. THE ONLY TROUBLE WAS WHEN I PUT THEM ON MY FEET WOULD SWEAT AND THEN WHEN WE STOPPED THEY WOULD GET COLD.

WE WERE ON THE PUSH NORTH AGAIN IN A SPEARHEAD. WE MOVED FAST. WE GOT TO A LITTLE SHACK IN THE ROAD AND A MILITARY POLICEMAN JUMPED OUT AND CHALLENGED US. HE ASKED WHERE WE THOUGHT WE WERE GOING. WE TOLD HIM AND HE SAID WE WERE ON THE WRONG ROAD. HE SAID HE WAS THE LAST OUTPOST. THERE WAS NOTHING AHEAD BUT ENEMIES. THE COMMANDER CALLED US BACK AND WE RETREATED TO FIND A ROAD WE COULD GET OVER TO THE ONE WE WERE SUPPOSED TO BE ON. WE LOADED ON TRUCKS. IT WAS BITTER COLD AND EVERYONE WAS HUDDLED TOGETHER TO KEEP WARM. I WAS ON THE BACK OF THE TRUCK, AND MY FEET WERE COLD. WHEN THE TRUCKS WENT UP A HILL THEY WERE JUST CRAWLING ALONG SO I DECIDED TO GET OFF AND RUN BEHIND THE TRUCK TO GET SOME CIRCULATION GOING. I JUMPED OFF AND MY FEET WERE SO NUMB IT FELT LIKE I WAS JUMPING ON MY ANKLES. I THINK THAT IS WHAT KEPT ME FROM GETTING FROSTBITE. WE DID LOSE SOME MEN TO FROSTBITE, HOWEVER. WHEN WE GOT BACK FAR ENOUGH TO BUILD A FIRE I GOT MY FEET REAL CLOSE. WHEN THEY HAD THAWED ENOUGH TO GET MY BOOTS OFF THE FELT INSOLES CAME WITH

MY FEET. THEY WERE FROZEN TO MY SOLES. IT WAS THEN THAT I NOTICED ICE BETWEEN MY TOES.

RATIONS WERE ANOTHER THING. SOME OF THE STUFF WOULD GIVE ME HEART BURN AND SOME OF IT I DIDN'T LIKE AT ALL. BUT IN THE WINTER THE HAMBURGERS IN GRAVY WASN'T BAD. I COULD CHOP IT OUT OF THE CAN WITH MY BAYONET, SCRAPE THE GREASE AWAY AND IT WAS PRETTY GOOD. THEY WERE REAL GOOD IF YOU WERE LUCKY ENOUGH TO BE BACK FAR ENOUGH TO HAVE A FIRE SO YOU COULD WARM THEM UP AND EAT THE GRAVY TOO.

WE FINALLY FOUND A WAY TO GET TO THE ROAD WE WERE SUPPOSED TO BE ON AND WE HEADED CROSS COUNTRY. THAT WAS SOME TRIP. WE WERE RIDING ON TANKS AGAIN. THAT WAS A LOT BETTER THAN WALKING. I WOULD STAND UP BY THE TURRET OVER THE VENT TUBE FOR THE TWIN CADILLAC MOTORS THAT RAN THE TANK. IT WAS ALWAYS WARM THERE. WE HEADED NORTH AGAIN FOR THE THIRD TIME. WE CAME TO A RIVER AND STARTED TO CROSS. I DON'T KNOW WHAT UNIT WAS IN FRONT OF US, BUT ALL OF A SUDDEN THE MEN STARTED TO DISAPPEAR. THE RIVER BOTTOM WAS QUICKSAND. THEY BROUGHT UP SOME BOATS AND WE WENT ACROSS. WE WERE READY TO FOLLOW GENERAL MACARTHUR THROUGH CHINA. THAT NEVER HAPPENED AS THEY STOPPED US RIGHT THERE AT WHAT THEY CALLED THE MACARTHUR LINE. THEN THEY PULLED US CLEAR BACK TO THE THIRTY EIGHTH PARALLEL.

WE WERE RIDING ON TANKS ALONG A ROAD SOMEWHERE WHEN A LONE AIRPLANE STARTED STRAFING US. WE JUMPED IN THE DITCH ALONG THE ROAD. HE MADE HIS PASS. I WAS GOING TO BE SMART, SO I JUMPED BACK ON THE TANK AND GRABBED THE FIFTY CALIBER MACHINE GUN ON THE TOP. THE PLANE WAS COMING AROUND AGAIN AND I THOUGHT I'LL GET HIM THIS TIME. THEN I REMEMBERED THE DUST COVER BEING ON THE FRONT OF THE GUN. I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO TAKE IT OFF OR LOAD THE GUN. THE PLANE WAS ON HIS WAY BACK AND THIS TIME IT LOOKED LIKE HE WAS COMING RIGHT AT ME. I HIT THE DITCH JUST IN TIME.

ONE NIGHT IN THE WINTER I WAS HOT. I WAS IN MY SLEEPING BAG LYING IN THE SNOW. I COULDN'T GET COOL. I HAD MY SLEEPING BAG WIDE OPEN. I WAS NAKED AND I STILL COULD NOT COOL OFF. THE MEDIC CAME AND GAVE ME AN A.P.C. THE ARMY CURE-ALL. I DON'T KNOW IF IT WAS ONE NIGHT OR TWO. THEN I WAS ALRIGHT. I DIDN'T KNOW UNTIL I GOT TO CAMP CARSON, COLORADO, THE NEXT YEAR THAT I HAD AN ATTACK OF MALARIA. IT HAPPENED AGAIN TO ME

WHILE I WAS AT CAMP CARSON. THE CIRCULATION IN MY FEET HAS NEVER BEEN THE SAME SINCE KOREA. SOME NIGHTS MY FEET ARE COLD. SOME NIGHTS ONE WILL BE COLD AND THE OTHER BURNING HOT. SOME NIGHTS THEY ARE BOTH HOT. THAT'S THE ONLY THING THAT HAS STAYED THE SAME.

ONE THING I FORGOT. WE WERE ON A HILL AND ONE OF THE GUYS CUT HIS THUMB ON A RATION CAN. HE TOLD US THAT INJURY WAS GOING TO TAKE HIM BACK TO THE STATES. IT SURE DID. HE CLAIMED THAT HE COULDN'T MOVE HIS THUMB BUT HE HAD NO TROUBLE DEALING CARDS. THEY SENT HIM HOME. WE HAD A FEW PEOPLE WHO SHOT THEMSELVES IN THE FOOT OR SHOT OFF THEIR TRIGGER FINGER TO GET OUT OF THERE. I NEVER HAD GUTS ENOUGH TO HURT MYSELF. THERE ARE A LOT OF OTHER INCIDENCES THAT I DON'T REMEMBER IN THE TEN MONTHS I WAS IN KOREA THAT I'M UNABLE TO RECORD. BUT THE ONE THING I DO KNOW IS THIS SO-CALLED FORGOTTEN WAR IS NOT FORGOTTEN FOR THE ONES THAT WERE THERE. IT IS NOT FORGOTTEN BY THE THOUSANDS WHO WERE KILLED OR WOUNDED, OR CAPTURED. IT IS SURE NOT FORGOTTEN BY THE LOVED ONES WHO WAITED FOR THEM. WHEN I GOT ROTATED I WAS NUMBER TWO. THERE WERE ONLY THREE OF US LEFT WHO HAD COME OVER IN THE OVERMANNED COMPANY WE HAD WHEN WE FIRST ARRIVED. I DIDN'T KNOW THE OTHER TWO MEN. THEY WERE FROM A DIFFERENT PLATOON.

WHEN OUR GUYS GOT A MEDAL OR PURPLE HEART AWARDS WERE PRESENTED AT A COMPANY FORMATION. I GOT MY PURPLE HEART WHEN I GOT ROTATED. THEY GAVE ME ONE AND SAID IT WAS THE LAST ONE LEFT. THE TOP OF THE CASE WAS BROKEN. I SAID I'LL TAKE IT. JUST BEFORE I WAS READY TO LEAVE, LT. HANEY TOLD ME IF I SIGNED UP FOR SIX MORE MONTHS IN KOREA HE WOULD PROMOTE ME TO CORPORAL. I TOLD HIM IF I HADN'T EARNED THE RIGHT TO BE CORPORAL BY THEN ANOTHER SIX MONTHS WOULDN'T MAKE ME ANY BETTER. I DECLINED.

WHEN I LEFT KOREA AND GOT BACK TO JAPAN THE FIRST THING THEY DID WAS SEND ME TO THE SHOWERS. THEY SENT ME IN ONE DOOR OF A BUILDING AND HAD ME DROP EVERYTHING; MY PACK AND ALL MY CLOTHES. I WENT THROUGH THE SHOWERS, RECEIVED A NEW UNIFORM, AND WENT OUT THE OTHER DOOR. SO MUCH FOR MY TWENTY FIVE PISTOL. I NEVER SAW IT AGAIN. ALSO, WHEN I LEFT THEY GAVE ME MY 201 FILE (PERSONNEL RECORDS) TO TAKE WITH ME. IT WASN'T SEALED AND I WAS CURIOUS TO SEE WHAT WAS IN IT. THEN I REALIZED WHY THINGS WERE THE WAY THEY WERE. MY EVALUATION SAID I WASN'T QUALIFIED TO TRAIN TROOPS OR REACH A HIGHER GRADE. I WASN'T

QUALIFIED FOR ANYTHING. THEN I KNEW WHY I DIDN'T MAKE GUNNER. YOU DON'T CUSS A BIRD COLONEL AND GET AWAY WITH IT. THE ONLY THING I CAN SAY IS I WAS PLANNING ON STAYING IN THE ARMY, BUT HE PROBABLY SAVED MY LIFE BY PUTTING THAT ON MY RECORD. I GOT OUT.

EPILOGUE

*IT'S TOO BAD THAT SOME PEOPLE THINK THAT THEY HAVE IT ROUGH IN THIS COUNTRY. THEY NEVER GOT WEALTHY OR GOT THE AMERICAN DREAM. I NEVER GOT RICH OR ACHIEVED THE SO-CALLED AMERICAN DREAM. BUT I WORKED ALL MY LIFE AND RAISED A WONDERFUL FAMILY. THE ONES THAT ARE RICH DON'T CARE ABOUT THE WARS THAT GO ON. THEY AREN'T INVOLVED. I REMEMBER THE SECOND WAR. SOME OF THE WOMEN IN THE STORES COMPLAINED ABOUT RATIONING. WE COULDN'T AFFORD TO BUY FOOD IN THE FIRST PLACE. ONE WOMAN SAID SHE WISHED THE WAR WOULD HAVE LASTED LONGER BECAUSE HER HUSBAND WAS MAKING BIG MONEY. IF SHE HAD A SON OR TWO IN THE MILITARY SHE MIGHT HAVE HAD A DIFFERENT OUTLOOK. I NEVER THOUGHT TOO MUCH ABOUT MY PURPLE HEART FOR MY SLIGHT WOUND. SOME MEN DIED TO GET THEIRS. I THANK **GOD** EVERY DAY THAT I WAKE UP WITHOUT THE SOUND OF ARTILLERY OR SOMEONE SHOOTING AT ME. I THANK **HIM** FOR JUST WAKING UP EVERY DAY.*

The SOBERING STATISTICS:

54,229 KILLED

103,248 WOUNDED

8,142 MISSING

3,746 CAPTURED

NOT FORGOTTEN

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DENNIS C. BENNETT WAS BORN AND RAISED IN ROCKTON, ILLINOIS. HE ENLISTED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY AT THE AGE OF 17 AND WAS SENT TO KOREA. HE WAS THERE WHEN THE KOREAN CONFLICT FORMALLY BEGAN ON JUNE 25, 1950. HE IS A MEMBER OF AMERICAN LEGION POST 439 IN LA FERIA, TEXAS.

